

The **Kansas Autism and Tertiary Behavior Supports (ATBS)** project is comprised of an interdisciplinary team of master educators, behavior specialists, speech language pathologists, school psychologists, and social workers with the goal of building the capacity of school districts to serve children/youth with diverse learning or complex and challenging behavioral needs. In collaboration with the **Kansas State Department of Education**, the ATBS team builds regional capacity by providing support through professional development, coaching, technical assistance, and resources on evidence-based practices. These practices include structured teaching, behavior interventions, language assessment and instruction, social competencies, transition planning, early learning practices, the educational identification of autism, and self-care.

## EDUCATORS EXPANDED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

During the 2020–21 school year, Kansas educators accessed ATBS professional development events, requested consultations and technical assistance, and downloaded resources.



The ATBS team provided 134 virtual professional development events with 2,716 attendees from 91 Kansas school districts and 54 other educational agencies, representing a high level of participation even during interruptions caused by COVID-19. Ninety-one of these events included multiple sessions, ranging from four to 10 days. The use of multiple sessions for professional development provided participants with opportunities for in-depth practice with constructive feedback, coaching, and reflection on their fidelity of implementation and

attainment of student outcomes. The 20 professional development sessions observed for the inclusion of adult learning indicators contained more than 90% of the indicators in the domains of preparing and engaging learners, contextualizing the content, and transferring learning to practice.

The ATBS team responded to 710 technical assistance requests during the 2020–21 school year. Coaching was the primary support provided to educational organizations (school districts, cooperatives, interlocals), with 568 (80%) of the contacts resulting in individual, team, or systems coaching. In addition, educators can access resources designed to support the implementation of evidence-based practices at <https://www.ksdetasn.org>. In 2020–21, a total of 1,225 ATBS resources were accessed 48,253 times!

*"This was one of the best virtual trainings I have been to! I loved how interactive it was! I was engaged the whole time!"*  
— Training Participant

*"We are proud of our relationship with ATBS and appreciate the opportunity to partner with them to provide training. We have started sending more of our general education teachers to ATBS trainings because we see that the information is good for all."*  
— Administrator

## AITs & InSTEP INCREASED DISTRICT CAPACITY

Local Autism Interdisciplinary Teams (AITs) supported schools by providing professional development, participating on IEP teams, and providing classroom-based consultations. ATBS supported 55 locally active Autism Interdisciplinary Teams (AITs) working in 84% of Kansas school districts throughout all regions of the state. These AITs reported providing 383 professional development

*"It changed my teaching! I make decisions based on data and think differently about behavior."*  
— InSTEP Participant

sessions with 4,360 total participants across Kansas. Frequent topics included paraeducator training (30%), basics of Autism (23%), principles of structured teaching (22%), use of visual supports (21%), communication (16%), and behavior

intervention plans (16%). They also participated in 440 screenings, with 38% resulting in the positive identification of autism, and provided 6,889 classroom-based consultations for individual students. Additionally, AIT members supported IEP teams in the educational identification of autism, resulting in an additional 175 students receiving needed services.

The InSTEP Program, begun in 2018, is a comprehensive professional development

program that supports district-identified educators to increase local capacity in meeting the needs of complex learners. The ATBS-designed professional development package supports these educators as they integrate evidence-based practices into their own teaching and share strategies with their colleagues. The multi-year program includes assessment techniques, classroom organization and management, challenging behavior reduction and prevention, communication skill development, and data analysis. Twelve teachers completed the InSTEP program during 2020–21. As demonstrated by Capstone Projects, each planned for instruction, explicitly taught target skills, analyzed data, and saw improvement in students' outcomes, including increased independence in the classroom and improved social and communication skills with peers.

### 100% of InSTEP participants agreed that:

- Participation in the Capstone Project increased communication and collaboration with IEP team members.
- Completion of the implementation cycle assisted me in problem solving strategies and modifications based on student strengths and needs.
- Participation gave me the confidence to continue to use the strategies I learned and share these strategies with others.