

# **Scaling Up: Experiences of State Departments of Special Education**

by

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**May 2004**

Prepared for:

Project Forum

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1800 Diagonal Road - Suite 320  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Year 3 Deliverable 3-3A  
Under Cooperative Agreement # H326F000001  
Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)  
U.S. Department of Education

Project Forum at National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) is a cooperative agreement funded by the Office of Special Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education. The project carries out a variety of activities that provide information needed for program improvement, and promote the utilization of research data and other information for improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The project also provides technical assistance and information on emerging issues, and convenes small work groups to gather expert input, obtain feedback and develop conceptual frameworks related to critical topics in special education.

This report was supported by the U.S. Department of Education (Cooperative Agreement No. H326F000001). However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Department should be inferred.

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## Acknowledgments

Project Forum extends its sincere appreciation to the individuals listed below who were interviewed for this document and/or reviewed an earlier draft. Their time and expertise enriched the quality and accuracy of the information. Acknowledgement of these individuals does not necessarily indicate their endorsement of this final document.

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# Scaling Up: Experiences of State Departments of Special Education

## Background

Research-validated practices are typically “discovered” in laboratory schools or selected settings and initially implemented in individual schools or districts. The challenge is replicating the successful implementation of research-validated practices on a large scale. In 1996, Elmore, an often-cited researcher in the field of education policy, lamented that while many children in school districts and communities around the country have long benefited from successful teachers, schools and programs, replicating this success on a larger scale has proven to be a difficult and vexing issue (Elmore, 1996). Seven years later, Elmore’s colleague at Harvard, Chris Dede, voiced a similar concern at a Harvard Graduate School of Education conference of 80 educational researchers, practitioners and policymakers on scaling up success, “Lots of times, we find little islands of innovation in education that are really very exciting and people say, ... ‘Couldn’t all districts do this?’ Unfortunately...the answer tends to be no” (Potier, 2003).

The process of replicating innovations on a larger scale is known as *scaling up*. The term scaling up is used in many fields, including business, engineering and medicine. Although the particular innovation varies from field to field, the goal is the same—taking an innovation that works on a small scale and making it work in more places and/or for more people.

In a recent review of the literature on scaling up in education, the internal organization of schools (e.g., school space, staff roles and student grouping) and the external environment in which schools function (e.g., district and state policy, school autonomy and pressure to demonstrate positive results) were identified as challenges to scaling up. In spite of significant challenges, the literature points to a number of factors that are important for successful scaling up, including program design, buy-in at the school level, support, leadership, quality assurance and building constituencies for change (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2003).

Nearly ten years ago, at a Research Project Directors’ meeting sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), special education researchers were presented with a challenge—to continue to work with OSEP to build a knowledge base that addresses vital problems and to more effectively communicate their research findings to teachers, policymakers and families (Schiller, 1994). Over the past decade, translating research into educational practice has been a priority of OSEP. Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), administered by OSEP’s Research to Practice Division (RTP), has a core objective of bringing research-validated practices to scale.

In March 2001, OSEP convened the Scaling Up Work Group that consisted of researchers, developers, local education agency administrators, state directors of special education and technical assistance providers. Lizanne DeStefano from the University of Illinois, played a key role in recruiting participants, developing the agenda with OSEP staff, and preparing materials and presentations. The work group was charged with (1) identifying critical issues associated with bringing research-validated practices to scale and (2) determining an appropriate role for the federal government in this process (DeStefano, Dailey, Berman, & McInerney, 2001).

## **Purpose**

With the goal of building on the work of the Scaling Up Work Group and gaining a better understanding of the scaling up process from the perspective of the state education agency (SEA), Project Forum at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) conducted interviews with state directors of special education and other SEA-selected staff from six states. The purpose of these interviews was to examine how research-validated practices are identified and scaled up, what facilitates the process and what challenges are encountered along the way. This document is an analysis of the interview data. The work was carried out by Project Forum as part of NASDSE's Cooperative Agreement with OSEP.

## **Methodology**

Project Forum selected a sample of six states for this analysis in consultation with OSEP and Lizanne DeStefano. The six states were selected to represent diversity in technical assistance structure and scaling up experience, as well as diversity in terms of geography and size of population. The sample included Alabama, Hawaii, Kansas, New York, Rhode Island and Texas. The researchers developed a structured interview protocol designed to learn from states the mechanisms used to bring research-validated practices to scale and the factors that influence those mechanisms. State interviewees were also asked about recommendations for an appropriate federal role in the scaling up process. One Project Forum staff member conducted telephone interviews with up to two people per state in March through May of 2003.

## **Findings**

### ***Capacity/Infrastructure for Identifying Research-Validated Practices***

The identification of research-validated practices is not a happenstance. State departments of special education use specially designed and existing infrastructures to identify research-validated practices and cultivate their capacity to do this identification using a variety of funds. Interviewees from two states specifically noted that identification of research-validated practices is an integral part of the work of all SEA staff. In Rhode Island, for example, where SEA staff members are assigned to topical areas, identification of research-validated practices is part of that responsibility. Relevant information is funneled to appropriate staff members for closer scrutiny.

In four states, it is the job (in part) of staff funded by State Improvement Grants (SIGs) to review the literature/research in designated topic areas. In two of these states, research-validated practices are identified through SIG partnerships with institutions of higher education (IHEs). For example, Rhode Island used SIG money to fund a full-time faculty member from Rhode Island College to develop a research-validated curriculum for diverse learners. The other two states in this analysis also rely on their IHEs to identify research-validated practices, though not specifically as part of a SIG. New York funded the Higher Education Support Center for Systems Change at Syracuse University with Part B discretionary money to coordinate a network of in-state IHEs that are involved in personnel development and research.

Two states described how general education initiatives provide capacity and infrastructure for identifying research-validated practices. In Alabama, the Reading Initiative and Reading First grants work collaboratively with the SIG to identify and promote research-validated reading activities across the state. Kansas has strong linkages between general and special education in the area of early childhood research-validated practices and is developing linkages in the areas of reading and literacy. The Kansas interviewees believe that emphasis on research-validated practices in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is helping to strengthen these linkages in all areas.

General and special education technical assistance networks and support systems enhance the capacity of SEAs to identify research-validated practices. New York has a Special Education Training and Resource Center (funded with Part B discretionary money) in every intermediate district, as well as networks in the five largest cities. These centers are connected to, and coordinate with, the Regional Support Services Centers that were funded with Title I money and continued through NCLB. Kansas has a statewide network of subcontractors called Kansas Statewide Technical Assistance Resource System (KSTARS) that provide leadership, direction and expertise in the area of research-validated practices. The Rhode Island Technical Assistance Project (RITAP) currently has seven topic-related resource centers (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorders Support Center) for personnel development and technical assistance that also identify research-validated practices. Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) in Texas provide statewide leadership and technical assistance in various topic areas (e.g., transition, assistive technology, parental involvement, positive behavior support) and are responsible for identifying research-validated practices in those areas.

Interviewees from two states noted that local education agencies (LEAs) also identify research-validated practices and bring this information to the attention of SEA staff or staff working with one of the technical assistance or support networks described above. One interviewee reported that parents sometimes inform LEAs about a research-validated practice being used in another state. The LEA then determines if this is a viable model for use in its state.

### ***Sources of Information about Research-Validated Practices***

States obtain information about research-validated practices from a variety of sources, including OSEP-funded initiatives, experts in the field, institutions of higher education (IHEs), print materials and professional networks. The six states that were part of this analysis cited at least two and up to seven sources. Concerns were voiced about the quantity of information available in print and electronic format (referred to as “information overload”) and the associated challenge of sorting out quality information.<sup>1</sup>

The most frequently mentioned source was OSEP and the OSEP Technical Assistance and Dissemination Network (6 states). Some specific examples provided were the Regional Resource Center workgroups and the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC). Five states noted that nationally known experts/consultants are good sources of information.

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<sup>1</sup> Directors of State Improvement Grants (SIGS) reported similar sources of research-validated practices and concerns (Fiore, Puma, & Raphael, 2002).

Four states cited journals, reports and other print materials, while three states cited conferences and/or national organizations (e.g., the Council for Exceptional Children; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development). Other sources of information on research-validated practices mentioned by one or two states include IHEs, World Wide Web, successful models/initiatives in the state and across the country, private schools, the U.S. Department of Education and its general education initiatives (e.g., the Regional Educational Laboratories), professional networks (formal and informal), and non-education sources (e.g., business materials).

### ***Strategies and Methods for Scaling Up***

The six states involved in this analysis use multiple strategies and methods for scaling up. Four states described strategies that focus specifically on developing local expertise to support the scaling up of a particular research-validated practice in a variety of ways. For example, in Hawaii, there is a large-scale training of educators from around the state (the “roll out”) and these educators are expected to fine-tune the material for local implementation. In New York, an SEA-supported center based at an IHE provides technical assistance (through in-state and out-of-state consultants) to help LEAs learn to conduct root cause analysis (i.e., identify specific problem areas for the LEA), implement research-validated practices and collect data on scaling up progress. In the words of one interviewee, “school staff must have experts at their fingertips.” National and state experts are often hired to do initial training, consultation or development of materials, but the goal is for regional or local educators to “do” the scaling up. One interviewee explained that LEAs are energized when expert consultants come to work directly with them; attendance at a conference presentation by the same expert does not have the same effect.

The state and regional technical assistance networks and support systems that participate in the identification of research-validated practices (discussed previously in this document) are a mechanism for disseminating research-validated practices in four states. For example, in Kansas KSTARS plays an important role in scaling up, as do the ESCs in Texas. Strategies include workshops and customized face-to-face follow up. The SIG provides a mechanism for scaling up in Alabama, where a large part of the grant is used for training teachers in effective instructional strategies. Rhode Island uses its four collaboratives (intermediate units) to help scale up research-validated practices and is beginning to use its SIG as a vehicle for scaling up by sending staff to schools in need of improvement to work with teachers on implementing research-validated practices.

The state IHEs are often a source of experts or consultants for scaling up efforts and faculty provide in-service professional development related to these efforts. However, several states involved in this analysis also coordinate with their IHEs to scale up through teacher preparation programs. For example, Texas has the Higher Education Collaborative (HEC) through which scaling up materials, training and follow-up support are provided to IHEs. Essentially this is a “train the trainer” model, where faculty members are trained by the HEC project staff to implement scaling up initiatives. In this way, new teachers graduate with the same knowledge base as veteran teachers who have been involved with the scaling up initiative in the field. According to interviewees, this strategy not only broadens the scaling up efforts, but also makes new teachers more marketable in the state. Similarly, in Alabama when the SEA conducts

trainings for trainers who will be scaling up at the regional and local levels, IHE faculties are invited to participate. The intention is for IHEs to incorporate the training material into their teacher preparation courses. New York's Higher Education Support Center at Syracuse University coordinates a network of the state IHEs that are involved in personnel development and helps the SEA disseminate information on research-validated practices beyond the IHE network as well.

Honoring and showcasing successful scaling up efforts are also strategies used to broaden the effort. For example, Texas recognizes stakeholders at all levels (e.g., teachers, principals and superintendents) when a scaling up initiative is successful. Also, funds are available to send educators to visit successful sites and to send educators from successful sites to other locations to encourage scaling up.

Alabama and Rhode Island fund demonstration sites or pilot projects around their states to launch scaling up efforts. State funding is usually faded out over a period of several years. In Alabama, the goal is to have sites that demonstrate the spectrum of scaling up initiatives so that schools and LEAs that are interested in implementing research-validated practices can observe them in real settings.

Five of the six states use electronic methods to disseminate information about research-validated practices to enhance their scaling up strategies. Examples include website posting of information about particular research-validated practices, electronic newsletters and CDs featuring research-validated practices. Print materials (e.g., newsletters, handbooks and guidelines) are used in the same fashion. In addition, states support and enhance scaling up efforts by presenting research-validated practices at conferences/meetings convened for other purposes (e.g., leadership institutes).

### ***Documenting Results of Scaling up Efforts***

The topic of documenting the results of statewide scaling up efforts generated much discussion. The general consensus is that documenting results is not easy to do, but systematic collection of outcome data (versus implementation data) is part of the process in four of the six states in this analysis. For example, in Alabama, every school that participates in a scaling up initiative is required to collect data. State-wide data are disaggregated and school-level graphs and charts are made available to allow school staff to examine the effectiveness of the school's efforts. Outcome data are also presented at state meetings and conferences. Funds awarded to LEAs in Kansas for innovation (scaling up) must be used, in part, to evaluate the innovation effort and these data are then used by the state to determine if future funds should be directed towards similar innovation projects.

In addition to collecting data in New York, results of scaling up efforts are frequently documented in reports and presentations to the Board of Regents. Content experts may be asked to give or assist with such presentations. Reporting to this Board is an important part of the scaling up process in New York and helps ensure its continuity.

Child-level outcome data are not the only results that states find valuable. SEA interviewees also said that *hearing* service providers talk positively about scaling up efforts and *observing* that state organizations (e.g., parent groups) are addressing the scaled-up topic is important qualitative evidence. In Rhode Island, an important result of the state's autism scaling up effort was the opening of a classroom that uses research-validated practices in a part of the state where such a classroom had not previously existed.

Interviewees pointed out several challenges to documenting results of scaling up efforts. One challenge is the lack of understanding at the school level of the value of on-going data collection. For example, service providers may believe that the data are not important for their work because they rely on personal observations. Another challenge is the multitude of factors that may be causing change (positive or negative) related to the scaling up effort. For example, increased reading scores following a reading initiative could be due to any number of reasons and controlled studies are typically not done. LEAs usually volunteer to participate in scaling up activities and LEAs that don't volunteer may be different along a number of dimensions. A third challenge is ensuring that the program has matured enough to document results of the scaling up effort.

### ***Facilitators of Scaling Up***

Although scaling up takes deliberate and concerted effort, interviewees from all six states identified factors or variables that facilitate the process. In all six states, *buy-in* is reportedly an important facilitator. In this context, buy-in refers to key stakeholders embracing the designated educational reform and committing to scaling up that reform. A variety of key stakeholders and stakeholder groups were mentioned, including parents, building administrators, teachers, legal staff and local education agencies (LEAs). For example, the Kansas SEA set up state-level stakeholder groups called *issue teams* to create guiding principles and major recommendations in specified issue/topic areas. Examples of issue/topic areas include pre-referral intervention and student eligibility determination/assessment. Policy decisions and changes are based on the teams' principles and recommendations. Involving the issue teams at the beginning of the process facilitates scaling up.

During discussions about buy-in, interviewees used such terms as *consumer-identified need*, *locally-identified need*, and *grassroots need*. They explained that if the need for a particular educational reform is identified at the local level, there is automatic buy-in. In the words of one SEA representative, "It is important to involve parents and all stakeholders in the process as critical players...[Scaling up] cannot be a top down process."

All interviewees reported that scaling up is facilitated by adequate resources—for example, funds for personnel and funds to support/enhance data collection capacity. One interviewee pointed out that adequate resources are needed to support the state's existing scaling up infrastructure and another said that the SEA is required to earmark resources for scaling up innovative practices.

In Alabama, funds to hire skilled/knowledgeable staff to support the scaling up effort at the LEA and school levels have facilitated the process. Two additional states also mentioned the

importance of developing local expertise to scale up research-validated practices, although not specifically related to adequate resources. In Rhode Island, local expertise means having a school-based staff person committed in time and responsibility to the scaling up effort. This staff person must convene a multi-stakeholder team (e.g., parents, teachers and students, if appropriate) that “owns” the scaling up effort, is involved in every stage of the process and is committed to its success. In the words of the interviewee, “The team must will this to happen...the team builds momentum and it [scaling up] takes on a life of its own.”

Several other local factors were also mentioned. Texas found that providing opportunities for local customization—a menu of options, so that every LEA or school is not required to scale up in exactly the same way—could facilitate scaling up. In Kansas, having data available to answer the “what if” questions facilitates scaling up. For example, in regard to non-categorical identification, once one LEA had data to document that this identification process did NOT increase the percentage of students identified as disabled, the scaling up continued in this area. Local follow up support in the form of materials and “refresher courses”—for example, one year after initiating a scaling up effort—also was reported to facilitate scaling up.

Another facilitator of the scaling up process is strong support from key individuals at the policy and administrative levels, and from agencies and organizations. Two states specifically mentioned the importance of support from the governor and legislature. Two other states noted that firm commitment at the SEA level is crucial for scaling up success (e.g., involvement of state director of special education at each stage of the process). The New York SEA, for example, is very focused on its goals and data related to achievement of those goals, which facilitates scaling up in goal areas and need areas as identified by data.

One state reported that support from OSEP-funded technical assistance and dissemination centers facilitates the scaling up process, as does support from state chapters of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and Council for Administrators of Special Education (CASE).

Two states specifically described how it is necessary to understand the change process in order to facilitate scaling up. There must be a mechanism to move people through the change process. In Hawaii, scaling up starts at the “awareness level,” meaning that school-level personnel are provided with comprehensive information about the initiative before implementation is expected to begin. Interviewees from Kansas cautioned “belief follows practice”—after people have had the opportunity to implement the practice, they are more likely to “own” and believe in the practice. They said that change at the individual level is a necessary part of the scaling up process. Also, it is necessary to have a common way to talk about the scaling up process (i.e., common terminology).

### ***Barriers to Scaling Up***

The most commonly reported barrier to scaling up is the lack of understanding that scaling up requires extensive and sustained support and resources. This lack of understanding is reflected in the assignment of multiple responsibilities to personnel who are responsible for the scaling up effort; inadequate school-level professional development; and insufficient time for meetings, conferences and workshops. In the words of one interviewee, “Scaling up is hard work.”

Reflecting back on comments about facilitators of scaling up, several interviewees pointed out that one barrier is the lack of local buy-in or locally-identified need. This barrier is characterized by remarks such as “This is not a problem in my school (or district).”

Interviewees from two states noted that perceptions of individuals create barriers. For example, teachers may perceive that the scaling up effort is a criticism of their judgment or “tried and true” methods of teaching. One interviewee remarked, “Those who really need to be involved [in the scaling up effort] are often not there.” The perceptions that the scaling up effort is a “fad” or that the state has competing activities/priorities that are not linked also create barriers.

State geographic factors and demographic diversity also create challenges/barriers for scaling up efforts. For example, the state of Hawaii is comprised of many islands, which makes it more difficult and more expensive to provide professional development and follow-up support. The diversity of the LEAs within a state, in terms of racial/ethnic characteristics, socio-economic factors, size, etc. also must be addressed in order for scaling up efforts to be successful.

### ***Topics and Ease of Scaling Up***

When interviewees were asked specifically if some topic areas are/were harder or easier to scale up than others, they had a variety of reactions. Two states replied that scaling up in areas where the research findings are inconsistent and controversial (e.g., autism) is more difficult. Also, scaling up is more difficult when the topic area may generate social or political conflict (e.g., deafness). One state director explained that scaling up is easier if it does not require major attitudinal or philosophical change—for example, scaling up related to parent/school relationships would likely be difficult. Another interviewee said that scaling up in a topic area that requires significant interagency collaboration (e.g., secondary transition) is more difficult than a topic area that does not (e.g., reading). Also, scaling up in a topic area that is directed at one school level (e.g., reading at the elementary level) is reportedly easier than scaling up efforts that must be “re-packaged” for multiple levels—elementary, middle and secondary.

Two states reported that topic areas related to those emphasized in NCLB (e.g., teacher quality, reading readiness) garner more support and are easier to scale up.

Two states felt that the topic area was less important than other factors and the confluence of those factors (see facilitators and barriers section). In the words of one SEA staff person, “Timing is everything.”

### ***Prominent State Scaling up Efforts***

During the course of the interviews, state representatives described prominent scaling up efforts in their states. In four of the six states, reading is the most prominent effort or one of the most prominent. Two states indicated that efforts in the area of positive behavior support (PBS) are prominent. Other examples of prominent scaling up efforts are non-categorical identification of disabilities and racial/ethnic disproportionality in the population of students receiving special

education services. For more information about prominent state scaling up efforts, including the impetus for these efforts, see Appendix A.

### ***Looking Ahead to Future Scaling up Efforts***

The SEA staff interviewed for this analysis all anticipate that scaling up will be an integral part of SEA work in the future. They were divided, however, as to whether past experiences will make future scaling up easier. One state interviewee explained that the process will be easier because the infrastructure is in place, including the capacity to collect and analyze data related to success of scaling up efforts. In another state, future scaling up is expected to be easier because staff is aware of the barriers and challenges and LEAs know the process.

On the other hand, knowing what to expect does not always make it easier. As one interviewee said, “It’s like having a second child—it’s not really easier, but you know what to expect.” Interviewees emphasized that successful scaling up is hard work. In the words of one interviewee, “Scaling up is a multi-faceted process and takes a lot of effort. [It] takes careful thought and careful planning.”

Several state representatives expressed concerns about the continued availability of funds to support scaling up efforts. Although legislators and policymakers have an increasing understanding of the importance of scaling up research-validated practices, it is unclear what the future will bring in terms of financial and budgetary commitments to scaling up.

### ***Federal Role in Scaling Up***

Interviewees from all six states see a role for the federal government in the scaling up process. A role described by four states was identifying and validating research-validated practices in the following ways:

- funding research centers;
- spearheading national initiatives (e.g., Learning Disabilities Summit);
- focusing funding in areas of greatest need; and
- separating the “good from the bad” (e.g., What Works Clearinghouse).

Four states also described a role for the federal government in disseminating research-validated practices:

- funding technical assistance centers (e.g., RRCs and content-specific centers); and
- organizing presentations at U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) conferences/meetings.

Three states described using federal State Improvement Grant (SIG) funds to support the scaling up process in a variety of ways.

Other comments related to the federal role included flexibility in use of federal funds for state scaling up initiatives, targeted federal funds for scaling up in states that have persistent problem areas, and dissemination of research-validated practices by the USDOE in systematic and user-friendly ways.

### Summary

Project Forum interviewed representatives from six state departments of special education about the process of scaling up research-validated practices. The process begins with the identification of these practices, using specially designed and existing infrastructures within the state. General and special education funds, technical assistance networks and other state support systems enhance a state's capacity to identify research-validated practices. States obtain information about research-validated practices from a variety of sources, including OSEP-funded initiatives, experts in the field, institutions of higher education (IHEs), print materials and professional networks.

States use multiple strategies and methods for scaling up, including consulting with nationally recognized experts and developing local experts who support the scaling up of a particular research-validated practice. Electronic communication and media are commonly used to augment other methods. The scaling up process is greatly facilitated if there is cross-stakeholder *buy-in*, meaning that decision makers, administrators, parents and service providers embrace the designated educational reform and are committed to scaling it up. In addition, there must be adequate resources for personnel who initially introduce the research-validated practices and personnel who support the scaling up effort over the long term. Easy access to local expertise and having options for local customization also facilitate the scaling up process.

One of the greatest barriers to scaling up is the lack of understanding that the process requires extensive and sustained support and resources. State geographic factors and demographic diversity may also create barriers and challenges for scaling up efforts. Although states understand that the collection of outcome data (vs. implementation data) must be built in and its value emphasized, documenting the results of scaling up efforts presents challenges. These challenges include collecting "good" data at the local level, separating change due to the scaling up effort from change due to other factors, and allowing sufficient time to pass before results of the scaling up effort are measured.

State interviewees anticipate that scaling up research-validated practices will be an essential part of SEA work in the future and they expect the federal government to support these efforts in a variety of ways. There is, however, concern about adequate resources to insure that scaling up efforts are successful.

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## Appendix A

### Prominent State Scaling up Efforts

*During the telephone interviews, SEA representatives were asked about the most prominent scaling up efforts in their states. Below is a summary of responses to this question.*

#### Alabama

Alabama's scaling up efforts are focused in the areas of beginning reading and positive behavior support. Both efforts began when the State Improvement Grant (SIG) was funded in 1999. These areas were selected because they were "need areas" in the state and research-validated practices existed. Scaling up efforts were directed at the elementary level, which has been reinforced by the Reading First grant from the federal government.

#### Hawaii

Hawaii's most prominent scaling up effort is in the area of *differentiated instruction*. Teachers who differentiate instruction use varied approaches for curriculum, instruction and assessment that promote learning opportunities and outcomes across learning environments for all students. This effort is relatively new, but is intended to be multi-year. To date, scaling up activities have been at the awareness level—providing information about differentiated instruction. Training modules are being developed to scale up at the school and eventually at the classroom level.

#### Kansas

The most prominent scaling up activity in Kansas is non-categorical identification of students with disabilities, including revising the evaluation process so that it focuses on functional assessment. This is a team-based problem-solving process, starting in the pre-referral stage by assessing the student's needs and providing intervention before deciding that the general education setting cannot meet that student's needs. The scaling up effort began in the early 1990s and was incorporated into the SEA's management plan. This effort reflected a national trend at the time and made sense to a staff that was looking for a better and more "relevant" special education model. It gave LEAs permission to look at special education differently and to innovate. Scaling up strategies and methods have been revised over time to meet the state's needs.

#### New York

New York has six long-term goals that were set in 1996. These goals were set after considerable cross-stakeholder debate. Progress on each goal is measured by performance gains. All scaling up efforts emanate from these state goals and funds are allocated based on data from the six goals. Reading and math efforts are most prominent because the state has been engaged in these efforts the longest. In the area of positive behavior support, scaling up efforts are widespread and concepts have been introduced that were not known to many educators previously, but many more resources are needed in this area. Racial/ethnic disproportionality in the population of students receiving special education services is a topic imbedded in one of the state's six goals.

In this area, scaling up efforts focus on giving LEAs the tools and skills they need to make data-based decisions.

### Rhode Island

Reading is a prominent scaling up effort throughout the Rhode Island Department of Education, backed by strong legislative support. This effort is collaborative in that a number of different offices and funding streams are supporting it. The state is training cohorts of more than 300 elementary teachers on performance-based reading assessment and is planning to use federal Reading First funds to buy Palm Pilots for all K-3 reading teachers and special education resource teachers so they will be able to maintain electronic records of reading performance and progress over time. Reading fellows— LEA educators on loan for two or three years to the SEA—work with low-performing schools and school improvement teams to help teachers apply what they have learned in workshop sessions.

### Texas

Reading is the most prominent scaling up effort in Texas because much reading research is being done in the state. Also, the former governor, George W. Bush, had a reading initiative and the legislature appropriated considerable funds for the re-tooling of teachers' and administrators' skills in the area of reading. In addition to professional development, this scaling up effort includes early screening (K-2) for reading problems, summer school and reading enrichment programs. Although the special education unit was not initially involved in the reading initiative, this unit built on the larger scaling up effort by developing professional development materials for teachers and administrators who serve elementary and secondary students who struggle with reading and working on reading programs for students with visual impairments and hearing impairments. The second most prominent scaling up effort is in the area of positive behavior support (PBS), spurred on by a change in legislation that eliminated the use of locked time out<sup>2</sup> in schools. An on-going special education PBS effort caught the attention of general education because of its relevance to all students and one initiative is building on the other.

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<sup>2</sup> "Locked time out" refers to seclusion in a locked room for a period of time.