

Spring 2024 Report

Introduction

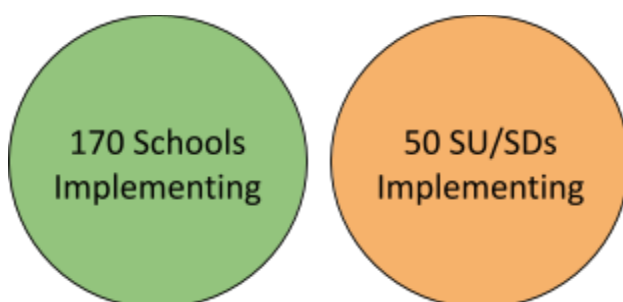
The Building Effective Supports for Teaching (BEST) Project reports three times a year on its progress in the areas of reach, process, capacity, fidelity, and outcomes. This report covers January 1 to June 30, 2024. This spring, the BEST Project continued to meet Vermont schools where they are by providing necessary professional learning opportunities, coaching support, technical assistance, and resources. The BEST Project builds its capacity to meet the needs of VT educators by fostering collaborative relationships with colleagues from the VT Agency of Education (AOE), VT Department of Mental Health (DMH), national/regional organizations, community partners, and schools/SU/SDs. This report highlights the following initiatives: VT Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (VTPBIS), Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education (Project AWARE), and Early MTSS/Pyramid Model. All of our work contributes to meeting the social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs of students, staff, and families/caregivers.

BEST Project Results by the Numbers

The BEST Project uses a variety of data points to track reach throughout Vermont, detail our process of implementation and efforts to build capacity, monitor fidelity of implementation, and document outcomes. The following includes quantitative and qualitative data.

Reach: Who's Participating in PBIS?

During this timeframe, the [following schools/districts](#) are implementing PBIS to achieve social, emotional, behavioral, and academic success for all students.



This spring, several schools engaged in the March VTPBIS Core Trainings and June VTPBIS Core Trainings at the 2024 BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute. As a result of both professional learning opportunities, two new schools received training at the [Universal Level](#), two schools received training at the [Targeted Level](#), two schools received training at the [Intensive Level](#), 16 schools received training in [Refreshing, Enhancing, and Deepening Universal PBIS](#), and 11 schools received training at the [Expanding and Enhancing Targeted Level Interventions](#).

A participant at the March VTPBIS Core Trainings said this, "I loved the guidance of practices on how to implement the work."

Another participant said, "Team time was very helpful because we have no time at school. Encouragement from others is inspiring."

Process:

The BEST Project is charged with developing and delivering high-quality professional learning opportunities in social, emotional, behavioral well-being, and mental health, including PBIS systems, data, and practices. All participants are asked to complete a post-learning evaluation to measure their satisfaction. The BEST Project and the presenter(s) review the data from each

learning event as part of our continuous improvement process. These events consistently yield very high rates of participant satisfaction.

The following reflects data on the number of [trainings](#) offered by the BEST Project, the number of training participants, training satisfaction rates, and qualitative feedback provided by our training attendees. This spring, 138 people representing 73 schools/organizations attended 10 learning events with an average participant satisfaction rate of 98% highly satisfied or satisfied.



What are participants saying?

"Having a team from school was very beneficial to immediately put the tools into real world practice."

"I liked the information that others were able to share in the chat, especially how they use the data they collect."

"Having a recorded session and resources shared with all [was helpful]. Great facilitator with very approachable demeanor and useful suggestions!"

"Short, sweet, and to the point with lots of examples. Love it!"

In addition, the keystone professional development activity of the Spring was the [BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute](#). Over 320 people from 52 teams attended this four-day event to share and learn new ideas. Results from the Institute will be shared in the Annual Report.

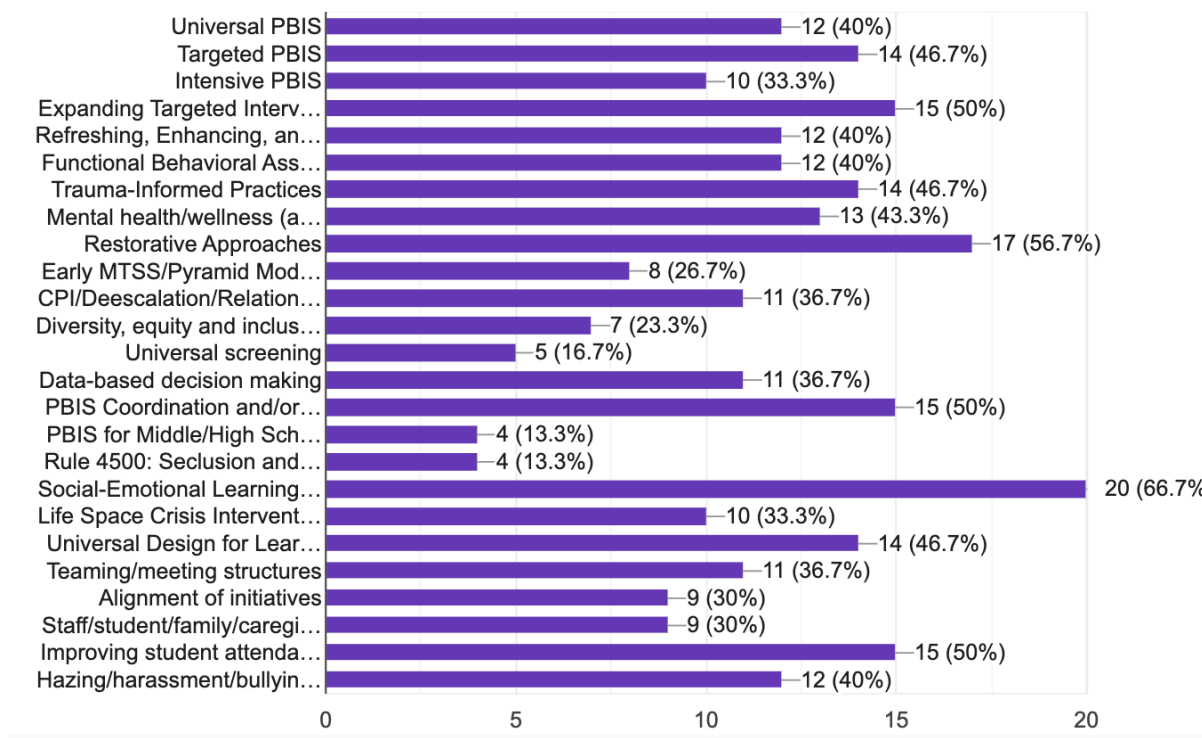
To sustain the delivery of high-quality professional learning opportunities and to be responsive to local and statewide needs, the BEST Project meets with its technical assistance providers monthly to review data, examine relevant research, and identify strategies to gather input from the field. The BEST Project also hosted two state leadership team meetings this spring with a variety of invested partners to collaborate on interagency initiatives and align efforts to disseminate information to the field regarding best practices. In preparation for the BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute, the BEST Project held two Summer Institute Planning Committee meetings this spring. The BEST Project also surveyed the field about their learning

needs and preferences. The graph below shows the various topics that educators were most interested in. The topic with the highest interest rate was Social-emotional Learning (SEL)/student social skills, followed by Restorative Approaches.

What topics are you interested in learning about (check all that apply)?

 Copy

30 responses



The BEST Project stays current by attending relevant professional development opportunities such as the [Northeast PBIS Leadership Forum](#) in Groton, CT, where the BEST Project presented on [Elevating Voice for School Improvement](#). They are also active members of the Northeast PBIS Advisory Group and the National State PBIS Leaders Network.

To meet the demand for mental health resources to support educators, students, families, and communities, the BEST Project has expanded the [Mental Health Resources & Tools](#) webpage. This webpage includes a compilation of resources and tools that support the alignment and integration of mental health and educational systems, data, and practices. The BEST Project will be continuing to update this page.

Capacity:

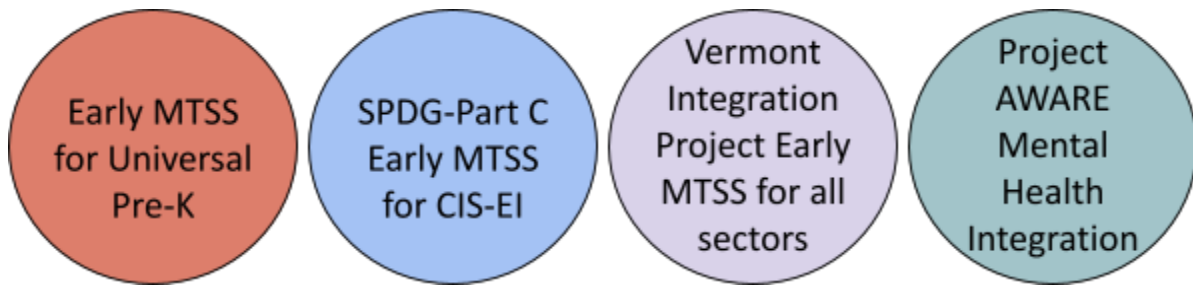
The following reflects data on the number of VTPBIS coaches and TAs, the number of schools accessing coaching support, and special projects and grants the BEST Project works on.



With five [Technical Assistance \(TA\) providers](#), 170 schools and 50 SU/SDs have timely access to support and resources. TAs connect with their region's SU/SD and School Coordinators through a monthly Friendly Reminder email. This practice promotes connections between TAs and school teams and supports the sustainability of effective PBIS implementation. TAs provided a variety of supports for schools, including support around teaming structures, data, matching professional development to identified needs, and planning for and completing annual PBIS assessments.

Some schools and SU/SDs help bridge the gap between professional learning and PBIS implementation by contracting with one of the nine [VTPBIS coaches](#) for ongoing support. This year, at least 16 schools have contacted coaches to develop a scope of work that will help them improve PBIS systems, data, and practices. The BEST Project continues to develop strategies to increase the number of schools that access coaching.

The BEST Project is also involved in the following ongoing statewide projects. This includes technical assistance/coaching support and contributing to scale-up, alignment, and data conversations. More information about these projects can be provided as needed and will be included in the Annual Report.



Fidelity:

All VTPBIS schools are expected to complete fidelity assessments at least once per year. This year, schools were asked to complete the [Tiered Fidelity Inventory \(TFI\)](#) at each level of implementation. The TFI is an efficient and effective validated measure to assess the fidelity of core PBIS features. Categories of the assessment include Teams, Implementation, and Evaluation. Results allow school leadership teams to prioritize actions for change.

Schools also have a choice between administering the [Self-Assessment Survey \(SAS\)](#) (staff perceptions), the [School Climate Survey](#) (staff, student, and/or family/caregiver perceptions), and/or the [Feedback and Input Survey](#) (staff, student, and/or family/caregiver perceptions).

We provide many reminders for schools to complete these important assessments and strive for high completion rates. We also share relevant research that emphasizes the importance of measuring fidelity and perceptions from PBIS Apps, a not-for-profit organization supporting educators to create more effective, equitable learning environments for all students through high-quality data systems and training.

The results of the TFI, SAS, School Climate Survey, and/or Feedback and Input Survey are used by schools to develop an annual action plan for PBIS sustainability. Aggregated results will also help guide the professional development offerings of the VTPBIS State Team. These results will be published in the Annual Report.

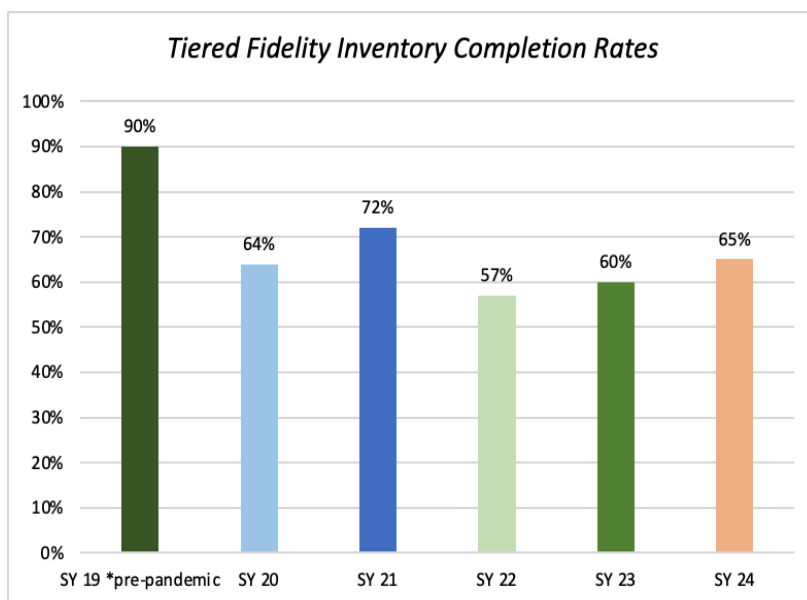
Outcomes:

The BEST Project continues to determine the most accurate way of assessing PBIS-related outcomes. According to the [PBIS Evaluation Blueprint](#) published by the National Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, schools implementing PBIS with fidelity should show desired changes in student outcomes such as discipline rates, academic achievement, graduation rates, social/emotional/behavioral (SEB) outcomes, student satisfaction,



Figure 1. The Full Evaluation Cycle.

equity, staff retention, etc. Figure 1, above, shows the full evaluation cycle as recommended in the PBIS Evaluation Blueprint. The figure shows four stages of the evaluation cycle including 1. Planning Evaluation, 2. Conducting Evaluation, 3. Reporting Evaluation Results, and 4. Using Results for Continuous Improvement. The graph below shows TFI completion rates over time. In SY 19, 90% of schools completed the TFI, in SY 20 64%, in SY 21 72%, in SY 23 60%, and most recently, in SY 24, 65% of schools completed the TFI.



Since 2020, the BEST project has encouraged schools to complete the TFI and while completion rates are not as high as pre-pandemic rates (see left), there is an upward trend of more schools completing the TFI over the past three years. This positive trend, allows the BEST Project to identify schools implementing with fidelity and which schools may need more targeted levels of support. This data also allows the BEST

Project to determine whether PBIS implementation leads to desired outcomes.

While the BEST Project continues to find ways to measure the impact of PBIS Implementation, several factors have impacted how to measure these data. First, there is variability in decision rules regarding discipline rates between schools (i.e. what is considered a “minor” behavior in one school may be considered a “major” behavior in another). Second, since the pandemic in SY 19, State tools used to measure academic achievement scores have changed over time making it difficult to compare and contrast differences between and among implementing schools. Third, while student, staff, and family/caregiver satisfaction can be examined through school climate surveys, not all schools/SU/SDs use the same survey instrument making it difficult to compare scores across schools. Finally, the most helpful information about outcomes is generated through the use of our Annual Acknowledgements process. The BEST Project is currently revising the annual Acknowledgment process and plans to roll out the new acknowledgment process this Fall. The new acknowledgment process will allow the BEST Project to determine which schools are actively implementing and at what level they are engaged. The BEST Project hopes this will lead to a more comprehensive report on outcomes schools are seeing as a result of their PBIS implementation.

Summary and Recommendations

The BEST Project has been very busy this half-year with prioritizing action items related to our SY 24 goals detailed in the [Annual Report](#). The following outlines progress on action steps taken at the time of this report:

SY 24 Goals	Action Steps
<p>Goal 1: Center diversity, equity, and inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigned VTPBIS TA to attend training on increasing the diversity of the membership of the State Team. Learnings will be reviewed in July. Continued to prioritize professional learning on DEI for VTPBIS TA providers, trainers, and coaches. Used equity constructs to guide the development of all professional learning opportunities. Reviewed and provided TA on ADA accessibility requirements with coaches/trainers. Reviewed training materials to ensure ADA compliance. Offered an equity strand (Everyday Equity: Achieving Equity in Your School Every Day in Every Way) and a new equity workshop (Centering Equity within a Social, Emotional, Behavioral Learning Framework) at the BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute.
<p>Goal 2: Increase and improve the use of effective practices at high rates of implementation fidelity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised and disseminated the VTPBIS Coordinators Handbook that clearly articulates roles and responsibilities at the school- and SU/SD-level. Developed and disseminated a comprehensive document on high-leverage universal practices. Supported existing VTPBIS schools in achieving/maintaining implementation fidelity through coaching, training, and TA. Ensured SUs/SDs/schools are aware of TA and coaching support through monthly email reminders, posting on the website, and VTPBIS Updates. Revised the annual VTPBIS Acknowledgement System to be rolled out in the fall. Offered training on CPI, universal screening, and FBA/SSP practices, in addition to many other practices at the BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed the 2024-2025 Professional Learning calendar and disseminated it broadly.
<p>Goal 3:</p> <p>Enhance schools' capacity to include & align social-emotional behavior, well-being, mental health, and early childhood within a PBIS framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborated with essential state and local partners on the integration and alignment of social, emotional, behavioral learning and well-being and mental health within MTSS. Enhanced support for early childhood grant-funded sites in integrating Pyramid Model practices and PBIS. Provided TA and coaching support for schools to align and/or integrate interventions within the overarching PBIS or VTmtss framework. Offered professional learning on integrating multiple data sources to support alignment and action planning.

