



**VERMONT PBIS**

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**ANNUAL REPORT 2020**



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
CENTER ON DISABILITY &  
COMMUNITY INCLUSION



**VERMONT**

AGENCY OF EDUCATION

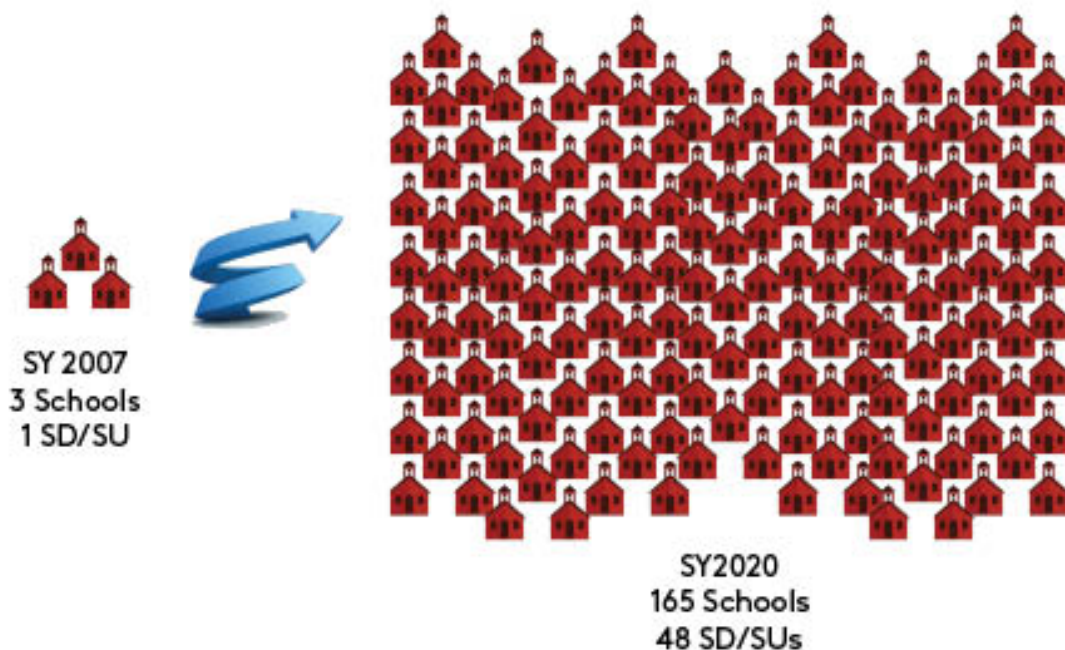
# INTRODUCTION

This VTPBIS Annual Report provides information about the context, input, fidelity, and impact of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in Vermont's schools. Also included is a status report on Vermont's efforts to sustain PBIS implementation, as well as a plan for sustainability into the future. Given the unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19, this report provides a rather unique analysis of the 2019-20 school year, a plan to continue acting upon last year's goals, and to add new goals that are most relevant to these times.

PBIS is a framework for preventing and responding to problem behavior within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS is a whole-school, data-driven, prevention-based framework for improving learning outcomes for EVERY student. Vermont's educational quality standards (EQS) require that schools have an MTSS in place for both behavior and academics. While the goal is for schools to build an MTSS framework for both academics and behavior, this report focuses on behavior and PBIS.



***From 2007 to 2020 the number of VTPBIS schools has grown from three to 165.***



The global pandemic has disrupted many aspects of our lives and, in particular, in education. Never before has there been such an urgent need to prioritize building and enhancing MTSS to support the social/emotional/behavioral and academic needs of students, educators, and families. On March 15th (and extended on March 26, 2020), the Governor directed and informed all Vermonters that public schools would transition to an online learning environment for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year as part of the state's comprehensive "Stay Home, Stay Safe" efforts. While schools were organizing the many and complex variables of distance learning in partnership with families, the VTPBIS State Team provided real-time resources and support to help educators promote effective social/emotional/behavioral learning and wellness at home. It was a critical time for developing and maintaining authentic connections and engagement with staff, students, and families. The VTPBIS State Team suspended business as usual and rallied to meet the multiple and diverse needs of schools through webinars, [sharing of resources](#), and [VTPBIS COVID-19 closure response contests](#).

Many VTPBIS schools are intentionally connecting the PBIS framework to meeting current needs during COVID-19.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, issues of racial justice also came to the forefront. Following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others

in the past, the BEST/VTPBIS State Team became acutely aware of our responsibility to interrupt racism by disrupting and addressing issues of inequity, hate, and bias in schools. We believe that Black lives matter and have agreed, as a State team, that we will:

- Engage in professional development about racism, bias, and white fragility in order to build greater awareness, sensitivity, and opportunities for reflection;
- Listen and learn from the educational experiences of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color;
- Embed the core components of equity and cultural responsiveness in all BEST/VTPBIS professional development and coaching in order to build equitable systems, policies, and practices in Vermont schools;
- Ensure that the systems and practices of PBIS include voice, choice, and ownership of all students, families, and staff;
- Promote professional development on social/emotional/behavioral learning strategies that are grounded in equity, honor different cultures, and teach anti-bias;
- Collect, analyze, problem solve, and act on fidelity and student outcome data in order to decrease disproportionality in Vermont schools; and
- Establish an equity action plan to be evaluated on an annual basis.

***"PBIS has meant the world to us as we have made the transition back to in-person learning. I have said a million times over the past three months that PBIS provides a perfect framework for us to articulate, teach, practice, and reinforce all of these new routines in our buildings."***  
**- Matt Young, Principal, Peoples Academy Middle School.**

# CONTEXT

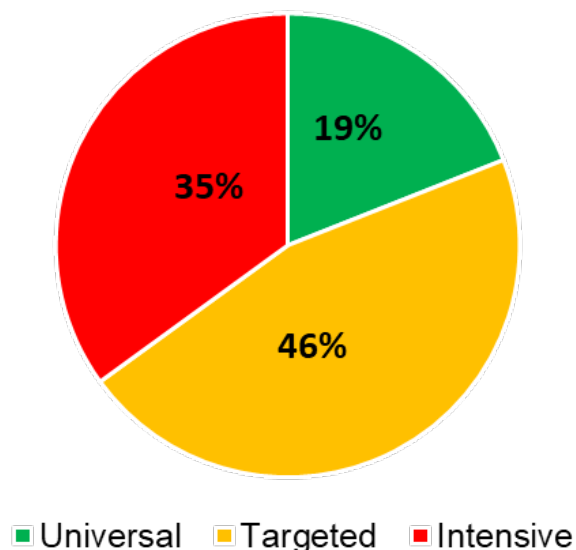
VTPBIS schools begin by implementing Universal practices that are developed to support all students. Once these practices are in place with fidelity, schools move on to develop Targeted and Intensive systems and interventions to support students with greater needs. Of the 165 VTPBIS schools, 46% have received training to implement Targeted Level PBIS interventions and 35% have received training to implement individualized interventions at the Intensive Level (Chart 1).

Alignment of social/emotional/behavioral initiatives is a common area of interest among VTPBIS schools. When too many initiatives are started at the same time, efforts can be diluted and staff can get disillusioned. Over the past four years, the VTPBIS State Team has taken the lead in helping schools organize their interventions so they are aligned or integrated within the overarching PBIS or VTmtss

framework. The opening session of the 2020 BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute provided a demonstration of how the VTmtss framework can be used to align restorative approaches and trauma-responsive schools. In this session, 67 school teams grappled with how they could make the connections between these approaches as well as other approaches used in their schools.

School mental health services is an essential component of VTPBIS and has been a priority focus for the VTPBIS State Team. In 2019-20, 76 VTPBIS schools contracted with Vermont's mental health agencies to provide mental health supports within a PBIS framework. The VTPBIS State Team is actively collaborating with the Vermont Agency of Education and the Vermont Department of Mental Health to administer a federal grant that provides training and support on the interconnection of PBIS and school-based mental health in three regions of the state.

**CHART 1. SY20 PERCENT OF VTPBIS SCHOOLS BY LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION (N = 165)**



# INPUT

## Professional Learning

The VTPBIS State Team facilitates a broad scope and sequence of high-quality professional learning opportunities that are offered regionally, statewide, and via distance-based technology. Since COVID-19 related school closures in March, all professional learning opportunities have been offered remotely. The VTPBIS State Team curated 20 professional development resources for Vermont educators to access during COVID-19 school closures. The team also developed three new virtual offerings.

Additionally, specific resources to support PBIS at home were posted on the Vermont PBIS website.

All learning events have been consistently well-received by individuals and school teams.

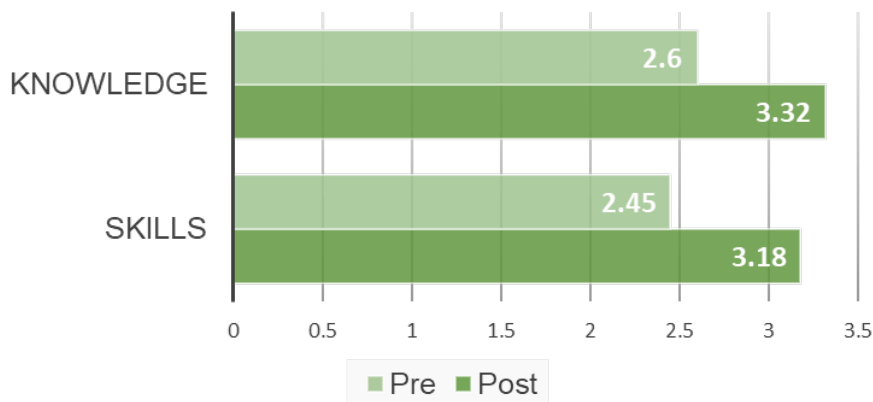
Participants who attended trainings completed pre/post self-assessments of their knowledge and skill acquisition. Overall, participants reported an increase in both knowledge and skills (Chart 2).

32 In-Person and Web-Based Trainings

1,221 Participants

97.73% Highly Satisfied/  
Satisfied

CHART 2. PRE/POST KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL SELF-ASSESSMENT



*“This was very eye opening and I am grateful to have watched this. I learned a lot and plan to take these skills and use them in my profession.”*

*“I really liked the presenter, he was knowledgeable and engaging.”*

*“The timing of this training was perfect - as many of us are not able to be physically in schools working with students right now the information offered will have time to digest. Much of it is applicable to all of us, especially right now during this stressful time!”*

*“I love the practical ideas and discussion and really look forward to examining the resources and revisiting the webinar as it was a lot of information in a short amount of time. I really like how it applied some of the training I have already received into practice a bit more. I look forward to examining how to use this to provide further training and support at the district and building level.”*

# INPUT

## BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute

The annual BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute is the most significant professional development event of the year, providing four days of learning and sharing evidence-based practices within a VTmtss Framework. The planning committee worked very hard to adapt the Institute to a virtual environment. This year's theme was "Staying Grounded: Aligning Systems so All Students and Adults Thrive (Wherever They Are!)."

415  
participants

67 school  
teams



*"I feel like my teaching practice will directly improve as a result of this training. I am also optimistic that we can eventually implement a school-wide restorative approach."*

*"There was a lot of meaningful content. The presenters worked wonderfully together, and did a great job facilitating discussions."*

*"I am incredibly glad that my colleagues all were able to participate. We were able to get so much done that would not be possible during the school year."*



*"The strands were fantastic and the keynote presenters were AMAZING!!! We cannot wait to attend BEST again in the future! Thank you for all of the work to put this online format together."*

*"Thank you BESTIES for adapting to our current remote format...you modeled a positivity, curiosity and community mindedness that each of the sessions focused on for kids. This is what keeps BEST the best. Thank you for all that you have done to keep the spirit of the conference alive, and for recharging our batteries!"*

# Classroom Behavior Practice Coach (CBPC) Training Series

The goal of this project is to help VTPBIS schools and SU/SDs develop the capacity to build and sustain evidence-based classroom management supports for teachers to increase positive behavior in the classroom. Due to COVID-19, all trainings for this project were put on hold and will resume next year.

## Technical Assistance and Coaching

VTPBIS Technical Assistance providers (TAs) help SU/SDs and schools navigate the process of exploring, implementing, and sustaining PBIS. This support is available through technology and/or 1-2 visits to the school. We have increased our TA capacity this year to provide more support. Sometimes SUs/SDs determine that they need more in-depth coaching. In 2019-20, 13 VTPBIS

State-Approved Coaches were available to support fidelity of PBIS evidence-based practices and development of local implementation capacity. Twenty-seven VTPBIS schools pursued coaching with VTPBIS Coaches.



## Web Presence



2,170  
email subscribers



50  
VTPBIS  
Updates  
emails



9,616  
Website visitors



35,829  
Website views

# FIDELITY

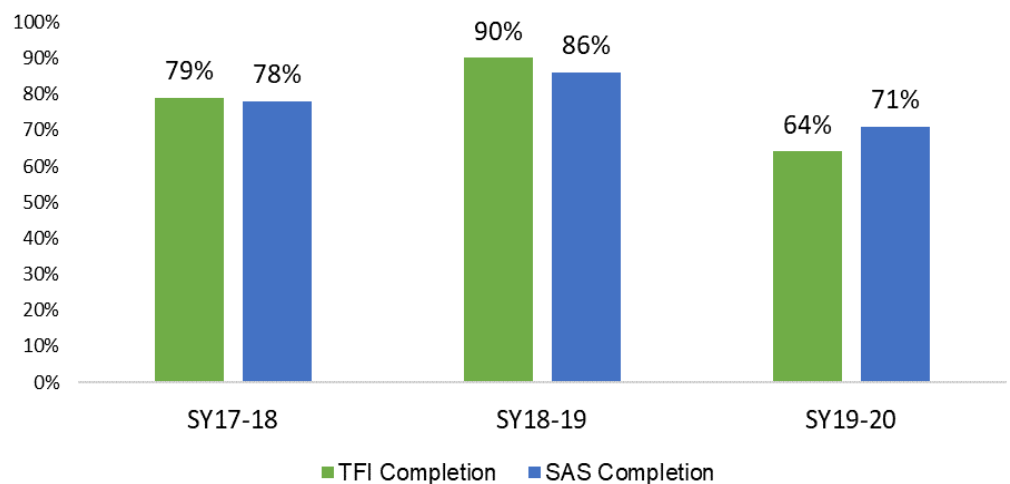
VTPBIS schools complete two fidelity measurements each year. The Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) measures staff perceptions of the implementation status and improvement priority for school-wide, classroom, non-classroom, and individual student systems. This year, of eligible schools, 111 schools (71%) completed the SAS. Schools also complete the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI). The TFI allows schools to efficiently assess implementation fidelity at one, two, or all three tiers of PBIS implementation. This year, of eligible schools, 101 schools (64%) completed Tier I of the TFI. This is a significant drop in completion rate compared to previous school years due to the challenges schools faced in quickly transitioning to a completely new mode of instruction in spring 2020. We anticipate completion rates will return to normal this school year (Chart 3).

VTPBIS schools complete the [Tiered Fidelity Inventory \(TFI\)](#) at each tier that they are currently implementing. This year, 101 VTPBIS schools completed the TFI. Of this number, 77% (42) of schools who have been trained at the Targeted level completed Tier II of the TFI and 79% (34) of

schools who have been trained at the Intensive level completed Tier III of the TFI. This is up from 69% (Targeted/Tier II) and 70% (Intensive/Tier III) last year.

Of the VTPBIS schools that completed the TFI this year, 77% are implementing with fidelity, which is consistent with last year's findings (Chart 4).

**CHART 3. TFI & SAS PERCENT COMPLETED RATES**



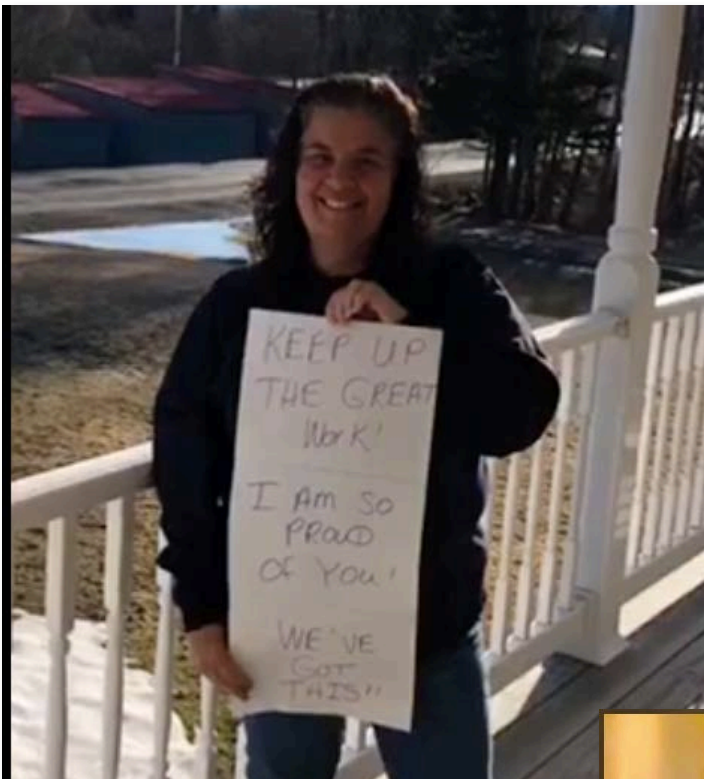
**CHART 4. TIER 1 AVERAGE SCORES BY SUBSCALE**



Schools that achieve VTPBIS Exemplar status demonstrate that student behavior and academic outcomes improve over time. This year, the VTPBIS State Team, like other states across the country, decided to forego the traditional acknowledgement system for the 2019-2020 school year. We recognized that the measures we normally use to evaluate schools' implementation of PBIS need to change in response to the current circumstances. Therefore, while the team examined traditional PBIS measures such as the SAS and TFI, all VTPBIS schools were asked to share additional narrative evidence of positive student

outcomes, adapting PBIS, and partnering with families during remote learning. Nineteen schools nominated themselves for recognition. The VTPBIS State Team reviewed the narrative responses from each school. Based on a review of both quantitative and qualitative factors, all 19 schools were recognized.

The following quotes are from the nomination submissions and reflect the collective creativity and effort demonstrated by many schools to continue to build positive behavior supports with their students and families during the transition to remote learning:

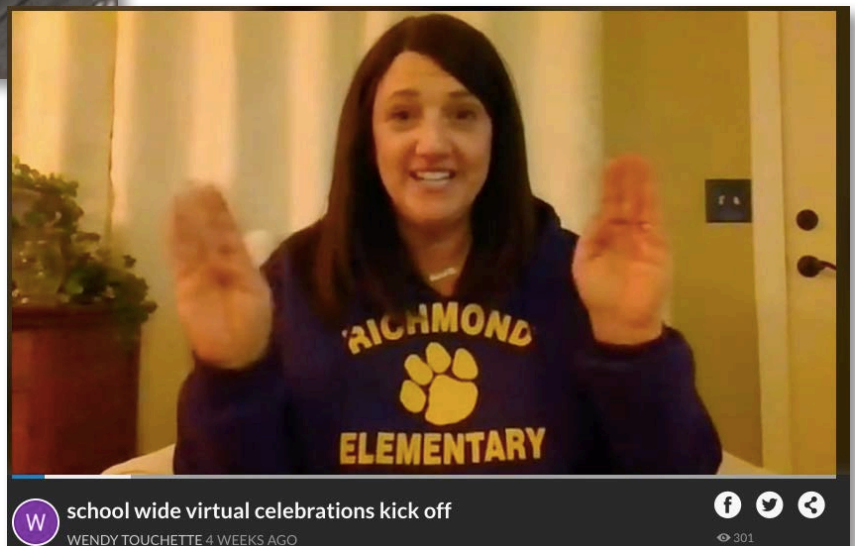


*"To acknowledge students, on a weekly basis we awarded students showing resilience and hard work connected to our 4 expectations: safe, kind, respectful and responsible electronic achievement awards. These awards were shared in their Google classrooms, emailed to parents, and added to our PBIS Facebook page."*

*-Guilford Elementary*

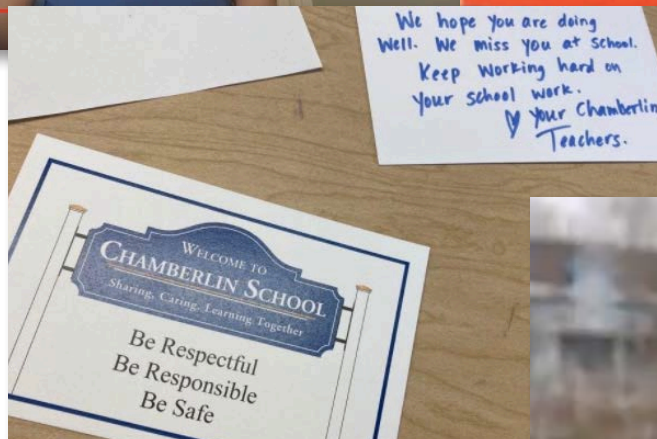
*"We were able to make regular contact with every student. Some took longer and more effort to reach, but we did it. Some students were more engaged in emergency remote learning than ever before."*

*-Brownington Central School*



# IMPACT

One indicator that the VTPBIS State Team generally reports on in this annual report is “major” Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs). At this time, the VTPBIS State Team is temporarily discontinuing the examination of ODRs as an outcome measure. The team is currently updating its action plan for this year and one action step is the identification of alternative outcome measures such as measures of student engagement and school climate.



*“[Prior to school building closures,] our office referral numbers dropped dramatically, especially in middle school. This was due to a renewed effort to be consistent about expectations and responses to missteps. The middle school team worked with the students to give them a voice in certain aspects of the expectations that they had never had here before.”*

*-Brownington Central School*

# SUSTAINABILITY

It is commonly agreed that the 2019-20 school year was an unprecedented time in Vermont education, as well as across the globe. The cascade of systems supports (State Team, TAs/coaches, SU/SD and school-based Coordinators, school leadership teams, staff, students, and families) all jumped into action to make the final months of the 2020 school year as engaging, relevant, and positive as possible. We affirmed and re-affirmed that social/emotional/behavioral learning and well-being for all is of the highest priority. We also recognized that we need to focus on doing **a few things** well that will have the **greatest impact** on student outcomes. With that principle in mind, the VTPBIS State Team will continue to build on our efforts to achieve the goals identified for 2019-20 and add a few key goals for this year.

## SY21 Action Plan for Sustainability

*The VTPBIS State Team will continue to implement and expand upon the FY 20 goals, plus the following:*

SY20 Goals	SY21 Action Steps
Help build and support SU/SD-level capacity to manage PBIS by aligning state-level initiatives and expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support state-level executive team to focus on connections between social/emotional/behavioral initiatives.</li> <li>Align messaging around VTmtss and PBIS.</li> <li>Increase level of TA capacity by adding an additional TA; TAs will communicate at least monthly with all SU/SD and School Coordinators.</li> </ul>
Build connections between PBIS implementation fidelity and student outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review PBIS fidelity and student outcome data quarterly. Provide feedback to SU/SDs and create professional development based on data trends.</li> <li>Consider additional social/emotional/behavioral student outcome measures to ascertain student success, beyond problem behavior data.</li> </ul>
Improve student and family voice in PBIS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer opportunities for networking around student and family engagement.</li> <li>Continue to promote restorative practices to enhance engagement.</li> <li>Consider ways for the VTPBIS State Team to engage students and families as stakeholders.</li> </ul>

SY21 Goals	SY21 Action Steps
Provide real-time professional development, resources, and support that promote effective social/emotional/behavioral learning and wellness at home, school, or through hybrid education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop PD content that is relevant for changing educational environments and that is available both synchronously and asynchronously.</li> <li>Collect and post new resources developed nationally and in Vermont.</li> </ul>
Prioritize a focus on equity and anti-bias.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a VTPBIS Equity Action Plan (see page 2).</li> </ul>

# WHERE IS VTPBIS? *165 schools in 48 SU/SDs as of June 30, 2020*

Addison Central	Dorset	Miller's Run	Shelburne Community
Albany Community	Dothan Brook**	Milton Elem.	Sheldon Elem.**
Alburgh Community	Doty Memorial	Missisquoi Valley	South Royalton
Allen Brook**	East Montpelier Elem.	Molly Stark	St. Albans Town
Arlington Memorial Middle/High	Eden Central	Monkton Central	Educational Center
Bakersfield Elem.	Edmunds Elem.	Monument Elem.	Stockbridge Central
Barnet Elem.**	Fair Haven	Morristown Elem.	Stowe Elem.**
Barre Town Middle & Elem	Fair Haven Union High	Mt. Abraham Union High	Summit Street
Barstow Memorial*	Fairfield Center	Mt. Anthony High	Sunderland Elem.
Beeman Elem.	Ferrisburgh Central	Mt. Anthony Union Middle	Sustainability Academy at
Bennington Elem.	Fletcher Elem.**	Neshobe*	Lawrence Barnes
Benson Elem.**	Flood Brook	Newbrook Elem.	Sutton Village
Berlin Elem.	Folsom Education & Community Center	Newport Town	Swanton**
Bethel Elem.	Georgia Elem. & Middle	North Country UJHS	Thatcher Brook Primary
BFA Fairfax	Grand Isle	Northeast Primary	Thetford Elem.*
Bingham Memorial Elementary (Cornwall)	Green Street	Northfield Elem.	Thomas Fleming
Blue Mountain	Guilford Central**	Northfield Middle High	Townshend Elem.*
Braintree Elem.	Hardwick Elem.	Northwest Primary	Twinfield USD #33
Brewster Pierce Elem.	Hartland Elem.	Oak Grove	Union Elem.
Bridport	Highgate Elem.	Orange Center	Union Memorial
Brighton Elem.	Hinesburg Community	Orchard	Vergennes Union Elem.
Bristol Elem.	Hyde Park Elem	Orleans Elem.	Vergennes Union High
Brookfield Elem.	Integrated Arts Academy at H.O. Wheeler Elem.	Orwell Village	Vernon Elem.
Brownington Central**	Irasburg Village	Ottauquechee**	Waitsfield
Burke Town	Isle La Motte	Otter Creek Academy*	Walden
C.P. Smith	J.J. Flynn Elem.	Otter Valley UHS	Wardsboro Elem.
Cabot	Jamaica Village	Peacham Elem.	Washington Village
Calais Elem.	Jericho Elem.	Peoples Academy Middle	Waterville*
Canaan	JFK Elem.**	Porters Point	Wells Village**
Castleton Elem.	Johnson Elem.	Poultney Elem.	Westford
Castleton Village	Killington Elem.**	Pownal Elem.	White River Valley Middle*
Chamberlin**	Kurn Hattin Homes	Proctor Elem.	Wilder
Champlain Elem.	Lakeview Union**	Putney Central	Williamstown Elem.
Charleston**	Lamoille Union Middle	Randolph Elem.	Williamstown Middle/High
Charlotte Central	Lincoln Community	Reading Elem.	Williston Central
Chester-Andover Elem.	Lothrop Elem.**	Richmond Elem.	Windsor
Clarendon Elem.	Lowell	Rick Marcotte Central	Wolcott Elem.
Concord	Lyndon Town	Ripton Elem.	Woodbury Elem.
Coventry Village	Malletts Bay	Riverside Middle	Woodstock Elem.
Currier Memorial	Manchester Elem.	Rochester*	
Danville*	Marion Cross	Robinson Elem.	
Derby Elem.	Middletown Springs Elem.	Rutland Intermediate	
		Salisbury Community**	
		Shaftsbury Elem.	


Key: \* New Schools


\*\* Schools that received VTPBIS Certificates of Recognition for extending PBIS to students and families during COVID-19 school closures.

**VTPBIS** is supported by the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) and administered by the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion (CDCI) at the University of Vermont (UVM). State Team Members (as of September 2020) - UVM: Anne Dubie, Ken Kramberg, Sherry Schoenberg, Amy Wheeler-Sutton; AOE: Laura Greenwood, Tracy Harris, Josh Souliere, Meg Porcella, Marni Troop, Tracy Watterson; DMH: Marianna Donnelly

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