



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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# Introduction

**T**he Building Effective Supports for Teaching (BEST) Project reports three times a year on progress in the areas of reach, process, capacity, fidelity, and outcomes of our work in Vermont's schools. This Annual Report summarizes all activities during the 2023-2024 school year (July 2023- June 2024) including an Action Plan for Sustainability for the 2024-2025 school year. Our action plan builds upon current implementation and supports future sustainability.

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. With all of these projects, we continue to broaden our training, technical assistance, and resources to meet the growing social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) learning, well-being, and mental health (MH) needs of Vermont students, educators, and families/caregivers.

We are committed to helping schools strengthen and transform their systems, data, and practices to create learning environments that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and lead to positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students.

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**.

In this report, we incorporate the following quantitative and qualitative data as part of the annual evaluation of implementation efforts.





# Process

To measure the **reach** of the BEST Project in Vermont, we report on:

- Number of schools/districts implementing or exploring PBIS
- Online presence

To evaluate our **process** of training schools in Vermont:

- Number of trainings offered by the BEST Project
- Number of training participants
- Training satisfaction rates
- Qualitative feedback provided from our training attendees

To evaluate our **capacity**, we report on:

- Number of VTPBIS TA Providers, Coaches, and Trainers
- Number of schools that have connected with a coach
- Special projects and grants the BEST Project works on

To evaluate the **fidelity** to the PBIS implementation process:

- The measures that schools are required to complete annually are:
  - Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)
  - Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) and/or School Climate Survey (SCS)

To evaluate **outcomes** we report on:

- Student Behavior Observation and Data Forms (BODFs)
- School Climate Survey (SCS)
- Use of the School-wide Information System (SWIS) equity reports
- School Acknowledgments



# Results

In the past year, the BEST Project has supported schools amidst ongoing challenges in Vermont schools related to staff turnover/vacancies, growing student behavioral and mental health challenges, and a difficult budget season. Our awareness of and sensitivity to the challenges educators face enable us to share relevant and timely information and resources.

The BEST Project provided technical assistance and coaching. We provided professional learning opportunities through virtual training – both synchronous and asynchronous – as well as in person.

Furthermore, BEST Project staff fostered collaborative relationships with colleagues from the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE), the Vermont Department of Mental Health (DMH), national/regional organizations, and community partners. We also maintained strong partnerships with our supervisory unions/districts (SU/SDs) and schools.

Results in this section reflect five categories of evaluation:

**REACH**

**PROCESS**

**FIDELITY**

**CAPACITY**

**OUTCOMES**



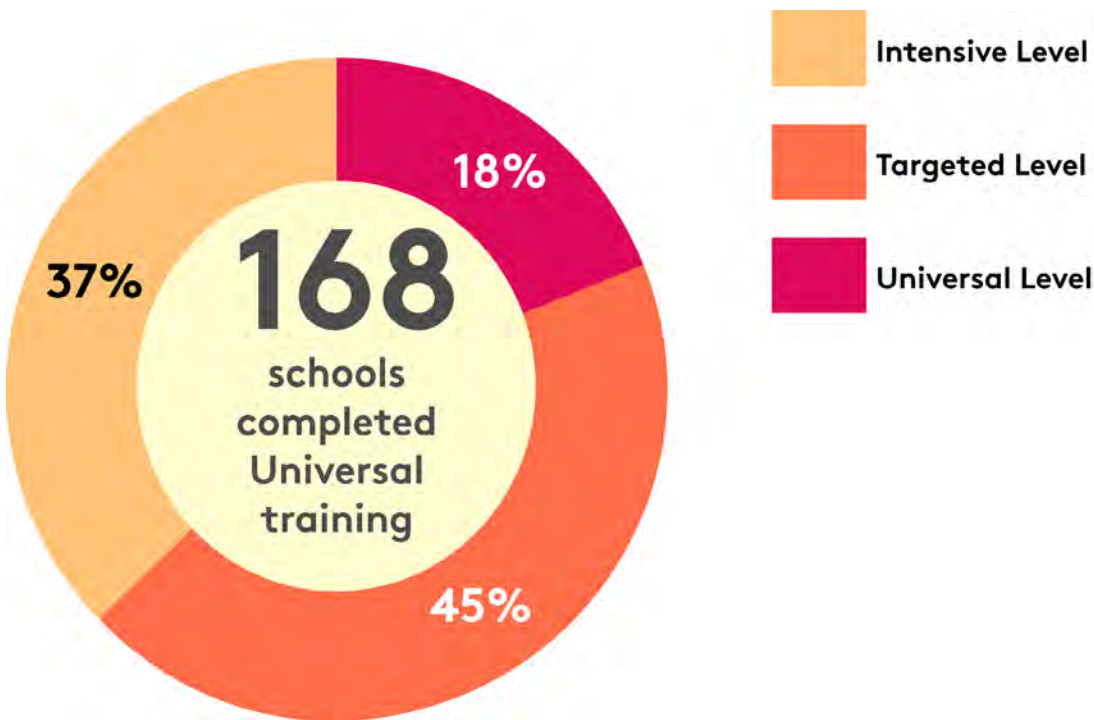
The BEST Project currently supports [168 schools in 50 SUs/SDs](#) to implement PBIS with the goal of achieving social, emotional, behavioral, and academic success for all students.

This year, the BEST Project offered VTPBIS Core Trainings in March and June. 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, 15 teams received training in Refreshing, Enhancing, and Deepening Universal PBIS (including one district team), and 12 schools received training in Expanding and Enhancing Targeted Level Interventions. Two new schools are exploring PBIS implementation.

All VTPBIS schools start their implementation journey by attending the Universal Training to implement practices developed to support all students. Once these practices are in place with fidelity, schools may decide to advance to developing Targeted and Intensive systems and interventions to support students with greater needs.

While all 168 schools have completed the Universal Training, 18% have opted to stay at the Universal Level, 45% have moved on to receive training at the Targeted Level, and 37% have received training to implement individualized interventions at the Intensive Level.

Figure 1: Schools by Level of Implementation



# Online Presence

The BEST Project reached a large audience through a twice-monthly newsletter (BEST Project Updates) and monthly reminders for School/SU/SD VTPBIS Coordinators and Administrators (VTPBIS Monthly Reminders).



Above, [PBISVermont.org](https://pbisvermont.org).

At left, [go.uvm.edu/thebestproject](https://go.uvm.edu/thebestproject)

## 2024:

  
# of  
email  
subscribers:

1,967

# of BEST Project  
Updates sent:

34

# of VTPBIS  
Monthly  
Reminders sent:  
12

# of website  
visitors:

11,369

# of website  
views:

32,797

REACH

# PROCESS

The BEST Project activities of the past year adhered to the goals that were established in the SY 23 Action Plan for Sustainability. We list specific goals and action steps from the 2023-2024 school year below.

## GOAL 1 Center diversity, equity, and inclusion

The BEST Project continued to prioritize centering equity, diversity, and inclusion (DEI) within an MTSS/PBIS framework. While we maintained our [Commitment to Equity](#) and take pride in our accomplishments this year, we also recognize that there will always be more work to do in this area.

We prioritized DEI in both professional learning **for** the Team and **by** the Team in the following ways:

- Attended training on increasing the diversity of the State Team membership.
- Prioritized professional learning on DEI for VTPBIS State Team.
- Used [equity constructs](#) to guide the development of new and existing professional learning opportunities with a focus on including the voices of all students, families/caregivers, and staff.
- Shared [“What’s New in PBIS” webpages](#) (that have a DEI focus) widely.
- Reviewed and provided TA on ADA accessibility requirements with Coaches/Trainers and reviewed training materials to ensure ADA compliance.
- Explored ways to assess outcomes for students with disabilities.
- 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.
- Offered a new [workshop](#) on inclusive practices for students with disabilities (SEL and Special Education: Integrating Inclusive Practices at All Tiers) at the BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute.
- Training evaluation surveys assessed whether or not participants felt trainings addressed DEI issues. Please refer to the graphs under the heading BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute.
- Met with the Membership and Outreach Committee Coordinator for the Vermont Educational Equity Collective (VEEC) to discuss opportunities for collaboration.



*"We utilized disaggregated data regularly to look at disciplinary practices and to look at how students from various groups feel about school in our climate surveys."*

— Orchard School

*"We are very fortunate to have a stipended equity liaison position within our school, supported by the large teams that have attended the BEST conference's Equity Strand in the past two years. These staff members regularly bring perceptive questions and observations related to our discipline data, practices, and systems to the forefront during staff and team meetings. We disaggregate our SWIS data in a variety of ways on a regular basis to see how we are applying our discipline system to various identity groups within the school. When we uncover an overrepresentation, we look further into what is happening with those students, and how we can more proactively support them, rather than respond reactively with discipline. This is a shared effort among behavior support staff, the counselor, clinician, teachers involved and principal."*

— Ottauquechee School



*"Our school really cares about diversity, equity, and inclusion. All kids have access to tier 1 PBIS in the classroom and in all settings around our school. Our discipline data does not show a discrepancy between office referrals and race."*

— Johnson Elementary

## GOAL 2

### Increase and improve the use of effective practices at high rates of implementation fidelity

The BEST Project provided several opportunities to support schools in reaching high rates of implementation fidelity. This was accomplished by developing resources, providing coaching and TA support, and developing a comprehensive calendar of in-person and online professional learning events to meet the multiple and diverse needs of VT schools. Here is a list of accomplishments connected to this goal:

- Revised and disseminated the [VTPBIS Coordinators Handbook](#) that clearly articulates roles and responsibilities at the school- and SU/SD-level.

- Developed, disseminated, and provided training on a [comprehensive document on high-leverage universal practices](#).
- 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](#) for a fall 2024 roll-out.
- Promoted “[What’s New in PBIS](#)” through coaching, training, and TA.
- Offered training on practices including function-based thinking, de-escalation, relationship building, crisis prevention, bullying prevention, universal screening, and Functional Behavioral Assessment/ Student Support Planning, and more.
- Developed the [2024-2025 Professional Learning calendar](#) and disseminated it broadly.



**24**

trainings

**1,059**

participants

**98%**

Highly Satisfied/  
Satisfied

**PROCESS**

# Learning Opportunities

## Annual VTPBIS Forum

The [Annual VTPBIS Forum](#) is the keystone professional development event of the fall.

This past year, over 176 people from 56 schools attended this October event to share, collaborate with colleagues, and learn new ideas.

Gillian Boudreau delivered a very well-received and thought-provoking keynote presentation titled, "A Safe Brain Is A Smart Brain: Reducing Fearful Patterns in Schools to Foster Connection, Growth, and Healthy Systems Change."

Rebecca Lallier provided a general session that grounded all participants in "What's New in PBIS."

The Forum also offered participants 15 workshop sessions on a variety of topics.



*"I appreciate the attention and reasoning to the language changes. I feel that you guys are always on the leading edge or curve of these changes and your focus on equity is fantastic."*

*"This is the part of the day that I so wished I was not the only member of our team attending! She was great and so informative, and showing examples of such 'typical' (before Gillian) responses that most everyone need to work on to be the best for our students. 'Taking the urgency out of the situation' is HUGE! I will be talking about this with my Admin and my team today, and wonder how we can get her message to our staff!"*

*"We found that attending the Forum in October was very beneficial and we enjoy getting the opportunity to attend and use the time to help our systems."*

*"Super helpful information and content at a time when educators are feeling overwhelmed and stressed."*



# The Annual BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute

is the most significant professional development event of the year, providing four days of learning and sharing of evidence-based practices within a VTmtss Framework. This year's theme was, "A Place of Belonging: Cultivating School Communities Where Strengths are Valued, Nurtured, and Embraced."



**359**  
participants

**52**  
school teams

*"The conference was well organized, engaging, and we left with a lot of great resources to continue our work with supporting our students."*

*"I am always very impressed with and grateful for the clear organization and attention to attendee wellbeing at the BEST Institute."*



**PROCESS**

The BEST Project collects evaluation data on participants' perceptions of the Summer Institute's accessibility and its inclusion of content relevant to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Over the years, the data shows increased satisfaction in both areas. See Figures 2 and 3 on the right.

Figure 2 shows how participants responded to the statement, "This training included relevant information on diversity, equity, and inclusion" over four years. The scale covers: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

In SY21, 1% of BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute participants responded Strongly Disagree, 2% responded Disagree, 61% responded Agree, and 36% responded Strongly Agree.

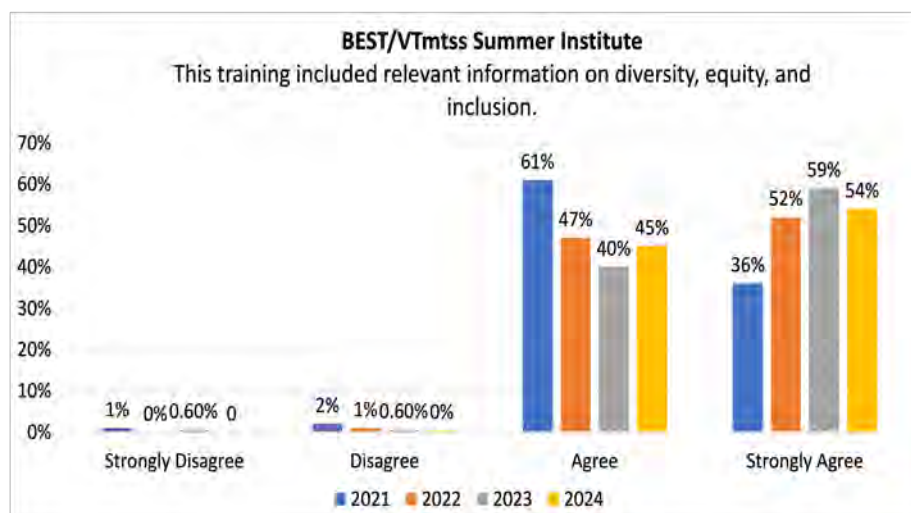
In SY22, no one responded Strongly Disagree, 1% chose Disagree, 47% Agreed, and 52% Strongly Agreed.

In SY23, .6% responded Strongly Disagree, .6% responded Disagree, 40% responded Agree, and 59% responded Strongly Agree.

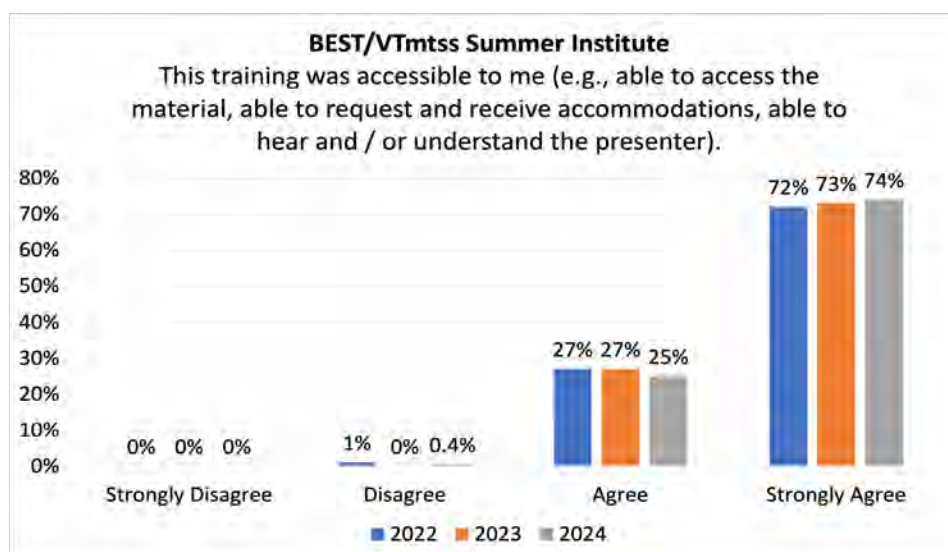
In SY24, no one responded Strongly Disagree or Disagree, 45% responded Agree, and 54% responded Strongly Agree.

Figure 3 shows how participants responded to the statement: "This training was accessible to me" over three

**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**



years. The scale was again Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

In SY22, none of the BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute participants responded Strongly Disagree, 1% responded Disagree, 27% responded Agree, and 72% responded Strongly Agree. In SY23, no one responded Strongly Disagree or Disagree, 27% responded Agree, and 73% responded Strongly Agree. In SY 24, no one responded Strongly Disagree, .4% responded Disagree, 25% responded Agree, and 74% responded Strongly Agree.





## GOAL 3

### Enhance schools' capacity to include & align social-emotional behavior, wellbeing, mental health, and early childhood with a PBIS framework

The BEST Project supported the state, schools, and districts in “working smarter, not harder” to build capacity and align social, emotional, behavioral, well-being, mental health, and early childhood practices with an MTSS/PBIS framework.

Collaborated with essential state and local partners on the integration and alignment of social, emotional, behavioral learning, well-being, and mental health within MTSS/PBIS.

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.

Embedded restorative and trauma-informed principles into all core trainings.



# CAPACITY

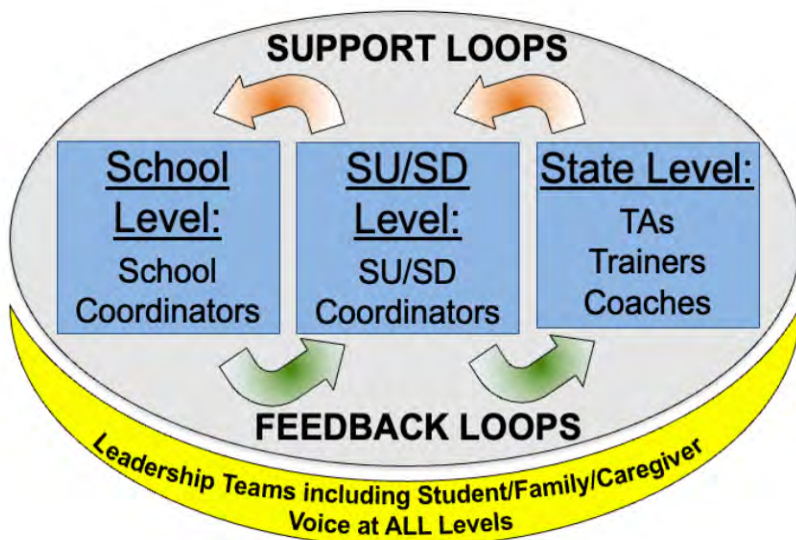
The BEST Project has developed a system of support that strengthens schools' capacity to implement PBIS with fidelity. The design (Figure 4) incorporates feedback loops that promote continuous improvement and sustainability at all levels: school, SU/SD, and state.

This year, a critical emphasis was placed on including student and family/caregiver voices at all levels. The goal is to foster communication among all parties, creating opportunities for bi-directional information exchange, support, and feedback.

At the school level, School Coordinators provide feedback to Coordinators at the SU/SD level, who then relay feedback to TA providers, Trainers, and Coaches at the state level.

This feedback helps guide TA Providers, Trainers, and Coaches in offering support to SU/SD Coordinators who, in turn, support School Coordinators, thereby completing the system of support loops.

**Figure 4: VTPBIS System of Support**



*"Our district coordinator came to our building once a month to observe in classrooms and meet with me if I had any questions. Since it was my first year in this role, she helped walk me through the assessments and how to sign our entire team up for the BEST conference."*

— Brownington Central School

# Technical Assistance, Training, and Coaching

The BEST Project aims to intentionally increase the use of technical assistance (TA) and coaching, both on-site and virtually.

VTPBIS Technical Assistance Providers (TA Providers) support schools and SUs/SDs in navigating the process of exploring, implementing, and sustaining PBIS. They provide this assistance through technology and/or 1-2 school visits. Our five TA Providers also send out VTPBIS Monthly newsletters to share information, resources, ideas, and updates. This approach helps us connect with VTPBIS School, SU/SD Coordinators, as well as administrators at the right time, for the right reasons, and with the right information.

TA Providers also offer increased support around pre-training readiness activities to ensure these activities are completed with fidelity. They also help schools gather input and feedback from students, staff, and families/caregivers before engaging in training. This effort enhances schools' ability to foster collective ownership within the school community.

Other areas of TA support include building teaming infrastructure, providing data and evaluation support, addressing current changes in PBIS, orienting new leaders or team members, improving systems, and identifying and implementing evidence-based practices, among other topics.

Sometimes, SUs/SDs/schools determine that they need more in-depth coaching. In 2023-2024, nine VTPBIS State-Approved Coaches were available to support the fidelity of PBIS evidence-based practices and the development of local implementation capacity. This past year, 18 VTPBIS schools sought coaching, up slightly from 17 the previous year. Coaching topics included leadership support to promote fidelity; professional development on revitalizing PBIS systems, data, and practices; support for new district SEL coaches; and specific requests for assistance in problem-solving around data.

*"[Our coach] provided guidance around adding to our team, outside insight and challenged our thought process."*

*"Our goal this school year was to teach our staff more about the effectiveness of implementing effective PBIS strategies. [Our coach] was able to support us in this by providing support to our PBIS team and training our staff."*

The BEST Project has a strong cohort of Trainers with expertise across all layers of the MTSS Framework, connecting systems, systems, data, and practices to support social, emotional, and behavioral learning and well-being, with equity at the center.

In addition, several Trainers have specialized expertise in restorative and trauma-informed approaches, de-escalation, and their alignment with PBIS. All Trainers receive ongoing support to continue developing relevant content.

To sustain the delivery of high-quality professional learning opportunities and to remain responsive to local and statewide needs, the BEST Project has engaged in the following activities:

- Organized monthly meetings with TA Providers to review data, examine relevant research, and identify strategies to gather input from the field.
- Hosted four state leadership team meetings with critical partners to collaborate on building and sustaining equitable opportunities for social, emotional, behavioral learning across Vermont and to disseminate information to the field regarding best practices.
- Met with our cohort of Trainers four times to build our capacity to provide professional development on new content.
- Remained abreast of legislative priorities and changes affecting the social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) learning and mental health of all.
- Attended relevant professional development opportunities such as the Northeast PBIS Leadership Forum in Groton, CT, where one of the BEST Project Directors presented the session, "From the Oceans to the Mountains: Elevating Voice for School Improvement"; and
- Represented Vermont as members of the Northeast PBIS Advisory Group and the National State PBIS Leaders Network.





# Additional Projects

The BEST Project continued to successfully apply for grants that enhanced and expanded our work. The Project provides technical assistance/coaching support and contributes to scale-up, alignment, and data conversations. The following highlights other projects.

## Project AWARE @ CDCI

The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) grant, awarded to the Vermont Department of Mental Health, supports three Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Designated Mental Health Agencies (DAs) in increasing awareness of mental health, improving access to support, and strengthening community teams and partnerships across education and mental health systems.

In December 2023, the BEST Project received a second round of grant funding from the Department of Mental Health to provide technical assistance, coaching, and training. This support will help to implement tools and concepts to enhance social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health approaches within the Vermont Multi-Tiered System of Supports (VTmtss) at both the state and local levels.



### *Participating LEAs/DAs:*

- Barre Unified Union School District and Washington County Mental Health
- Caledonia Central Supervisory Union and Northeast Kingdom Human Services
- Southwest VT Supervisory Union and United Counseling Services



## Early Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) @ CDCI

Starting in 2022, Vermont has revitalized the cross-sector scale-up of Early MTSS in public and private early childhood programs statewide. This includes Pyramid Model professional development, technical assistance, and coaching. The work is detailed in an [Impact Report](#).

The BEST Project has partnered with the Agency of Education (AOE), the Child Development Division (CDD), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the national Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC), and local coaches to carry out this work. Current funding comes from the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) and the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG).

Administrators, educators, and providers have enhanced their knowledge and skills through

professional development to establish systems necessary for high-fidelity implementation of evidence-based practices that support young children's social and emotional wellness, competence, and confidence. The professional development is building capacity at the state, regional, and local levels to promote scale-up and ensure long-term sustainability.

A State Early MTSS Leadership Team has been established to oversee this statewide work.

To stay informed on current best practices in early education, BEST Project staff attended this year's National Training Institute (NTI) Conference.

In Spring 2024, the first PDG cohort of 10 early childhood sites launched their work, with an additional 10 sites expected to launch in 2025. These sites completed the Vermont Early MTSS System Inventory or Benchmarks of Quality and will be

evaluated with classroom fidelity tools in the fall.

System and practice-based coaches have been matched with this cohort to provide direct support. This group of 16 coaches has participated in a comprehensive professional development program to increase their skills and familiarity with Early MTSS/Pyramid Model. This network is building Vermont's capacity to continue coaching early childhood sites.

A newly created position, Early Childhood Professional Development Director, has been established within the BEST Project to coordinate the statewide network of coaching and professional development in Early MTSS/Pyramid Model. The new hire supported an early childhood strand at the BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute and will plan future professional development opportunities.

## Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)

Schools complete the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) each year to efficiently assess their fidelity in implementing PBIS. School teams can use the TFI to assess fidelity at one, two, or all three tiers of PBIS implementation. Schools must complete the TFI at each tier they are currently implementing.

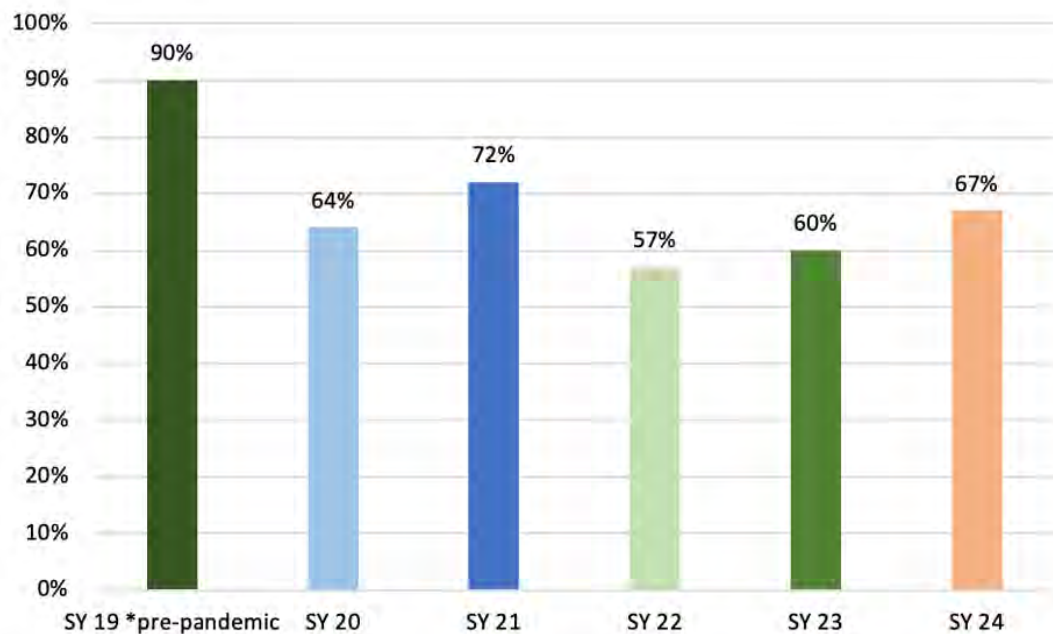
Although we have not yet reached our pre-pandemic completion rate, VTPBIS schools

continue to complete fidelity assessments at increasing rates each year.

Many schools reported using the TFI assessment to celebrate accomplishments and identify areas needing improvement to develop comprehensive action plans.

Of the 113 VTPBIS Schools that completed the TFI, 71 (63%) are implementing with fidelity (achieving at or above 70% on Tier 1).

**Figure 5: Tiered Fidelity Inventory Completion Rates**



In SY19, before the pandemic, 90% of schools completed the TFI. In SY20, the rate fell to 64%, and then increased to 72% in SY21. However, SY22 saw another drop in rates, down to 57%. Last year, 60% of VTPBIS schools completed Tier I of the TFI. This year, 113 (67%) of VTPBIS schools completed the TFI. In addition, six non-PBIS schools completed the TFI this year.



On average, across the VTPBIS schools who completed the TFI, the highest rated items (“fully in place”) at Tier 1 were:

- **Behavioral Expectations (Agreements):** The school has five or fewer positively stated behavioral expectations (agreements) and examples by setting/location for student and staff behaviors (i.e., school teaching matrix) defined and in place; and
- **Discipline Data:** Tier 1 team has instantaneous access to graphed reports summarizing discipline data organized by the frequency of problem behavior events by behavior, location, time of day, and by individual student.

The lowest rated items (“not in place”) on Tier 1 were:

- **Student/Family/Community Involvement:** Stakeholders (students, families, and community members) provide input on universal foundations (e.g., expectations, consequences, acknowledgments) at least every 12 months.
- **Annual Evaluation:** Tier 1 team documents fidelity and effectiveness of Tier 1 practices at least annually (including year-by-year comparisons) that are shared with stakeholders (staff, families, community, district) in a usable format.

*“As always these reports prove invaluable to our Universal Team. With new rollover in our faculty for the past 3 years the TFI helps us continue to take the pulse on where we are in terms of implementation and fidelity. It is helpful to have this information to present to the faculty as a whole and bring their attention to our challenges as well as celebrations.”*

— White River Valley Elementary School



# Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) and/or School Climate Survey

Schools use the Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) to measure staff perceptions of the implementation status and improvement priorities for school-wide, classroom, non-classroom, and individual student systems.

In the past year, when given the option to complete the SAS and/or a school climate survey, 61 schools (36%) chose to complete the SAS.

*"We completed the school climate survey and used this data in correlation with the SWIS and Educlimber data to see where we needed extra support in order to set our students up for success.*

*We were pleased to observe that, for the most part, the majority of our students like to be at school and feel connected to the adults in the building.*

*It is also interesting to note that the majority are very aware of their peers and how their classmates' behaviors affect the school environment and lessons."*

**—Woodbury Elementary School**

Overall, 116 VTPBIS schools (69%) completed either the SAS, a school climate survey, or both.

Outcomes related to the School Climate Survey can be found in the Outcomes section.

*"We learned through the SAS that communication between staff can be shored up. We can improve on providing staff opportunities to learn and engage with PBIS and PBIS systems."*

**—Thetford Elementary School**



# OUTCOMES

## PBIS Works

Research has proven that, when implemented with fidelity, the PBIS framework can improve school climate, reduce interfering behavior, strengthen prosocial behavior, and increase academically engaged time. PBIS is not static and is constantly evolving based on feedback and research.

For a full list of citations related to PBIS Outcomes, visit [References for the Evidence of PBIS](#).

In Vermont, the BEST Project looks at both quantitative and qualitative data to guide action planning. We looked at data showing student outcomes as well as teacher outcomes.

At the time of this report, state-level data on exclusionary discipline were unavailable. We aim to present outcomes-based exclusionary discipline data in a future report.

## Student Outcomes

### Behavior Observations

The BEST Project reviews “major” interfering behaviors as reported on Behavior Observation and Data Forms (BODFs), formerly called Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) in School-wide Information System (SWIS).

In SY24, the most frequently reported interfering behaviors were:

- Physical Aggression
- Skipping Class
- Defiance/Insubordination/Non-Compliance
- Abusive Language/Inappropriate Language/Profanity

These behaviors align with feedback from the field.

As a result, the BEST Project will continue to prioritize professional development in proactive de-escalation strategies, relationship building, and social-emotional learning.

Additionally, we will introduce training content on school engagement and absenteeism prevention in the [2024-2025 BEST Project Professional Development Calendar \(.pdf\)](#).



## School Climate

Schools implementing PBIS with fidelity are expected to see improvements in school climate, as reported by staff, students, and families/caregivers. The BEST Project encourages schools to complete a school climate survey and provided training on a free online survey available through PBIS Assessment. Some districts and schools created their own school climate survey or used other existing surveys.

At least 35 VTPBIS schools completed a school climate survey within PBIS Assessment for either staff, students, or families/caregivers this year. An additional 40 VTPBIS schools, at least, completed other versions of school climate surveys, although their scores are unavailable to us. This means at least 45% of VTPBIS schools completed a school climate survey this year.

Students rated their agreement with items on a scale of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4).

Based on school climate data from PBIS Assessment from 24 elementary schools and 23 middle/high schools, the average school climate scores were 2.98 for elementary and 2.89 for middle/high schools.

The highest-rated items on the elementary school climate survey were:

- “My school wants me to do well” (3.6)
- “My school has clear rules for behavior” (3.4)

The lowest-rated items for elementary schools were:

- “Students in my classroom behave so teachers can teach” (2.4)
- “I like school” (2.6)

For middle/high schools, the highest-rated items were:

- “I believe in helping others” (3.4)
- “I treat other students fairly” (3.4)

The lowest-rated rated items for middle/high schools were:

- “Most days I look forward to going to school” (2.3)
- “Students in my school take pride in keeping our school building (e.g., bathrooms, classrooms, lockers) in good condition” (2.2)

Overall, scores remained fairly consistent from last year to this year.

*“We learned that a huge majority (over 90%) of our students feel like they have a trusted adult in our building that they can go to for help. This piece of data made us all very proud to know that we are making important connections with our students.”*

**- Vergennes Elementary**

# Staff Outcomes

## School Climate Survey

This past year, 29 schools administered the personnel version of the PBIS School Climate Survey to understand staff perceptions of school climate. Staff rated their agreement with items on a scale of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). The overall mean scores for the personnel survey were 3.1.

The highest-rated items on the personnel school climate survey were:

- "I feel safe when entering and leaving my school building" (3.7)
- "Teachers at my school treat students fairly regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture" (3.6).

The lowest-rated items were:

- "Students at my school demonstrate behaviors that allow teachers to teach, and students to learn" (2.4)
- "At this school, parents frequently volunteer to help on special projects" (2.5)

*"KES teachers focused on cognitive restructuring as a faculty and staff in the first few months of school. By December, teachers were developing habits that spilled over to their interactions with each other and with their students. After incentivizing teachers to reframe negative statements and phrases, the practice of cognitive restructuring became a bright spot among faculty and staff. It brought a sense of joy that most certainly trickled down to students."*

**- Killington Elementary School**



# School Outcomes

## Annual Acknowledgements

This year, the VTPBIS State Team invited VTPBIS schools that completed the TFI to nominate their school for an Annual Acknowledgement. Schools were asked to provide evidence of how they sustained their PBIS systems, data, and practices.

Schools were also encouraged to share data related to positive student social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes, including information related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This year, we recognized 52 schools for their efforts based on their nominations. Schools that received the VTPBIS Annual Acknowledgement have two stars next to their name on the last page of this report.

This year, the VTPBIS State Team developed [new criteria](#) for acknowledging schools at different levels of fidelity: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. This new acknowledgment system criteria will be rolled out in the fall of 2024 for the 2024-2025 school year.

*“This year has seen our teams come together stronger than ever before, unified in our commitment to supporting students and fostering a positive learning environment.”*

— Charleston

*“This year we partnered with Lamoille Restorative Center and improved a lot in our restorative work and response to behaviors that are not meeting our agreements. We really focused on teaching when students are not meeting agreements... We also have an SEL team that meets weekly to try to proactively respond to SEL needs.*

— Wolcott Elementary School



**VERMONT PBIS**  
**School of Recognition**



# Equity Outcomes

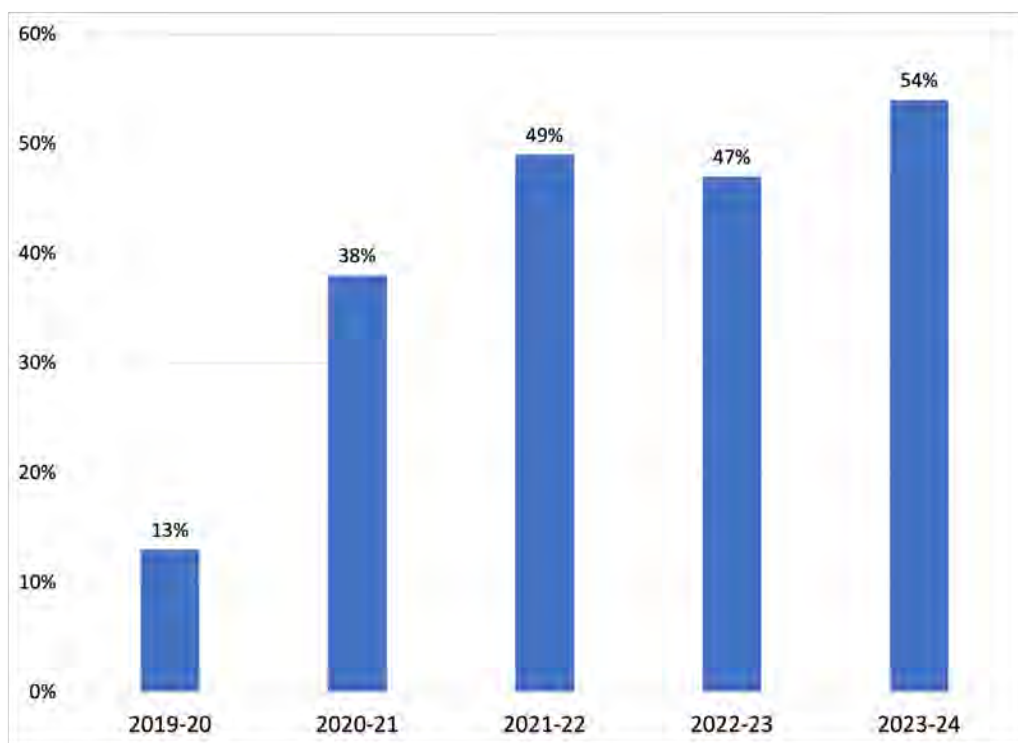
The School-Wide Information System (SWIS) has a report that enables schools to examine disaggregated data and creates interpretive sentences for each graph to tell schools their data story.

Schools using SWIS can disaggregate by students' IEP status, gender, English Language Learner status, and race/ethnicity to uncover any areas of disproportionality.

While the number of schools using SWIS declined between last year and this, likely due to districts deciding to use other platforms, the percentage of schools accessing equity reports increased, as shown in Figure 6.

In the 2019-2020 school year, only 13% of Vermont schools using SWIS accessed equity reports, compared to 53% in 2023-2024.

**Figure 6: Percentage of Vermont Schools using School-Wide Information System (SWIS) that Accessed SWIS Equity Reports**



In SY20, of 153 schools using SWIS, only 20 (13%) accessed the reports. In SY21, 149 schools used SWIS, but 57 of them (38%) accessed the reports. In SY22, of 153 schools using SWIS, 75 (49%) accessed the equity reports.

Last year, 156 schools used SWIS, and 74 of them (47%) accessed the equity reports. This year, 131 schools used SWIS and 70 of them (54%) accessed the equity reports.



Over the past few years, despite the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BEST Project has delivered high-quality training, technical assistance, and coaching support to Supervisory Unions/School Districts and schools across Vermont in implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices within a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework.

Due to the expanding scope of the BEST Project's work, the team will be undergoing a rebranding process over the next school year. This rebranding effort aims to better reflect the project's growth, evolving goals, and new areas of focus. We are excited about the changes to come and look forward to continuing our mission with a fresh perspective and enhanced identity.

The BEST Project and VTPBIS State Team actively work to build Vermont schools' capacity to support all students, including those at risk of or who experience social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) challenges. The PBIS Framework, when implemented with fidelity, provides a structure for preventative and responsive supports for students that lead to positive outcomes for all. Over the next three years, the BEST Project aims to determine current levels of fidelity of PBIS implementation in Vermont schools; develop a multi-tiered approach to supporting schools to improve fidelity; and measure school-level and student-level outcomes.

The BEST Project has developed the SY 25 Action Plan for Sustainability with input from national, state, and local partners, as well as voices from the field.

# SY 25 Action Plan for Sustainability

## GOAL 1:

**Form an overarching team that encompasses the BEST Project/ VTPBIS, along with other projects the team participates in.**

- Through a collaborative and reflective process that engages key partners and incorporates their feedback, the team will determine foundational elements, including a new name, logo, mission, vision, and goals.
- The team will complete a [Working Smarter, Not Harder matrix](#) to examine team purpose, membership, and goals to ensure efficiency and adequate representation.

## GOAL 2:

**Develop a 3-year plan for improving fidelity of PBIS implementation in Vermont schools.**

In year 1, we will determine accurate current levels of fidelity of implementation, including areas for growth and celebration. To accomplish this, we will:

- Roll out the [TFI 3.0](#), which has an increased focus on classroom implementation, mental health, equity, and family/caregiver and student voice (pending national validation).
- Increase the percentage of VTPBIS schools who complete the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) from 67% to 80%.
- Provide support from TA Providers for TFI completion to a minimum of 20 schools, including the TFI Walkthrough.
- Roll out the revised VTPBIS Annual Acknowledgement system
- Identify one or more schools at each level (elementary, K-8, middle, high) that are implementing PBIS with fidelity to establish model sites.



## GOAL 3:

### Develop a plan for measuring and assessing outcomes of PBIS implementation.

- Research how states with similar demographics measure outcomes.
- Identify possible outcomes to measure including:
  - Student engagement and attendance
  - School climate (students, staff, family/caregivers)
  - Academic achievement
  - Exclusionary discipline (BODFs, out-of-school suspension)
  - Seclusion/restraint
- Determine model sites through the Annual Acknowledgements process to compare outcomes in schools implementing at various levels of fidelity.



# GLOSSARY

The following definitions came from the [PBIS Implementation Blueprint \(.pdf\)](#) and the [PBIS Evaluation Blueprint \(.pdf\)](#).

**Behavior Observation and Data Form (BODF)** - Recording of the details of a major or minor interfering behavior by a student that was observed by an educator for purposes of providing support to the student, if needed. This is Vermont's term for the national PBIS term, office discipline referral.

**Capacity** - Capacity sections of the report typically document two aspects of the initiative: (a) Structures for Supporting PBIS Implementation and (b) Formal Measurement of Capacity.

**Child Development Division (CDD)** - CDD resides under the Agency of Human Services and works with partners to provide Vermonters with affordable access to high-quality child care and child development services.

**Coaching** - Job-embedded professional learning provided to support implementation of new skills and practices. Frequently involves modeling, observing, and/or providing performance feedback.

**Constructs** - The systematic arranging of ideas or terms.

**Data** - Information that is used to select, monitor, and evaluate outcomes, practices, and systems.

**Department of Mental Health (DMH)** - DMH resides under the Agency of Human Services and has the same critical mission in mind: to improve the conditions and well-being of Vermonters and protect those who cannot protect themselves. The Individuals and families that the DMH supports in Vermont's communities want the same things we all want; safe homes, close friends, loving

relationships, good health and something meaningful to do each day.

**Disproportionality** - Disproportionality refers to a group's representation in a particular category that exceeds expectations for that group, or differs substantially from the representation of others in that category. Special education disproportionality has been referred to as the extent to which membership in a given group affects the probability of being placed in a specific disability category. Disciplinary disproportionality encompasses the disproportionately high rates at which students from certain racial/ethnic groups are subjected to office discipline referrals, suspensions, school arrests, and expulsion.

**Evidence-based Practices (EBPs)** - Interventions, strategies, and techniques supported by empirical evidence of their effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and durability. See the What Works Clearinghouse to assist in selecting EBPs.

**Fidelity** - Fidelity refers to the degree in which an intervention or practice is delivered as intended. Fidelity can be measured and compared to previous or future efforts to deliver the intervention or practice.

**Local Education Agency (LEA)** - A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of

a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties as are recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

**Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)** - The practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions (Batsche et al., 2005). An integrated MTSS is the integration of several MTSSs into one coherent strategically combined system meant to address multiple domains in content areas in education (McIntosh and Goodman, 2016).

**Outcomes** - Academic and behavior targets or indicators that are specified, endorsed, emphasized, and monitored because of their social and education significance.

**Partners** - Any individuals who will be affected by or make decisions regarding implementation within an organization. These vary by context (state, district, school) but typically include (but not limited to) students, families, educators, administrators, community groups, and agencies.

**Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)** - An evidence-based multi-tiered framework for implementing evidence-based practices to support improved social, emotional, behavioral (SEB), and academic outcomes for all student groups through systems and data-based decision making.

**Process** - The Process section reports the actions taken to support the PBIS initiative during the evaluation period.

**Professional Learning/ Professional Development (PD)** - A systematic process of support for all staff that can include face-to-face training, observation, coaching, resource banks of materials, communication plans, or virtual supports to help educators establish and sustain evidence-based practices.

**Reach** - Reach questions are intended to identify who is participating in PBIS and are affected by it.

**Restorative Approaches** - Restorative approaches build healthy school climates by creating space for people to understand one another and develop relationships. When things go wrong, restorative approaches create space to address needs, repair relationships, and heal.

**School Climate Survey (SCS)** - The School Climate Survey Suite is a set of four multidimensional surveys to measure student, teacher, administrator, faculty, and family/ caregiver perceptions of school climate.

**School District (SD)** - Town school districts, union school districts, interstate school districts, city school districts, unified union districts, and incorporated school districts, each of which is governed by a publicly elected board.

**School Year (SY)** - A school year is a specific period of time during which educational institutions, such as elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and universities, organize and conduct their academic activities.

**Schoolwide** - Refers to extending support to all students and adults in all settings in a school

or organization (e.g., agency). A schoolwide approach is also referred to as providing a full continuum of support (Tiers 1, 2, 3).

**Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)** - The survey examines the status and need for improvement of four behavior support systems: (a) school-wide discipline systems, (b) non-classroom management systems (e.g., cafeteria, hallway, playground), (c) classroom management systems, and (d) systems for individual students engaging in chronic problem behaviors.

**Supervisory Union (SU)** - A Supervisory Union is an entity that oversees and administers Vermont's public schools. Supervisory Unions provide essential services to schools, including developing curriculum, providing special education, and administering school meals programs. Supervisory Unions also provide financial administration and data management for public schools.

**Systems** - Support infrastructure that is needed to enable the accurate and durable implementation of practices, efficient use of data, and achievement of outcomes.

**Technical Assistance/TA Providers** - Process of providing support to an organization with an identified problem or need. TA providers are available to help Supervisory unions and schools navigate the process of exploring, implementing, and sustaining VTPBIS. Support is available through technology (i.e., online meetings) and up to two site visits per year.

**Tier 1 (Universal)** - Preventing the development of new cases (incidence) of unwanted behaviors by establishing a core foundation of high-quality learning environments for all students and staff and across all settings (i.e., schoolwide, classroom, and non-classroom).

**Tier 2 (Targeted)** - Reducing the number of existing cases (prevalence) of unwanted behaviors that are presenting high-risk behaviors and/or not responsive to primary intervention practices by providing more focused, intensive, and frequent small group-oriented responses in situations where unwanted behavior is likely.

**Tier 3 (Intensive)** - Reducing the intensity and/or complexity of existing cases (severity) of unwanted behavior that are resistant to and/or unlikely to be addressed by primary and secondary prevention efforts by providing the most individualized responses to situations where unwanted behavior is likely.

**Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)** - An assessment that provides a valid, reliable, and efficient measure of the extent to which school personnel are applying the core features of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS).

**Vermont Multi-Tiered System of Support (VTmtss)** - VTmtss is a systemic approach to decision-making for excellence and equity within a culture of continuous improvement that focuses on successful outcomes for all students. VTmtss is Vermont's approach to unifying a progressive system of supports, personalization, flexible pathways, and proficiencies.





## The BEST Project

receives funding from the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) and Department of Mental Health (DMH) and is supported by the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion (CDCI) at the University of Vermont (UVM).



[go.uvm.edu/thebestproject](https://go.uvm.edu/thebestproject)



### Accessibility



This year we've made the annual report available as this fully accessible report. We've also included a glossary.

Let us know if these things are helpful!

[Image credits](#)

### State Team Members (as of June 2024)

- **BEST:** Anne Dubie, Cassandra Townshend, Amy Wheeler-Sutton, Meg Baker
- **AOE:** Laura Greenwood, Tracy Harris, Josh Souliere, Meg Porcella, Tracy Watterson
- **VTPBIS State TA Providers & Coaches:** Chantelle Albin, Kym Asam, Amanda Babcock, Lauralee Keach, Jon Kidde, Ken Kramberg, Rebecca Lallier, Sherry Schoenberg, Jeremy Tretiak, Gregg Stoller
- **DMH:** Marianna Donnally



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
**CENTER ON DISABILITY &  
COMMUNITY INCLUSION**



# PBIS in VT

## PBIS is in 168 schools in 50 supervisory unions and districts as of June 30, 2024.

**\*Albany Community School**

**\*\*Alburgh Community Ed Center**

**\*\*Allen Brook School  
Bakersfield Elementary School**

**\*\*Barnet Elementary School  
Barre City Elementary & Middle School**

**Barre Town Middle & Elementary School**

**Barstow Memorial School**

**\*\*Barton Graded School**

**Beeman Elementary  
Bennington Elementary School**

**\*\*Benson Village School  
Berlin Elementary School**

**BFA Fairfax**

**Bingham Memorial  
Elementary School**

**Blue Mountain School**

**Braintree Elementary School**

**Brewster Pierce Elementary  
School**

**Bridport Central School**

**Brighton Elementary School**

**Bristol Elementary**

**Brookfield Elementary School**

**Brookside Primary School**

**\*\*Brownington Central  
School**

**Burke Town School**

**C.P. Smith**

**Cabot School**

**Calais Elementary School**

**Canaan Schools**

**\*\*Castleton Elementary  
School**

**Champlain Elementary**

**\*\*Charleston Elementary**

**Charlotte Central School**

**Chester-Andover Elementary**

**Clarendon Elementary School  
Concord School**

**Coventry Village School**

**\*\*Craftsbury Schools**

**Currier Memorial School**

**\*\*Danville School**

**Derby Elementary School**

**Dorset School**

**\*\*Dothan Brook School**

**Doty Memorial School**

**\*\*East Montpelier Elementary  
School**

**Eden Central School**

**Edmunds Elementary School**

**\*\*Fair Haven Grade School**

**Fair Haven Union High School**

**Fairfield Center School**

**Ferrisburgh Central School**

**\*\*First Branch - Chelsea**

**\*\*First Branch - Tunbridge**

**Fletcher Elementary School**

**\*\*Flood Brook School**

**Folsom Education &**

**Community Center**

**\*\*Founders Memorial School**

**Georgia Elementary & Middle  
School**

**\*\*Gertrude Chamberlin School**

**\*\*Grafton Elementary School**

**Grand Isle School**

**Green Street School**

**\*\*Guilford Central School**

**\*\*Hardwick Elementary School**

**Highgate Elementary**

**Hinesburg Community School**

**Hyde Park Elementary School**

**Integrated Arts Academy at**

**H.O. Wheeler Elementary**

**Irasburg Village School**

**J.J. Flynn Elementary**

**Jamaica Village School**

**Jericho Elementary**

**\*\*JFK Elementary**

**\*\*Johnson Elementary**

**\*\*Killington Elementary**

**\*\*Kurn Hattin**

**\*\*Lakeview Elementary School**

**Lincoln Community School**

**\*\*Lothrop Elementary School**

**Lowell School**

**Lyndon Town School**

**Malletts Bay School**

**Manchester Elementary School**

**\*\*Marion Cross School**

**Middletown Springs**

**Elementary School**

**Millers Run School**

**Milton Elementary School**

**Missisquoi Valley UHSD**

**\*\*Molly Stark Elementary**

**School**

**\*\*Monkton Central School**

**Monument Elementary School**

**Morristown Elementary School**

**\*\*Mt. Abraham Union Middle/  
High School**

**Mt. Anthony Union High  
School**

**Mt. Anthony Union Middle**

**School**

**Neshobe Elementary  
School**

**\*Newark Street School**

**\*\*NewBrook Elementary**

**Newport Town School**

**North Country UJHS**

**North Hero**

**Northeast Primary**

**Northfield Elementary**

**School**

**Northfield Middle High**

**School**

**Northwest Primary School**

**Oak Grove School**

**Orange Center School**

**\*\*Orchard School**

**Orleans Elementary**

**Orwell Village School**

**\*\*Ottauquechee School**

**\*\*Otter Creek Academy**

**(Leicester, Sudbury,**

**Whiting)**

**Otter Valley Union HS**

**Peacham Elementary**

**School**

**\*\*Peoples Academy Middle**

**Level**

**Porters Point School**

**Poultney Elementary**

**School**

**Pownal Elementary**

**Proctor Elementary School**

**Putney Central School**

**Randolph Elementary**

**School**

**Reading Elementary**

**Richmond Elementary**

**Rick Marcotte Central**

**School**

**Ripton Elementary School**

**\*\*Riverside Middle School**

**Robinson Elementary**

**School**

**Rochester Stockbridge**

**Unified District**

**\*\*Rutland Intermediate**

**School**

**Salisbury Community**

**School**

**Shaftsbury Elementary**

**Sharon Elementary**

**Shelburne Community**

**School**

**\*\*Sheldon Elementary**

**School**

**St. Albans Town**

**Educational Center**

**\*\*Stowe Elementary**

**School**

**\*\*Summit Street School**

**Sunderland Elementary  
School**

**Sustainability Academy @**

**Lawrence Barnes**

**Sutton Village School**

**Swanton School**

**\*\*Thetford Elementary  
School**

**Thomas Fleming School**

**\*\*Townshend Elementary**

**Twinfield Union School**

**Union Elementary School**

**Union Memorial School**

**\*\*Vergennes Union**

**Elementary School**

**Vergennes Union High**

**School**

**\*\*Vernon Elementary**

**Waitsfield School**

**\*\*Walden School**

**Wardsboro Elementary**

**School**

**Washington Village School**

**\*\*Waterville Elementary**

**School**

**Wells Village School**

**Westford School**

**\*Westminster Center**

**School**

**\*\*White River Valley Elem**

**- Bethel Campus**

**\*\*White River Valley Elem**

**- South Royalton Campus**

**White River Valley Middle**

**School**

**White River Valley High**

**School**

**Williamstown Elementary**

**Williamstown Middle/High**

**School**

**Williston Central School**

**\*\*Wolcott Elementary**

**School**

**\*\*Woodbury Elementary**

**School**

**Woodstock Elementary**

**School**

## KEY

**\* New VTPBIS  
Schools**

**\*\* These schools  
nominated  
themselves and  
were recognized  
for maintaining  
and sustaining  
the PBIS  
framework  
during the  
2023-2024  
school year.**