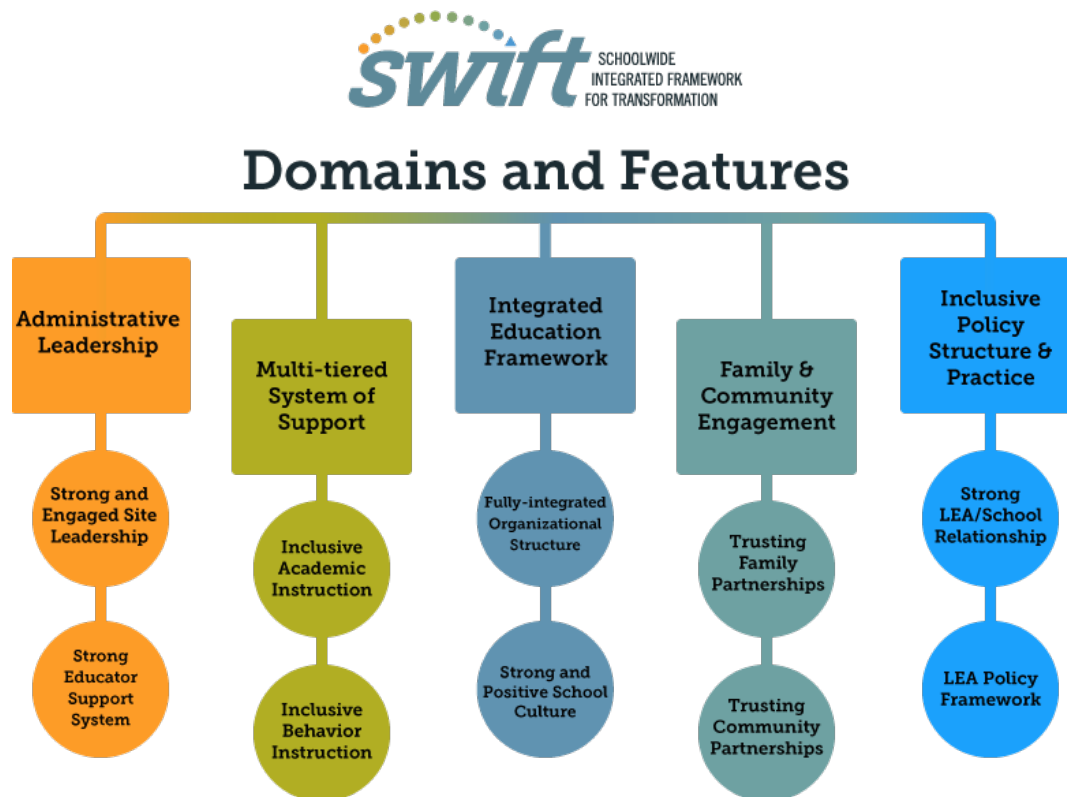


PROPOSAL**November 25, 2014****Title I National Survey Field Test on Effective Teaching Strategies and Programs**

The National Title I Association (NASTID) in partnership with the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)-funded SWIFT Center propose to develop and field test a survey tool to identify effective teaching strategies and programs that are successfully increasing academic and social outcomes in Title I Programs and that extend to students identified for special education. After the instrument is field tested, refined and validated on a stratified, limited sample of recipients (phase 1) we propose to administer it to a larger national sample on state-defined high performing schools (e.g. Reward Schools in flex waiver states) which serve a high proportion of Title I students (phase 2).

Today much of the guidance on effective practices is interpretive which can be beneficial as it allows for flexibility but can also limit impact if the teaching strategies and programs are not valid and reliable as determined by rigorous research methods. To begin to address this unintended consequence, this proposed survey would allow NASTID and NASDSE as well as the Offices of State Support (OSS) and OSEP to offer validated guidance and support to Title I Programs beginning with perspectival data from administrators including Title I and special education directors at the state level. The results from this database will enable NASTID and its partners to begin to formulate a strategy to examine actual data from successful schools linked to specific interventions and supports. The SWIFT domains and features are proposed as an organizational framework to underpin the survey. These domains and features constitute reasonable building blocks of effective inclusive education based on evidence from the extant research literature (e.g., Waldron, 2010; Sailor & McCart, 2014; Sailor, 2014). Research shows it takes administrative leadership, a multi-tiered system of support, family and community partnerships, an integrated educational framework, and inclusive policies and practices to accelerate student achievement, close achievement gaps between subgroups and the general student population and to effectively meet the needs of all students, including students with

disabilities and particularly those in need of the most extensive additional supports and services. The figure below provides graphic illustration of the SWIFT framework and its domains and critical features.



The goal of the proposed survey is to identify the current level of implementation of a core set of strategies focused on the SWIFT domains and features, initially with a pilot test in the high performing Title I *Distinguished Schools*, that can then act as a template or road map for instructional leaders (state commissioners, federal Title directors, special education directors, superintendents, principals and educators) as they make decisions on how to maximize the impact of their federal funds and develop coherence across funding streams. The database ultimately resulting from the national survey following the pilot test should provide an overview of the current landscape of the presence of these evidence-based features in successful Title I schools.

We understand that schools with different demographics (e.g., Urban, rural, vs. suburban; elementary, middle vs. high school; large vs. small; with vs. without certain student

subgroups, etc.) have different challenges to overcome. Personnel in challenged schools frequently ask, “Can you show me a school similar to mine that is outperforming mine so I can connect with them to find out what they are doing and how they are doing it?” The survey will be designed in part to address this request.

NASTID’s *Distinguished Schools* program offers the opportunity to conduct the field test of the proposed survey directed to schools that have shown sustained positive student performance and growth. We are proposing to use the schools identified in 2014 and 2015 as our pilot field sites. State directors in each state can then assist with the data collection and insure we have an equitable national representation. We anticipate contracting with a survey research center to develop the survey tool and field test it. A full survey using the questions refined after the pilot will be targeted to a broader national sample of administrators, selected with the help of Title I and special education state leaders. The data from this survey will result in a report with the potential to impact national, state and local policy decisions to guide pre-service teacher preparation and professional learning opportunities for existing teachers. Further, the data should assist directors and others to guide programming and assessment impacting Title I schools.

Expected Outcomes from the Survey:

1. *Field test (stage one).*

- Information on the perceived status of the presence and extent of SWIFT domains and features in the *Distinguished Schools’* program.
- Information on the perceived status of the impact of these features on students identified as economically disadvantaged as well as those in special education.

2. *National survey (stage two).*

- A refined survey tool based on preliminary field test results.
- Information on the perceived status of the presence and extent of SWIFT domains and features in an expanded, national sample of Title I schools stratified for geographical and demographic differences.

- Information on the perceived status of the impact of these features on students in the sample who are identified as economically disadvantaged and those identified for special education.
- The identification of core strategies based on results of the survey that could form a “roadmap” for school improvement in Title I schools.

REFERENCES

- Sailor, W., & McCart, A. (2014). Stars in alignment. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 39(1), 55-64. doi: 10.1177/1540796914534622
- Sailor, W. (2014). Advances in schoolwide inclusive school reform. *Remedial and Special Education, OnlineFirst*. doi: 10.1177/0741932514555021
- Waldron, N. L., & McLeskey, J. (2010). Establishing a collaborative school culture through comprehensive school reform. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 20(1), 58-74.