

Concept Paper

Developing the Capacity for Scaling Up the Effective Use of Evidence-Based Programs in State Departments of Education

Dean Fixsen, Karen Blase, Robert Horner, George Sugai

University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill,
University of Oregon, and University of Connecticut

APRIL 2009

Italian Proverb
Between saying and doing
Is the sea.

Abstract

The significant investment in developing evidence-based practices and other innovations will be “worth it” if it helps further the education of students and benefit their families and communities. The State Implementation and Scaling up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) Center helps States establish adequate capacity to carry out effective implementation, organization change, and system transformation strategies to maximize the academic achievement and behavioral health outcomes for students Statewide. Working in close cooperation with State leaders and relevant TA Centers, SISEP provides the critical content and foundation for establishing a technology of large-scale, sustainable, high-fidelity implementation of effective educational practices. As a benchmark, “scaling up” innovations in education means that at least 60% of the students and schools in a State who could benefit from an innovation actually are experiencing that innovation in their education setting.

Introduction

Limited understanding of large-scale implementation has emerged as a major barrier to effective educational reform. The past 50 years have been characterized by unprecedented advances for improving education practices, but only modest application of this knowledge to benefit students on a useful scale. The OSEP Center on State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) provides the critical content and foundation for establishing a technology of large-scale, sustainable, high-fidelity implementation of effective educational practices.

The SISEP Center builds on the work completed in the past 25 years in State-level implementation of health and human service programs, early literacy, and positive behavior support practices, as well as current work on implementation, organization change, and systems transformation being conducted by the National Implementation

Research Network (www.nirn.fpg.unc.edu) and the OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (www.pbis.org).

The central thesis of the Center is the importance of comprehensive capacity development at the State level (e.g. policy, funding, evaluation/monitor, personnel preparation, in-service, coaching, administrative leadership, information systems). To date, evidence-based practices have been disseminated via useful but insufficient strategies such as (a) State mandates, (b) knowledge sharing/in-service, or (c) descriptions of exemplary sites. As a result, evidence-based education practices to impact academic and behavioral outcomes have yet to reach the mainstream and have yet to provide the promised benefits broadly to students across the country.

For evidence-based practices to move from demonstrations to “standard operating procedures” a different approach to implementation is needed. In this concept paper, we will outline the scaling up process, the role of States, and the role of the SISEP Center. The outline is accompanied by an annotated review of the research and practice literature related to the scaling up design and the major concepts introduced in this paper (see the Annotated Bibliography under the “resources” tab on the www.scalingup.org website). In addition, several “briefs” describing key aspects of scaling up are on this website.

Scaling up defined

Scaling up is defined as having enough of something so that it is useful to individuals and to society. Scaling up is the process of moving from “exemplars” to the “typical.” The process of scaling involves the development of organizational capacity to move from exemplars sustained by extra-ordinary supports (called “ghost systems”), to typical application with organizations and systems that are designed to make full, effective, and sustained use of innovations (called “host systems”). While there is no firm agreement about the level at which “scaling” is achieved, we hypothesize that an organization or system (district, State) has reached the “tipping point” for functional scaling when approximately 60% of the units in the organization or system are implementing a practice with fidelity and demonstrable benefits to students.

Scaling up innovations

For innovations to reach at least 60% of all students and schools in a State requires fundamental changes in the education system. Systems are powerful. The complex webs of inter-relationships among components of current systems exert powerful influences on current outcomes. In most systems, these inter-relationships have evolved over time, a collection of good ideas and good intentions that currently may or may not produce desirable outcomes in the aggregate. It is a truism that current federal and State education systems (wittingly or unwittingly) fully support current education practices and current outcomes. It also is axiomatic that if we continue to do what we always have done we will continue to get what we always have gotten.

In education and human service systems today, powerful forces in current systems only make use of innovations that fit current system functions. There is an expectation that teachers and staff will change their practices to better educate children, but no expectation of change in how schools, districts, or States function. For those innovations that do not fit current systems, it does not take long before the system wears down innovations (and innovators) and last year's good ideas are discarded in favor of this year's promising practices.

New practices often do not fare well in well-established systems and, to the extent they are used at all, new practices often are maintained only by extra-ordinary supports. For example, the PBIS Technical Assistance Center is designed to create and support School-Wide Positive Behavior Support applications, the SFA Foundation is designed to create and support Success for All applications, and Project ACHIEVE is supported by an organized group of consultants. However, these supports (ghost systems) are not part of typical State education systems. They have not yet become part of "education as usual."

There are two problems with relying on extra-ordinary supports for more effective education practices: 1) new practices last only as long as the extra-ordinary supports are available and 2) State/ federal education systems do not take advantage of the specialized knowledge represented by the extra-ordinary supports to change and improve their system functioning to realize benefits for all students routinely. The result is the current State of affairs – scientists and innovators produce effective approaches to education while State and federal departments struggle with the problem of how to make use of these advances to benefit students everywhere.

Effective education practices

To maximize benefits to students, effective practices need to be used competently in all education settings including classrooms, hallways, lunch rooms, playgrounds, and buses. Parents and community agencies need to be involved to support and sustain gains in literacy, numeracy, science, and behavior. Comprehensive school reforms, whole school interventions, and a variety of classroom educational and behavioral practices have been demonstrated to be effective in these education settings. In each State, parents, stakeholders, and education leaders know best what their needs are and will choose the evidence-based practices they want to use. For the purposes of scale up, the education practice that is chosen a) should be supported by considerable research demonstrating substantial benefits to students (i.e. an effect size of 0.50 or better), b) should be more efficient than other alternatives, and c) should be a good fit with the needs in the schools and the State.

The role of the SISEP Center is to help States a) assess and create readiness for scaling of the evidence-based practice chosen by the State, b) effectively implement the practices they have chosen, c) create the infrastructure, strategies, and data systems they need to assure effective and sustained implementation of those practices in every school across the State, and d) create the infrastructure, strategies, and data systems necessary to

maintain a scale-up function in the State in order to take advantage of new evidence-based practices over the coming decades.

Selecting what to implement

The *selection of an evidence-based practice* is an important decision. From the perspectives of parents, stakeholders, and State leaders, the practice must be an effective solution to an apparent need and the expected benefits must warrant the effort required to implement and scale up the practice in the State. There is no advantage to scaling up new education practices that are no more effective than current practices. That would be a waste of limited resources. Multiple advantages accrue to students and to State education systems when demonstrably effective practices are implemented effectively in every school. The following is an example of a well-established evidence-based practice (many more evidence-based education practices can be found in the literature and on the What Works Clearinghouse website: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>). This example is provided to illustrate the changes in school routines that should be expected as part of implementing any evidence-based practice.

An Example of an Evidence-based Practice

The School Transitional Environment Project (STEP) is designed to reduce drop out rates and improve education outcomes by enhancing the experience of students during school transition. Students who are considered to be well-suited for the STEP program are those who are considered to be at-risk for behavioral problems and who reside in communities that have large junior or senior high schools with multiple feeder schools. STEP has been used in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Across several experimental trials, clear declines in drop out rates in high school of 40-50% or more have been common. Students in STEP also are more likely to avoid drops in academic performance and achievement levels in High School and have lower levels of behavioral difficulties.

Fundamental elements of STEP include developing students' perceptions of school as a safe, cohesive, and well organized environment in which to learn and grow. Strategies are also employed to reduce student anonymity, increase student accountability, and clarify students' understanding of school rules and expectations. These key features are implemented through the homeroom teacher's interaction with the students and their families.

At the practice level, students in this program are assigned to student cohort groups, each of which has a homeroom teacher. These cohorts remain together for homeroom as well as core classes (e.g., mathematics, English). Cohort classrooms are purposely grouped together in the larger school in an effort to create a feeling of community and to decrease the likelihood that participating students will engage in conflicts with older students. Homeroom teachers take on the roles of teacher, counselor, and administrator in their relations with the students. These teachers keep track of attendance and follow up with parents about any absences. They also talk with students in their homerooms about class schedules and any personal problems the students may be having.

Homeroom teachers also are responsible for working with students' families, explaining STEP, following up with parents concerning absences, and enhancing communication between families

and the school. Teachers also meet with other homeroom teachers to discuss potential student problems as well as students who may need counseling or extra attention.

Teachers provide the majority of the support for students in STEP. Homeroom teachers are assigned to 20-30 STEP students and serve as the primary link between home, student, and school. These teachers perform many of the guidance and administrative tasks such as helping students select classes and talking with students about personal problems. STEP homeroom teachers meet several times a week to discuss students who may be having problems and other concerns arising in their classrooms. They also consult with school guidance staff and attend trainings for team-building and to improve their student advisory skills.

From:

<http://www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/dropout/part3.3.09.asp>

Felner, R. D., Favazza, A., Shim, M., Brand, S., Gu, K., & Noonan, N. (2001). Whole school improvement and restructuring as prevention and promotion - Lessons from STEP and the project on high performance learning communities. *Journal of School Psychology, 39*(2), 177-202.

.....

Implementation of effective education practices

Choosing an evidence-based practices is one thing, implementation of that practice is another thing altogether. Evidence-based practices must be carefully selected to meet student needs **and** they also must be implemented well in order to achieve benefits for students. One without the other is not sufficient for reliably producing educational benefits to students. If the selected practice is not effective, it can be implemented well but still not produce benefits to students (i.e. it was not useful in the first place). If the selected practice is effective but not implemented well (i.e. not actually used as intended), it will not produce benefits to students. Thus, a) selection of the evidence-based practice is important and b) executing effective implementation strategies is important.

Once the evidence-based practice is selected, the *focus shifts to implementation* of that practice – a whole new set of activities. The use of evidence-based practices can benefit students and education systems but evidence-based practices, like STEP, almost always require changes in the day-to-day activities of teachers, staff, and administrators and changes in school structures and routines. Changes to the status quo should be expected, planned, and embraced as part of the implementation process.

Implementation activities are focused on teachers, staff, and administrators learning to support and use an evidence-based practice competently. There is a large body of literature in education and other fields demonstrating that practices are effective only when they are used fully. High fidelity uses of education practices lead to better outcomes. Low fidelity uses of those practices lead to less desirable outcomes. It is not enough to say we are using the practice. It is not enough to use only some aspects of the practice. To be effective the practice must be used fully, as designed by the developers and tested experimentally. Does this mean there is a rigid script to follow? The answer is no. Does this mean there is a flexible but limited range of possible ways to assure the core functions of an evidence-based practice are implemented? The answer is yes. Thus,

supports for professional development for teachers, staff, and administrators are an essential part of any attempt to implement an evidence-based practice with fidelity and good outcomes for students and communities.

Based on the commonalities among successfully implemented programs, several core implementation components have been identified. The goal of implementation is to have practitioners, such as teachers and education staff, use innovations effectively. To accomplish this, there are several core implementation components called *implementation drivers* related to developing competency and providing organization supports. The interactive processes outlined below must be *integrated* to maximize their influence on both staff behavior and organizational culture. Being *integrated* means that all the implementation drivers must be present and working together effectively to produce the desired outcomes. The interactive implementation drivers also *compensate* for one another, in that a weakness in one implementation driver can be *compensated* for by strengths in other drivers. The following sections briefly review each of the implementation drivers in order to illustrate the role they play in effective implementation of evidence-based practices.

Developing Competency

At the practice level, teachers, staff members, and administrators need to become competent users of the evidence-based practices. According to the literature, developing competency at the practice level involves selection, training, coaching, and performance assessments for the teachers, staff, and administrators who are expected to engage in the evidence-based practice.

Staff selection: Effective staffing requires consideration of several questions. Who is qualified to carry out the evidence-based practice or program? What are the best methods for recruiting and selecting teachers, administrators, and staff who possess necessary qualifications? In addition to prerequisite academic qualifications and experience factors, certain practitioner characteristics may be difficult to impart in training sessions, so they must be included in selection criteria. Staff selection also intersects with a variety of larger system variables. General workforce development issues, the overall economy, organizational financing, salaries and benefits, personnel policy constraints, and the demands of the innovation in terms of time and skill can all affect the availability of staff that are best qualified to implement an evidence-based practice.

Staff selection is important even when implementation is attempted in a school with a full complement of staff already in place. The new evidence-based practice can be described to all teachers and then teachers can be invited to “apply” to be in the first groups to learn the new practices. The “interview process” might be short but still is necessary to assure a reasonable match between the teacher and practice. The better interview protocols have questions and exercises to assess the philosophy, values, knowledge, and skills of teacher-candidates to assure a good fit with the practice that is about to be implemented.

Training: Evidence-based practices represent novel ways of providing education to students. Teachers and others at an implementation school need to learn when, where, how, and with whom to use (and not use) new approaches and new skills. Training is an efficient way to provide knowledge of background information, theory, philosophy, and values; to introduce the components and rationale for key practices; and to provide opportunities to practice new skills and receive feedback in a safe training environment. However, training experiences alone are not sufficient to assure that teachers and staff will develop the competence and confidence to effectively implement an innovation. The inadequacy of training by itself is one of the most widely replicated outcomes in education and other fields. One study after another shows that about 5 – 10% of those participating in training actually use new ideas or skills in their practice.

Coaching: Most skills needed by effective teachers and others can be introduced in training but must be practiced and mastered on the job with the help of a coach. A coach provides specific information about the application of an evidence-based practice in a school setting as well as advice, encouragement, and opportunities to practice and use skills specific to the innovation. The implementation of new education practices usually requires behavior change at the practitioner, supervisory, and administrative support levels. Training and coaching are the principal ways in which behavior change is brought about for carefully selected staff in the beginning stages of implementation and also throughout the life of evidence-based practices. Training followed by in-class coaching results in about 95% of the newly trained teachers using their new ideas and skills in the classroom. The “train and coach” approach produces vast improvements over the results of the “train and hope” approach.

Performance Assessments: Evaluation of staff performance is designed to assess the application and outcomes of the skills that are reflected in the selection criteria, that are taught in training, and that are reinforced and expanded in coaching processes. Assessments of teacher, administrator, and staff performance include measures of fidelity and also provide feedback useful to interviewers, trainers, coaches, managers, and others regarding the progress of implementation efforts and the usefulness of selection, training, and coaching in promoting and sustaining the new way of work. These data also are essential in interpreting outcome data and using data for continuous quality improvement.

Organization Supports

At the school level (organization, administrator), the implementation drivers involve using decision support data systems, facilitative administrative practices, and system interventions strategies. These organization supports are critical to establishing, improving, and sustaining evidence-based practices across generations of teachers and students.

Decision Support Data Systems: Measures such as quality improvement information, school-wide fidelity measures, and student education and behavior outcomes assess key aspects of the overall performance of the school. Data such as these help to support

decision making to assure continuing high fidelity implementation of the core intervention components over time.

Facilitative Administration: Facilitative administrators provides leadership and make use of a range of data inputs to inform decision making, to support the overall implementation and intervention processes, and to keep staff organized and focused on the desired education outcomes. In organizations with this advantage, administrators give special attention to policies, procedures, structures, culture, and climate to assure alignment of these organizational components with the needs of teachers, staff, and others as they implement the evidence-based practices. It is the responsibility of administrators to make sure that teachers, staff, and others have the skills and supports they need to perform at a high level of effectiveness with every student.

System Interventions: Systems interventions are strategies to work with external systems to ensure the availability of the financial, organizational, and human resources required to support the work of the teachers, staff, and others. Again, alignment of these external systems to support the work of practitioners is an important aspect of systems intervention.

SISEP and Scaling Up Implementation Activities

Now we get to the core elements of “scaling up.” People often talk about “scaling up evidence-based practices.” While this is an important outcome, *the heart of scaling up is “scaling up of effective implementation methods.”* As noted above, evidence-based practices without effective implementation methods do not produce student benefits (and vice versa). Evidence-based practices typically are very specific, as noted in the STEP example described previously. Fortunately, effective implementation methods are general and apply to a wide range of evidence-based practices. Therefore, scaling up the “capacity to implement” can have far reaching impacts on education. Once the capacity to implement is established, that capacity can be used year after year to implement a range of specific evidence-based academic and behavior improvement practices in a State. It will not be necessary for administrators and system managers to try to think up some new way to implement each new innovation that comes along. The capacity for implementing evidence-based practices and other innovations and policy initiatives already will be established, available, and effective.

As noted in the preceding sections, implementation is an intensive and highly interactive process requiring considerable knowledge and skill. Implementation requires changes in teachers’, staff, and administrators’ behavior; changes in school structures and routines; and changes in the type and substance of supports provided by districts and States. While the science and practice of implementation have advanced to the point of making the success of these changes more predictable, it still requires the intensive application of considerable skill and excellent judgment.

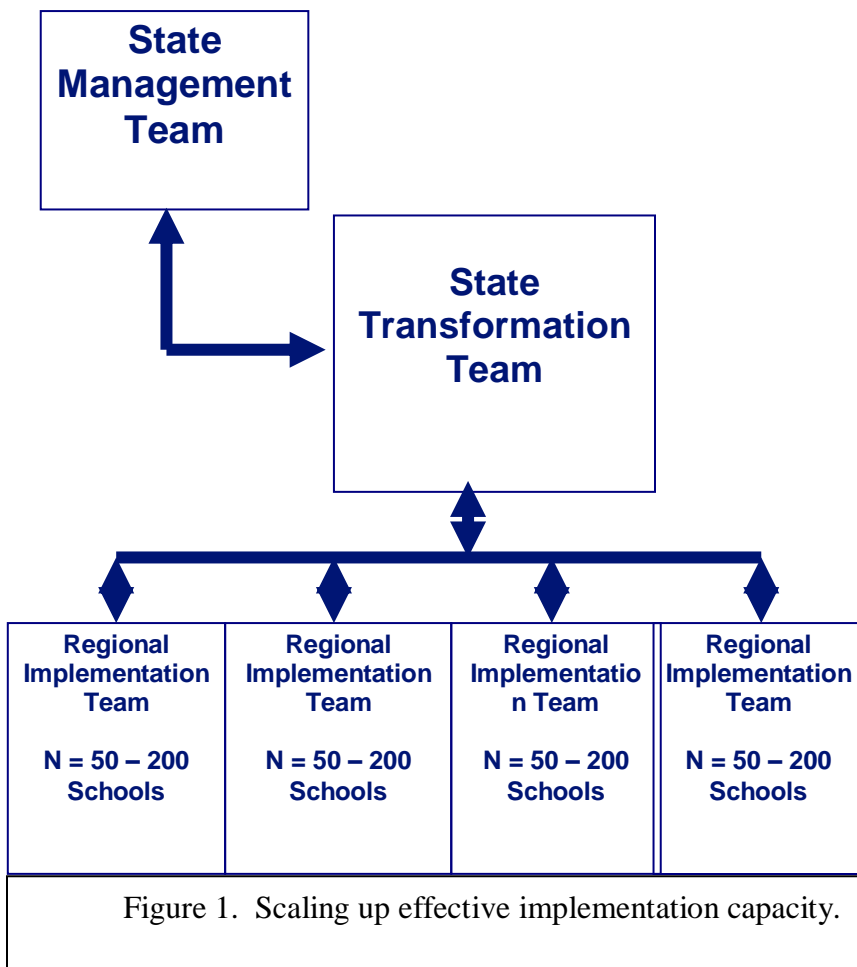
Scaling up also requires the participation and support of parents, unions, professional education associations, and other key stakeholders in each State. As noted above, the

parents and stakeholders are part of the process for assessing needs and selecting evidence-based practices that might meet those needs. Similarly, the involvement and support of parents and stakeholders are essential to the scaling up process locally, in districts, and in the State. Regular meetings with parent groups and other key stakeholder groups are anticipated as the scaling up process unfolds.

A design for scaling up innovations

Scaling up provides a plan for creating and sustaining the sources of effective implementation skills. Figure 1 shows the overall design for scale up. In this design, the essential work is done by the *Regional Implementation Teams* (RITs) working intensively with a manageable number of schools. It is at this level that effective implementation of evidence-based practices will occur and benefits to students and communities will accrue. The task of the *State Transformation Team* (STT) is to create enough Regional

Implementation Teams to saturate the State. The STT will work closely with the State Management Team to develop the RITs and the infrastructure supports that are critical for their operation and for sustaining their functions over the coming years. The *State Management Team* consists of the senior directors and leaders of general and special education in the State. Leadership, policy development, and



problem solving will be key contributions of the State Management Team as the capacity development process unfolds.

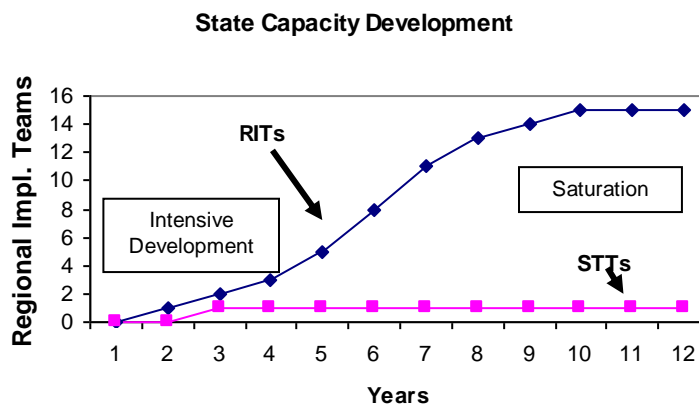
The purpose of capacity development is to help States establish new roles and structures to support the effective implementation of evidence-based practices as a continuing part

of how their State system operates for decades to come. To help accomplish this goal, SISEP initially works with the State Management Team to plan and resource the capacity-development work in the State. As the people and resources are put into place, SISEP provides training, extensive on-site coaching, and frequent assessments of performance to help team members at all levels learn the complex skills involved in implementing evidence-based practices, changing organizations, and transforming system functions. SISEP also helps to assure clear and timely communication protocols are developed among these new structures and helps States develop data systems to support decision making within and across teams. These activities are not simple, but they are doable.

Regional Implementation Teams (RITs)

The effectiveness of scaling up hinges on the Regional Implementation Teams. The intensive work that is essential to effective implementation is done by the RITs. The RITs work with individual schools, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff members to help them implement evidence-based practices with fidelity and good outcomes for students and communities. At the practice level (teacher, staff member, administrator), each RIT provides selection, training, coaching, and performance assessments for the teachers, staff, and administrators who are expected to engage in the evidence-based practice. At the school level (organization, administrator), each RIT helps the school establish, use, and monitor the effective use of decision support data systems, facilitative administrative practices, and system interventions to help assure the effective and continuing use of the evidence-based practice. At a system level (State management team), each RIT provides practice-level feedback regarding current facilitators and barriers to effective use of evidence-based practices. Thus, the focus of each RIT is developing the competencies of educators and the capabilities of school and district organizations so that effective changes can be made in education practices with students and necessary changes can be made in system functioning.

In the early years, each RIT will work with 50 schools to help them implement an evidence-based practice. *The focus initially is on developing the competence and capabilities of the RIT members.* As the RIT members gain expertise, it is expected that the team will be able to help implement a variety of evidence-based practices and work with an expanded number of schools. The eventual maximum number of schools will depend upon geography, complexity of the evidence-based



practices, system supports, and turnover of staff in schools and the RIT itself. A prediction is that one Regional Implementation Team eventually will have the capacity to provide competent implementation supports for about 150 schools. The majority of States will need fewer than 7 RITs to reach the saturation point (that is, competent implementation services available to all schools in the State). A few States will need up to 15 RITs and only the most heavily populated States will need more than 15 RITs to reach the saturation point.

State Management Team

The State Management Team provides leadership and policy support to enable the scaling up process. The members of the State Management Team will vary from State to State but typically will consist of the directors of education and special education, directors of curriculum and instruction, and chief financial officers in the State Department of Education. The members of the State Management Team are able to make “final decisions” about policy, regulations, and system changes.

The fully informed participation of the State Management Team is essential to the success of the capacity building efforts in a State. Initially, at least monthly meetings will be held to facilitate the start up and early successes of the scale up efforts. A major function of the State Management Team is to work to align the components of the education system to make room for and support the new ways of work that are part of the scale up endeavor. The continued participation of the State Management Team will be needed as part of the scale up process described below.

The State Management Team is responsible for establishing the policies and permissions necessary to begin the capacity development process (policy enabled practices) and for changing policies and organizational structures as needed to facilitate the performance of the system once the process is underway (practice informed policies). The focus on function will help determine the parts of the current system that need to be changed.

State Transformation Team (STT)

The State Transformation Team (STT) performs multiple functions. One important role of the STT is to develop and support new Regional Implementation Teams (RITs) until the saturation point has been reached in the State. This means that SISEP’s role with the STT is to ensure that the knowledge, skills, abilities, and strategies for creating competent RTT staff and structures are embedded in the STT. As shown in Figure 2, the early years of the capacity development process are geared to forming the foundation for expansion; the next few years are spent on rapid growth in capacity to the point of saturation, followed by an extended period devoted to sustaining and constantly improving this new part of the State education system.

A continuing role of the STT is to support and sustain the Regional Implementation Teams (RITs) to improve their effectiveness and efficiency over time. It is estimated that one State Transformation Team can effectively support about 20 Regional

Implementation Teams. The largest States may need to establish more than one STT. The STT is a key to sustaining the vitality and effectiveness of the scale up capacity over the long term and will be an essential new component of State departments of education.

Thus, capacity building leading to scale up will occur in three ways:

- More RITs will be developed as the STT becomes fully operational
- The more mature RITs will be able to expand the number of schools in their catchment area from 50 (the original innovation zone) to 150 (or so) depending on distance and difficulty
- The more mature RITs will be able to help schools implement a larger number/ wider variety of evidence-based programs.

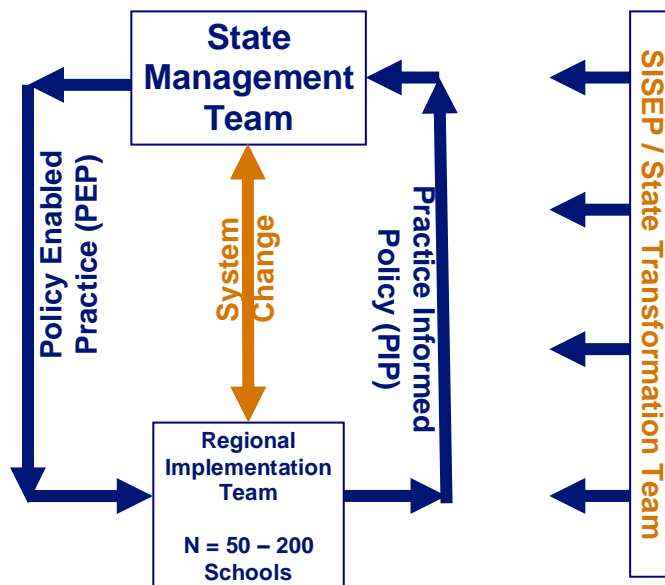
Another key function of the STT is to participate with the State Management Team in the system alignment process. Systems are constantly in a State of flux. Thus, the process of approximating full capacity development will continue unabated into the future.

Decision Support Data Systems

At every point in the scale up process, prompt and accurate feedback is an essential element. In this process, information about results is an essential component to guide development and assess approximations to the goals. Education systems are complex entities and, like all complex systems, regularly defeat “a plan.” There is no ill will intended, it is just the way complex systems work. In the SISEP approach to scaling up, the plan is designed to flex with the intended and unintended changes in the education system as the process unfolds. This flexible approach relies on evaluation data collection, summary, and reporting on a repeated cycle for keeping decision making and scale up firmly focused on the goals. The development of relevant data collection and interpretation routines will be initiated and supported by SISEP during the course of the scale up process.

PEP-PIP System Improvement Cycle

As noted above, the capacity building process will begin with planning and resource meetings between the State Management Team and the SISEP Center staff. In the first few months, the members of the first Regional Implementation Team will be selected. The development of their competencies related to implementation and organizational change will be initiated. The RIT will begin working with a small number of schools to help them



implement an evidence-based practice. This will provide an opportunity for intensive coaching and frequent assessments of RIT performance by members of the SISEP Center to help assure the development of the complex knowledge and skill sets that are involved in implementation.

Concurrently, the SISEP Center staff will meet with the State Management Team to close the communication loop and initiate the PEP-PIP system improvement cycle. The State Management Team will sanction the scaling up process and institute new policies to support the initiation and operation of the first RIT (Policy Enabled Practice). As the RIT does implementation work in several schools, policy-related issues will become apparent (e.g. staffing, funding, accreditation, reporting). A critical component of the system alignment process is to have information from the front line communicated directly to the State Management Team to be considered promptly as part of their decision making processes (Practice Informed Policy). SISEP Center staff will be actively involved in establishing this communication loop and assuring that processes and structures are developed to foster and maintain the direct connection between policy and practice in each State.

After the communication loop has been established, the system alignment process has begun, and the first RIT has met performance criteria, then the State Transformation Team will be developed. Once the STT is fully functioning, it will take on the role of developing new RITs and the SISEP team will step back to work more closely with the continued development of the STT. The members of the STT will be drawn from the State Management Team and from the initial RIT and some new members will be recruited to round out the STT. The members of the STT will receive intensive professional development, coaching, and performance assessments from members of the SISEP Center in order for the STT to develop its capacity to select, train, coach, evaluate, and support a cadre of RITs. The STT functions require high levels of skill and performance sustained over long periods of time. Once the STT group has met performance criteria, the State will be well on its way to having the capacity for rapidly and effectively moving research into practice in an education system whose functions are aligned with and anchored by continually improving achievement and behavior outcomes for students.

Conclusion

The capacity for making full and effective use of evidence-based programs and other innovations does not exist in State systems of education or other human services. The science of implementation, organization change, and system transformation is growing and applied “best practices” have been identified. Given the recent advances in knowledge, it is now possible for States to deliberately and systematically develop and make effective use of an implementation infrastructure to accomplish educationally and socially significant outcomes for students statewide. With a focused and determined effort, the capacity development process described in this concept paper should take no more than five years, a small investment of time and resources to achieve a noble goal in education.