Challenges in Evaluating Specialized Instructional Support Personnel

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Center on
**GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS**
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Collaboration: Working Together for All Students

- Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) play an important role in ensuring student success through support for students and educators within multi-tiered systems of support.

- The interdisciplinary nature of specialized support services requires SISP to serve in multiple capacities across a range of educational contexts.

Evaluating Specialized Instructional Support Personnel

- Supplement to the Practical Guide for Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems
- Design considerations for SISP (e.g. school counselors, speech therapists, school psychologists, nurses)
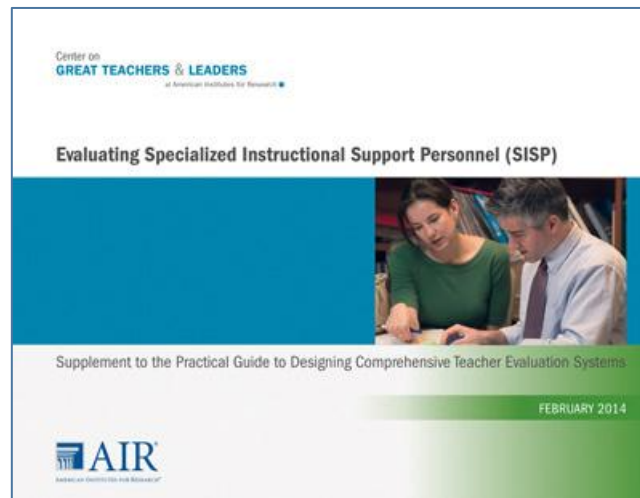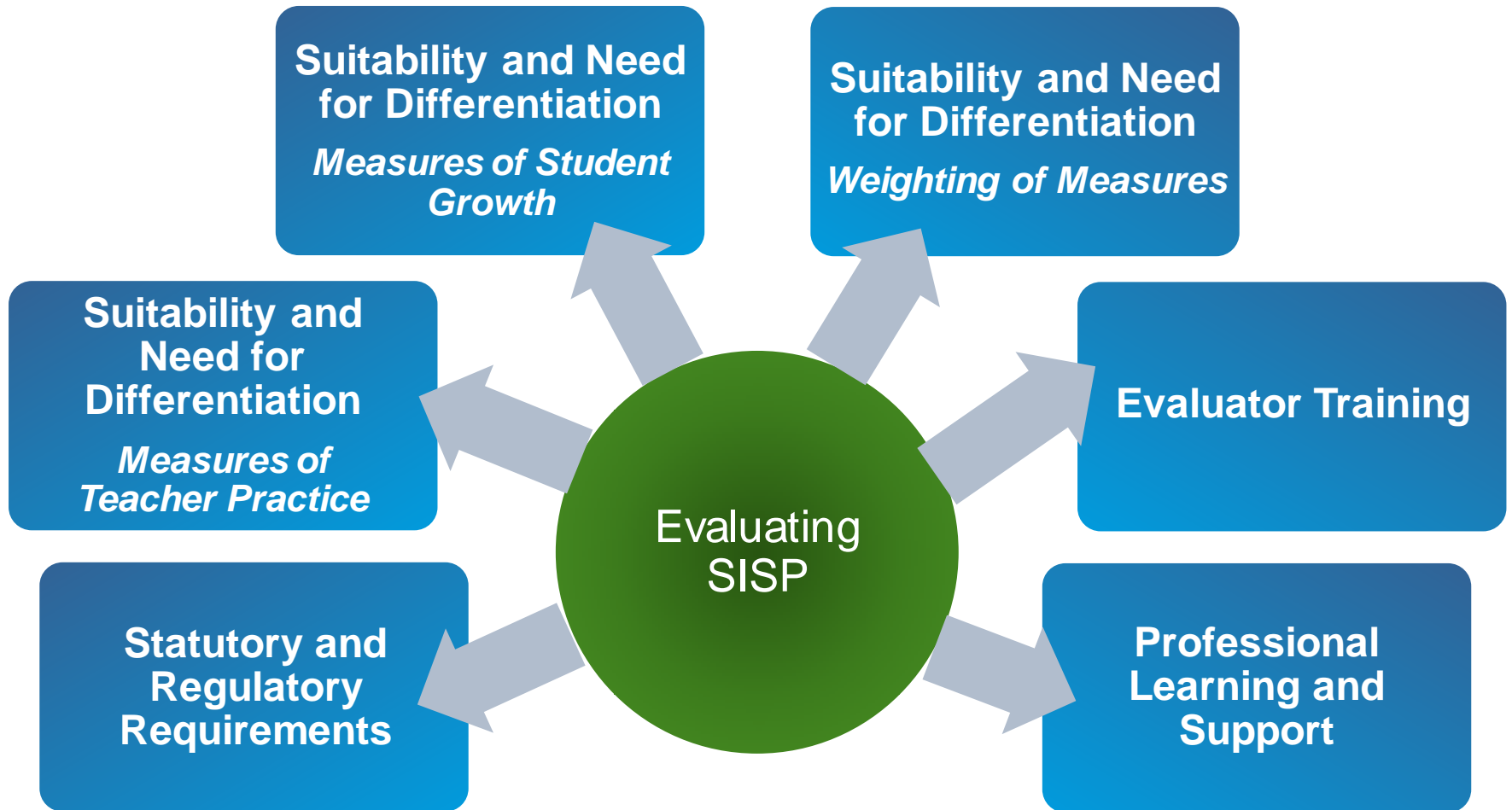
Feedback and Support

- *National Coalition of Shortages in Special Education and Related Services Providers*

- *American Occupational Therapy Association*

- *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association*

- Sarah Hall, South Central Comprehensive Center at the University of Oklahoma

- Kimberly Hymes, Council for Exceptional Children

- Leslie James, Nevada Department of Education

- Tara Myers, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research

- *National Association of School Nurses*

- *National Association of School Psychologists*

- *School Social Work Association of America*

Who are SISP?

- Related Services Personnel under IDEA, 2004
- Pupil Services Personnel under ESEA, 2002
- National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP)

- Art therapy services
- Dance/movement therapy services
- Educational audiology services
- Music therapy services
- Occupational therapy services
- Physical therapy services
- Psychological services
- Pupil services administrators
- School counselor services
- School nurse services
- School social work services
- Speech-language pathology services

Elements of Consideration

Suitability and Need for Differentiation

Measures of Student Growth

Suitability and Need for Differentiation

Weighting of Measures

Suitability and Need for Differentiation

Measures of Teacher Practice

Evaluator Training

Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

Evaluating SISP

Professional Learning and Support

Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

- Inclusion and exclusion criteria
  - Other Licensed Personnel
  - Non-Instructional Staff
  - Teaching Professional vs. Non-teaching Professional
- Definition of teacher

Online Resource: [Examples of State Regulations Governing SISP Evaluations](#)

Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

STATUTORY/ REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

1. Has the state determined what personnel are to be included in the educator evaluation system?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What personnel, by law, are required to be included in the new educator evaluation models?
- Is the law sufficiently specific, or is greater clarity needed?
- If the law specifically mentions teachers, does the statute clearly define "teacher"?
- If the law mentions noninstructional staff, are personnel specifically listed?
- If the law indicates certified or licensed personnel, is more clarity needed to account for those who provide direct services to students versus those who do not?
- Does the certifying/licensing agency determine those who are to be included under the statute?
- Does the statute allow districts to evaluate personnel, other than those listed within the statute, with locally determined measures not governed or monitored by the state?
- Is enough local flexibility provided in the evaluation of SISP to ensure accurate assessment of the knowledge and skills specific to their work?
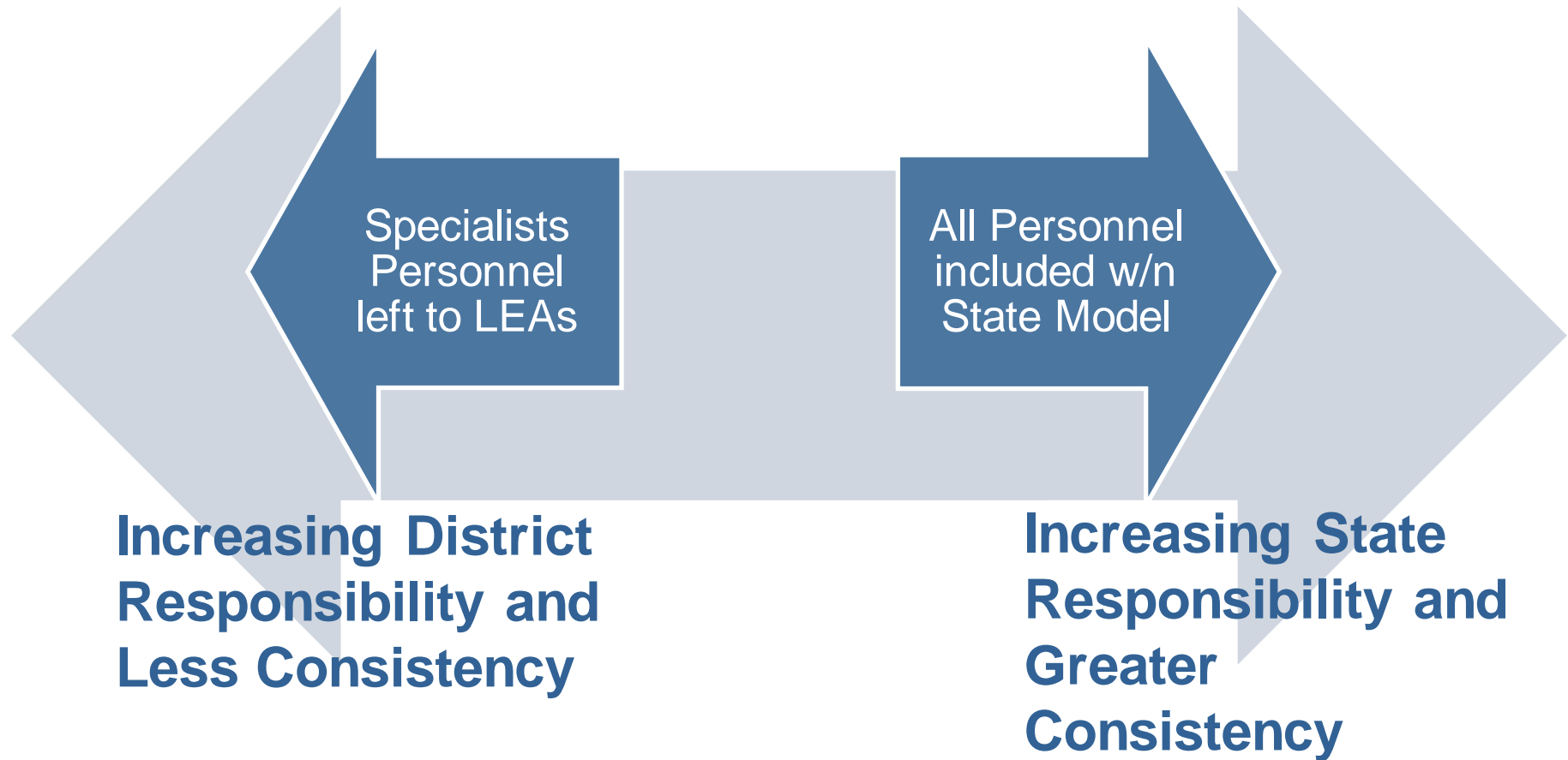- How are part-time SISP included in performance evaluations?

FLEXIBILITY

2. Does the state allow for flexibility in the inclusion of SISP into educator evaluation?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What personnel are required by law to be included in the new educator evaluation models? Are there personnel critical to providing supports and services to students that districts are not compelled to include?
- Are personnel not included who are critical to employing a multitiered system of support?
- Will excluding certain personnel from the requirements of the educator evaluation model generate pushback or a sense of unfairness?
- Are there personnel who are employed by a cooperative and/or county system, rather than by a school or district?
- In situations in which SISP work for multiple schools or districts, who is responsible for conducting and reporting educator evaluation results?
- Is there any policy that prevents the inclusion of additional personnel into the educator evaluation model?
- Are personnel specifically mentioned by the regulations excluded from participation?

NOTES

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State Versus District Roles: Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Specialists Personnel left to LEAs

All Personnel included w/n State Model

Increasing District Responsibility and Less Consistency

Increasing State Responsibility and Greater Consistency

Grouping

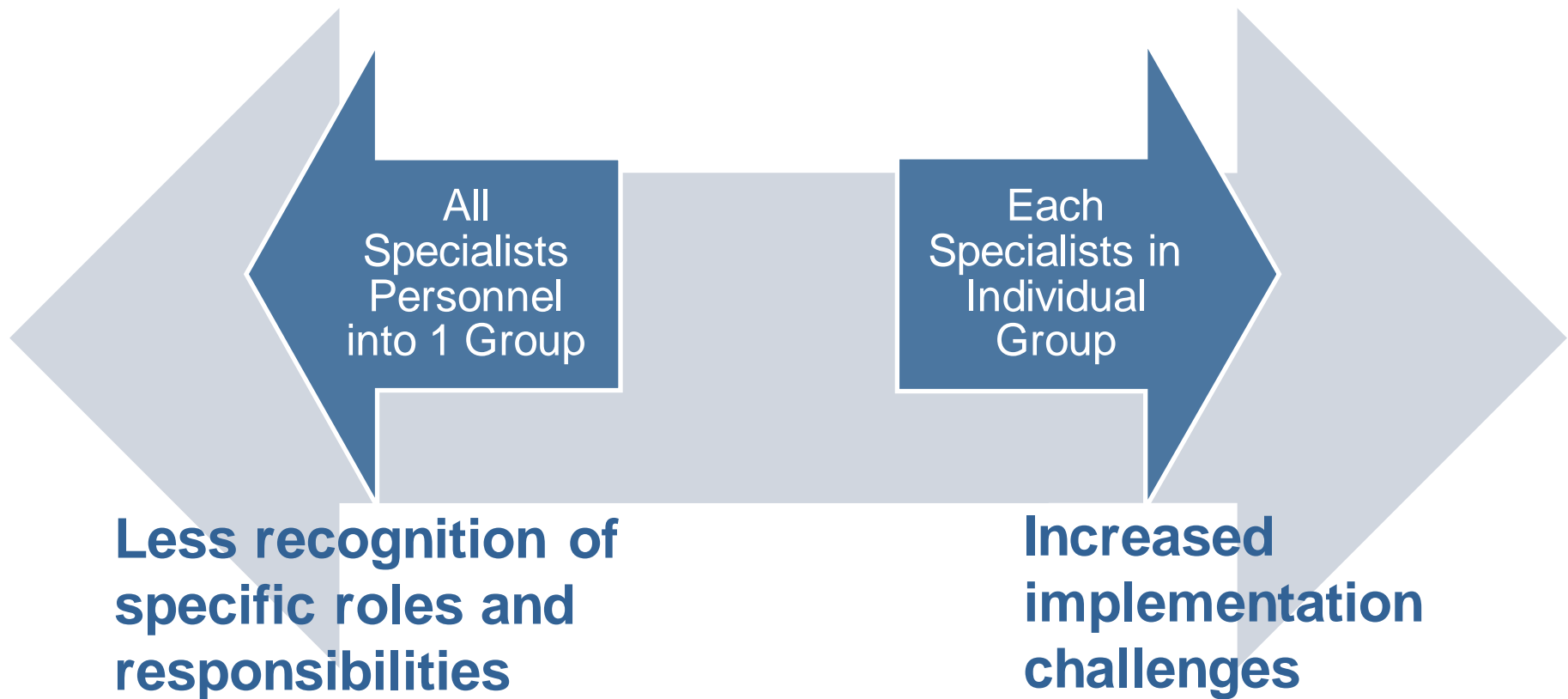- ## Florida State Department of Education

  - **Student Services Personnel:**
    - School counselors
    - School social workers
    - School psychologists
    - School nurses
  - **Specialized Exceptional Student Education Professionals:**
    - Behavior specialists
    - Occupational/physical therapists
    - Speech-language pathologists
    - Staffing specialists

- ## Nevada DOE

  Group 3 Criteria (defined by FUNCTION)

  - Licensed by NDE
    - AND
  - Teacher/Educator who serves as "Instructional Support" because they spend not more than 50% of their work year providing instruction to learners
    - OR
  - Educational Personnel who spend at least 50% of their work year providing student level and/or system level educational services that support students to access and/or process the curriculum to meet the academic standards

State Versus District Roles: Grouping

All Specialists Personnel into 1 Group

Each Specialists in Individual Group

Less recognition of specific roles and responsibilities

Increased implementation challenges

Importance of Professional Standards

- **Professional Standards:**
  - Guide best practice
  - Represent current research
  - Are developed by expert practitioners/researchers
- **Purpose of Evaluations:**
  - Improve performance
  - Improve student outcomes
- **Both are enhanced by input from the field.**

Suitability and Need for Differentiation: Measures of Teacher Practice

- **Modification of performance rubrics that:**
  - Align with current research-based practices and national association standards (as available)
  - Meet the requirements of the respective state statutes and regulations
  - Reflect SISP functions, practices, and responsibilities

- **Online Resource: [Sample Performance/Observation Rubrics for SISP and Specialized Rubrics by Discipline](#)**

ONLINE RESOURCE

Sample Performance/Observation Rubrics for SISP and Specialized Rubrics by Discipline

Curious about how other states have developed or modified rubrics? We created an online compilation of state and district performance or observation rubrics for SISP.

http://www.gtlcenter.org/content/examples-state-and-district-rubrics-used-evaluate-specialized-instructional-support

Suitability and Need for Differentiation: Measures of Student Growth

- Recognize the diverse ways in which SISP:
  - Facilitate, support, and enhance student participation, engagement, and progress in the general education curriculum
  - Provide other less direct or distal services to support students
    - A speech-language pathologist who teaches a student how to utilize an augmentative communication device
    - A school social worker who practices metacognition and self-advocacy strategies with a student with a reading disability

Online Resource: Sample Approaches for Including Measures of Student Growth for SISP

ONLINE RESOURCE

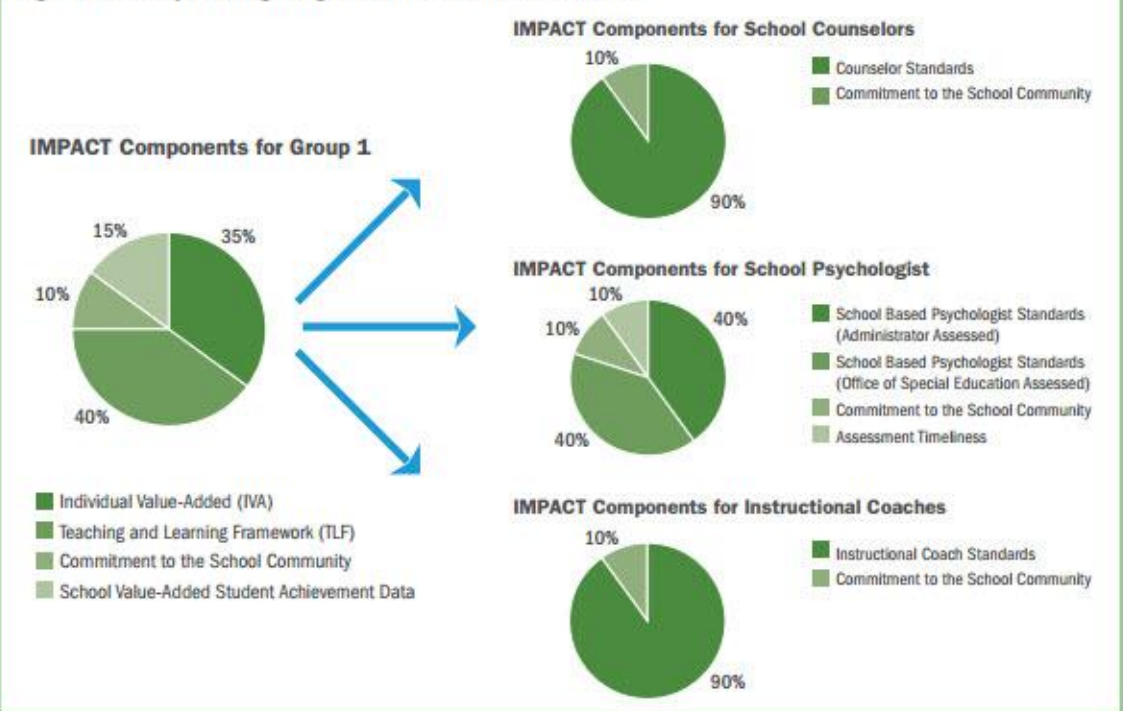Sample Approaches for Including Measures of Student Growth for SISP

Interested in seeing some of these approaches in practice? We created an online compilation of state-level approaches for measuring student growth for SISP.

http://www.gtlcenter.org/content/sample-approaches-including-measures-student-growth-specialized-instructional-support
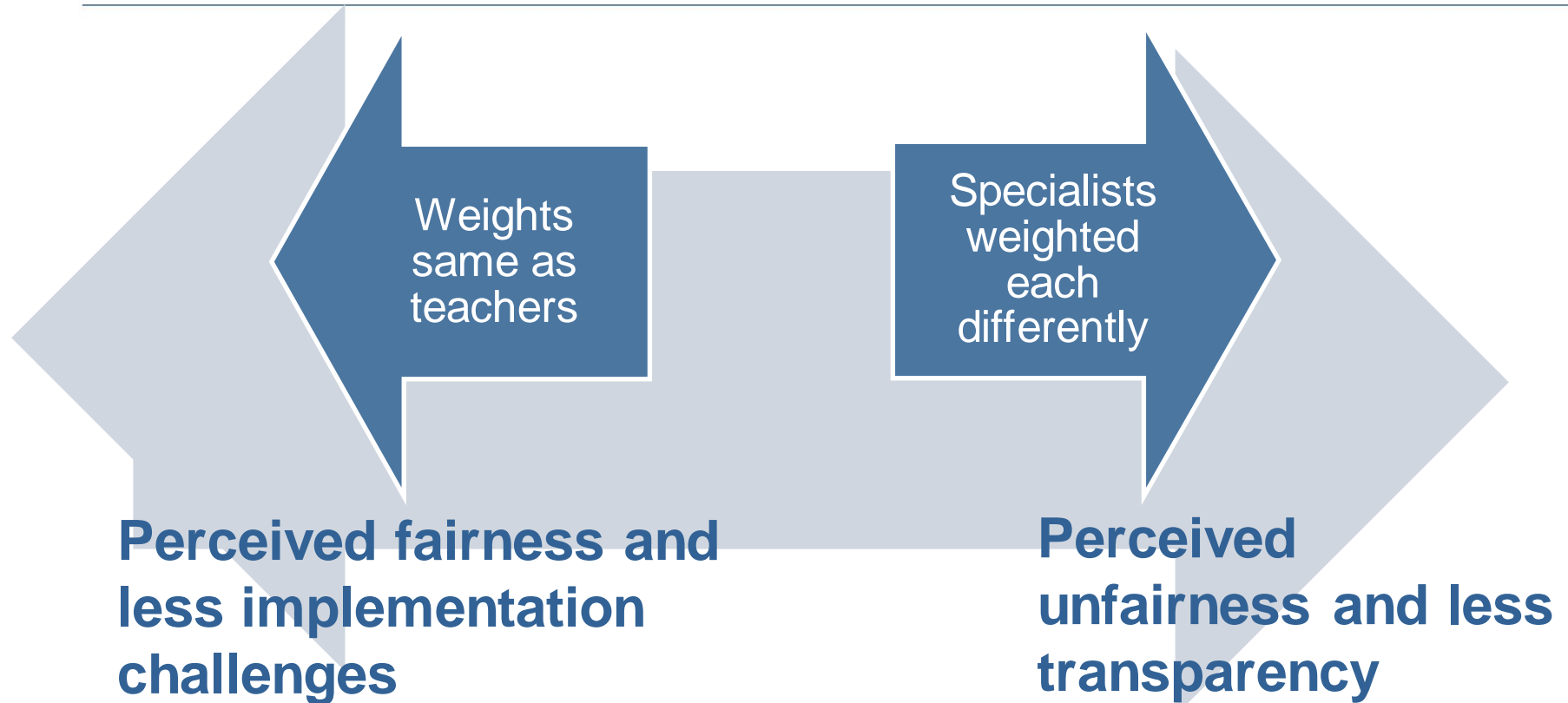
Suitability and Need for Differentiation: Weighting of Measures

- Use and weight of multiple measures varies according to SISP roles and validity of measures

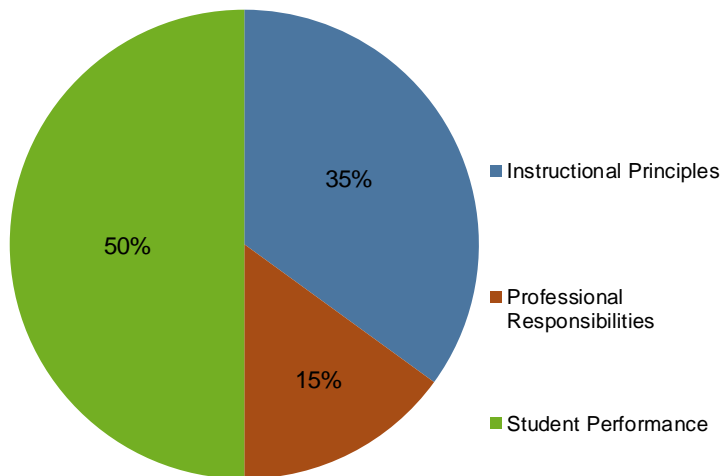Figure 1. Example: Weighting Measures in SISP Evaluation

State Versus District Roles: Weighting

Weights same as teachers

Specialists weighted each differently

Perceived fairness and less implementation challenges

Perceived unfairness and less transparency

Weighting

- **Nevada Department of Education**

Total Evaluation: Sample Group 1 Teacher Weighting

Pie chart legend:
- Instructional Principles — 35%
- Professional Responsibilities — 15%
- Student Performance — 50%

- **Teaching Professional with Unique Roles**
  - 25% Instructional Standards
  - 25% Professional Responsibilities Standards

- **Specialized Educational Professionals**
  - 15% Professional Practice Standards
  - 35% Professional Responsibilities Standards

Evaluator Training

- Explicit measurement and system design
- Specific evaluator training
- Peer evaluators

Professional Learning

- Evaluation systems designed to recognize the unique roles and responsibilities of SISP and aligned to the relevant national association standards are likely to move the profession toward best practice.

- Multiple measures offer different valuable results that can be triangulated to obtain a more complete picture of SISP professional learning needs.

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Advancing state efforts to grow, respect, and retain great teachers and leaders for all students