Implementation and Outcomes of Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports

Final Evaluation Report—2014

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Executive Summary

The focus of the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) is to improve outcomes for all students by instituting system-level change across the classroom, school, district, and state. Such systemic change is accomplished through development of a coherent continuum of evidence-based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to each student's academic and behavioral needs, and features frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision making.

Kansas MTSS integrates what is known about the components of effective schools into a single framework for improved social and academic outcomes for all students. Core components include evidence-based curriculum, high-quality instruction, a comprehensive assessment system, data-based decision making, effective intervention, fidelity of implementation, ongoing professional development, and leadership within an empowering school and district culture.

Implementation of MTSS has grown rapidly in Kansas and is a key approach used for turning around low-performing schools in the state, with more than a third of all public schools implementing MTSS to date. WestEd finds that Kansas MTSS is substantially contributing to improved student outcomes at the local level, as well as benefitting teachers, improving instruction, and supporting better school functioning.

About the Evaluation

After a competitive request for proposal process, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) contracted with WestEd, an independent, not-for-profit research, evaluation, technical assistance, and professional development organization, to conduct an external evaluation of the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). The WestEd evaluation team's task was to design, pilot, refine, and implement an evaluation system that measures the statewide progress of MTSS toward its main goal: creating a statewide system of support to local schools and districts in order to increase school capacity to use resources in ways that enable every child to be successful. The project provided formative and summative evaluation information to KSDE for improving and sustaining MTSS at the school, district, and state levels.

WestEd finds that Kansas MTSS is substantially contributing to improved student outcomes at the local level as well as resulting in benefits to teachers, improved instruction, and school functioning. Leadership and support from the KSDE Office of the Commissioner has been instrumental in the promulgation of MTSS as a framework for improving the education of all students. This summative evaluation report synthesizes data collected throughout the four-year evaluation project, describes the current status of MTSS implementation, and provides insights as to what it takes to implement MTSS with fidelity. It concludes with comments about the next steps for MTSS implementation in Kansas.

The evaluation was guided by five evaluation questions:

Scope: How many schools and districts are participating in MTSS?

Implementation: Annually, how many schools and districts are (a) exploring the use of MTSS to meet students' academic and behavioral needs, (b) adopting and installing components of MTSS (e.g., assessments, curriculum, instruction, etc.), or (c) successfully implementing MTSS with fidelity?

Student Outcomes: How are students in schools and districts that are fully implementing MTSS performing?

Statewide System and Infrastructure: How effective are KSDE and MTSS Core Team activities in supporting statewide implementation of MTSS with fidelity by schools and districts?

Sustainability: How successful are schools and districts in sustaining MTSS?

WestEd designed a multi-year, mixed-methods evaluation system. The evaluation system was piloted and refined in 2011 prior to full implementation in 2012 through 2014. Key data collection activities included:

- An annual survey, entitled the Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices, with responses from more than 500 schools per year;
- Two-day site visits to six schools where core and intervention instruction and team meetings were observed, and interviews and focus groups with leadership teams, teachers, and staff were conducted;
- A multi-day site visit to Wichita Public Schools that included interviews and/or focus groups with the Superintendent, leadership teams, the MTSS advisory team, as well as day-long visits to five schools (2 high schools, 1 middle school, and 2 elementary schools). Multiple cross-district focus groups were conducted with teachers, principals, and school-based MTSS Facilitators/coaches;
- A follow-up visit to Wichita Public Schools that included interviews with the Superintendent, a group interview with the leadership team, and interviews with over ten focus groups with more than 100 teachers, coaches, and principals;
- Periodic interviews with KSDE leadership;
- Periodic interviews with all members of the Core Team;
- Focus groups with Recognized MTSS Facilitators;
- Document review;
- Annual observation and participation in the Kansas MTSS Symposium;
- Annual collection of grade-level universal screening data for selected schools; and
- Annual analysis of school-level state assessment data.

The evaluation system was designed to give a complete picture of the implementation and early impact of MTSS. A mixed methods design was used to provide a full and comprehensive view of

MTSS implementation across Kansas from the perspectives of key stakeholders and participants and to offer an in-depth portrait of implementation in selected schools and districts across the state.

This final, summative report synthesizes data collected throughout the four-year evaluation project, describes the current status of MTSS implementation, and provides insights as to what it takes to implement MTSS with fidelity. The key questions are:

Who participates in Kansas MTSS?

What happens in schools implementing MTSS?

What are the benefits of MTSS?

How does the KSDE support and sustain implementation of MTSS?

How has MTSS implementation changed over time?

What are the next steps for MTSS in Kansas?

Evaluation Findings

Who Participates in Kansas MTSS?

Finding 1: The scope and reach of MTSS as a statewide initiative is well-established in Kansas. The statewide MTSS "presence" is pervasive. The state may be at a "tipping point" in terms of statewide scale-up and installation of MTSS across the state.

At this point in time, 48.0% of the 1,472 schools in Kansas have participated in some level of formal MTSS training. These schools represent 67.0% of the 293 districts across the state, showing that approximately two-thirds of public school districts in Kansas have schools that have participated in MTSS formal training experiences (2005–2014). Eighteen districts have taken a district-wide approach to implementing MTSS. About 224,000 (43.0%) of all Kansas public school students are enrolled in schools that have participated in Structuring or Implementation training since 2008.

What Happens in Schools Implementing MTSS?

Finding 2: Schools are demonstrating the hallmarks of strong implementation of the Kansas MTSS framework, specifically, they are demonstrating strong leadership at the school and district level, high-quality core curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices, an empowering culture with increased teacher collaboration, data use, ongoing professional development, and the alignment and integration of school improvement initiatives. The consistent implementation of these practices results in a smoothly run system that is achieving its intended outcomes.

Finding 3: Implementation of MTSS at the school level is increasingly consistent with the Kansas MTSS framework. Schools are moving from exploration/learning about MTSS to more advanced implementation stages over time.

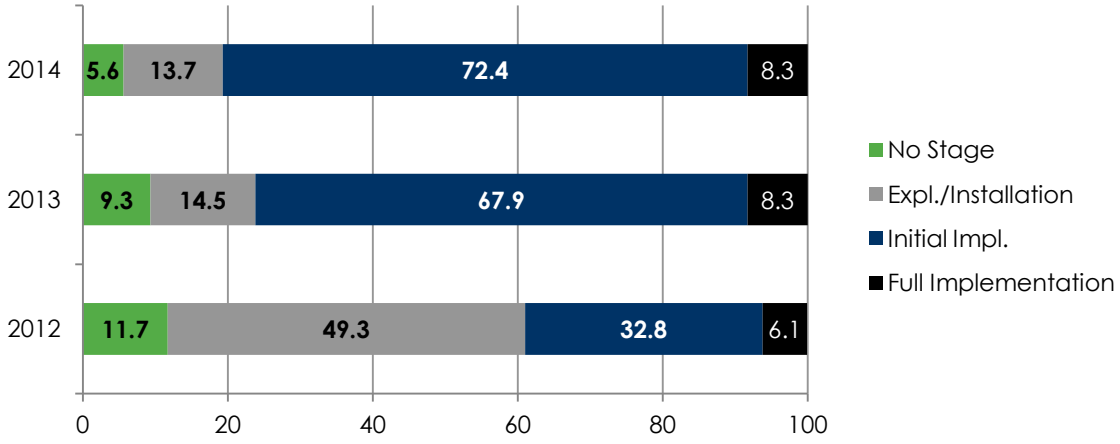
The 2014 statewide Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices yielded results that provided a snapshot of MTSS implementation in schools across Kansas. Respondents to the survey reported that they were currently implementing MTSS (75.5%), with another 10.7% of respondents planning to implement. About 81.0% (448) of schools responding to the survey are implementing MTSS at the initial implementation level or higher, and this is likely an underestimate as it is based only on those schools responding to the survey. The majority are implementing in reading (84.8%). More than half of respondents are implementing in math (56.9%) and 43.7% of respondents are implementing in behavior (see Appendix B for a summary of the 2014 survey findings). The percentage of schools scoring at the full implementation stage remained stable at 8.3% for 2014. A similar pattern of responses was reported in 2012 and 2013 (see Executive Summary Table 1 and Executive Summary Figure 1).

Executive Summary Table 1. Classification of Responding Schools by Stage of Implementation

Stage of Implementation	2012		2013		2014	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
No stage	77	11.7	55	9.3	31	5.6
Exploration	266	40.5	70	11.8	70	12.6
Installation	58	8.8	16	2.7	6	1.1
Initial Implementation	215	32.8	402	67.9	402	72.4
Full Implementation	40	6.1	49	8.3	46	8.3
Total Implementers	579	88.2	537	90.7	524	94.4
Total	656	100.0%	592	100.0%	555	100.0%

Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

Executive Summary Figure 1. Percentage of Schools at Various Stages of Implementation, 2012 to 2014



Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

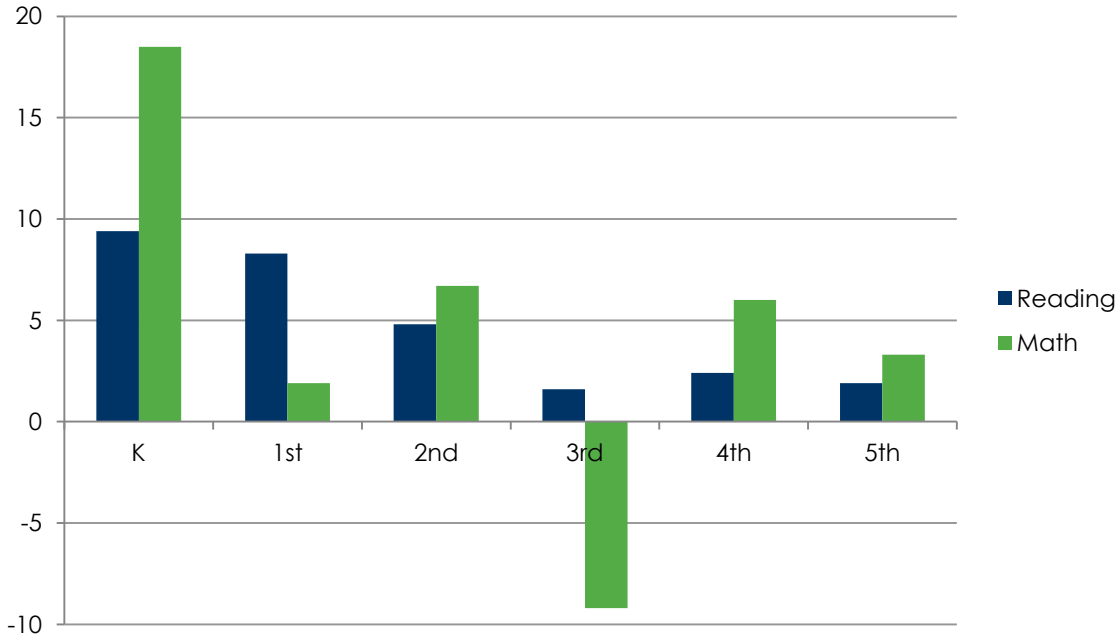
What are the benefits of MTSS?

Finding 4: MTSS is substantially contributing to improved student outcomes at the local level as well as resulting in benefits to teachers, improved instruction, and school functioning.

Statewide, most respondents to the Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices reported that to "some extent" or "to a great extent" implementing MTSS has had a positive impact on student outcomes: students scoring at benchmark (89.5%); students scoring as proficient on the state assessment (70.3%); a decrease in Office Discipline Referrals (77.1%); and a decrease in special education referrals (63.4%).

Universal screening assessment data from a sample of schools at full implementation shows gains on average for reading and math (except third-grade math), with the largest gains evidenced in kindergarten (see Executive Summary Figure 2).

Executive Summary Figure 2. Change in the Percentage of Students at Benchmark, Fall to Spring, 2013/2014



Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

However, hard data on student achievement/improvement is not available statewide. State assessment data is inconclusive as to any patterns or trends in the achievement levels of schools implementing MTSS.

In survey data and interviews with the Core Team and case study sites, respondents report benefits to students, teachers, and schools as a result of implementation of MTSS. Survey responses show that schools are observing more students scoring at benchmark on the universal screeners, behavior is improving, there are fewer special education referrals, and student engagement and motivation has improved. Focus group and interview data indicate that schools and teachers are changing their attitudes and practices related to collaboration and shared responsibility for all students, developing a common language, and using data in their decision-making processes. MTSS helps schools to focus on strengthening the core curriculum and instruction as well as on interventions.

How Does the KSDE Support and Sustain the Implementation of Kansas MTSS?

Finding 5: KSDE has established an effective statewide infrastructure to support and sustain MTSS implementation.

Components include the MTSS Core Team, the cadre of Recognized MTSS Facilitators, the annual MTSS Symposium, an extensive and frequently updated website of materials, research, and resources on MTSS, and an ongoing dissemination plan implemented in coordination with

the Technical Assistance System Network (TASN). Professional development materials are well aligned with national professional learning standards, such as the Learning Forward standards (2012).

Evidence from the 2014 school survey, Core Team, KSDE leadership, case study principal and administrator interviews and focus groups, the document review, and the MTSS website demonstrate that KSDE and the Core Team are effectively supporting implementation of MTSS with fidelity. Specifically, respondents to the 2014 school survey reported that, "to some extent" or "to a great extent," KSDE has established the necessary infrastructure to sustain and extend MTSS implementation over time (77.4%), that KSDE effectively disseminates information about MTSS (75.9%), that there are sufficient resources (76.0%), and that MTSS is clearly aligned with other state and local improvement initiatives (79.3%). Sixty-one percent of respondents agreed that there are sufficient MTSS Facilitators to support MTSS statewide.

How Has Kansas MTSS Implementation Changed Over Time?

Finding 6: MTSS implementation is being refined in Kansas to focus on the district rather than the individual school level, and to the use of an "integrated model" where the areas of reading, math, and behavior are approached simultaneously.

The shift to investment at the district level using the integrated MTSS—a comprehensive, integrated three-tier (MTSS: CI3T) framework—will require increased capacity on the part of the Core Team. According to the 2014 school survey, a slight majority (56.1%) of respondents described MTSS as a "district-led" initiative; however, this does not necessarily mean that the district has taken a district-wide approach (as Wichita has done). Sixty-seven percent of Kansas districts have had schools who have participated in formal MTSS training, according to the data on annual training participation, while 18 districts have engaged in district-wide training and are taking a district-wide approach to MTSS.

What are the Next Steps for MTSS in Kansas?

Next steps for MTSS in Kansas may be summed up as, "Stay the course." Investment in district-level capacity building, the strengthening of the Core Team, and continual adherence to the MTSS framework, as more and more districts and schools join the MTSS ranks, will sustain and expand MTSS over time. Investment in a statewide data system would enable KSDE to document the impact MTSS is having on student outcomes.

The evaluation activities over the past four years—from the annual online survey to the school case studies, the in-depth study of Wichita as the evaluation's district-wide example to interviews with the Core Team—have provided a valuable perspective on sustainability of a statewide initiative such as MTSS—what it takes and what the challenges are. Staff buy-in and support, the

integration and institutionalization of MTSS practices so that it becomes routine, the "way of doing things" and the umbrella for all school improvement efforts appear to be key. Training of staff, flexible scheduling, and the purchase of resource materials are all necessary but not sufficient. Sustained and continued district and school leadership support for MTSS through words and action are critical for statewide and local sustainability.

Kansas is both at a turning point and tipping point with regard to MTSS. The shift to a district-level focus for training and support and the move to the integrated model represent key decision-points in the process of statewide implementation. A scaling up tipping point may have been reached in terms of the number of schools and districts that are engaged in MTSS statewide. At this point in time, 48.0% of the 1,472 schools in Kansas have participated in some level of formal MTSS training. These schools represent 67.0% of the 293 districts across the state.

A stay-the-course/on-message approach from the state level on down appears to be the way to move forward with expansion and sustainability.

Introduction

The focus of Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) is to improve outcomes for all students by instituting system-level change across the classroom, school, district, and state. Such systemic change is accomplished through development of a coherent continuum of evidence based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to each student's academic and behavioral needs, and features frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision making.

Kansas MTSS integrates what is known about the components of effective schools into a single framework for improved social and academic outcomes for all students. Core components include evidence-based curriculum, high-quality instruction, a comprehensive assessment system, data-based decision making, effective intervention, fidelity of implementation, on-going professional development, and leadership within an empowering school and district culture.

Implementation of MTSS has grown rapidly in Kansas and is a key approach used for turning around low-performing schools in the state, with more than a third of all public schools implementing MTSS to date. WestEd finds that Kansas MTSS is substantially contributing to improved student outcomes at the local level, benefits to teachers, improved instruction, and better school functioning.

After a competitive request for proposal process, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) contracted with WestEd, an independent, not-for-profit research, evaluation, technical assistance, and professional development organization, to conduct an external evaluation of the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS).

The WestEd evaluation team's task was to design, pilot, refine, and implement an evaluation system that measures the statewide progress of MTSS toward its main goal: creating a statewide system of support to local schools and districts in order to increase school capacity to use resources in ways that enable every child to be successful. The project was intended to provide formative and summative evaluation information to KSDE for improving and sustaining MTSS at the school, district, and state levels.

A conceptual framework was developed by KSDE to visually represent MTSS (at right). The graphic illustrates that MTSS is more than a system of tiered academic and behavioral interventions targeted to "few," "some," or "all" students. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment form the core of the framework that supports all students while the core, in turn, is supported by leadership, professional development, and an empowering culture. Taken together, these components represent the Kansas MTSS framework.

This final, summative report synthesizes data collected throughout the four-year evaluation project, describes the current status of MTSS implementation, and provides insights as to what it takes to implement MTSS with fidelity.

WestEd found that Kansas MTSS is substantially contributing to improved student outcomes at the local level as well as resulting in benefits to teachers, improved instruction, and school functioning. Leadership and support from the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) Office of the Commissioner has been instrumental in the promulgation of MTSS as a framework for improving the education of all students. This summative evaluation report synthesizes data collected throughout the four-year evaluation project, describes the current status of MTSS implementation, and provides insights as to what it takes to implement MTSS with fidelity. The report is organized around the evaluation's six main findings summarized in the Executive Summary. It concludes with comments about the next steps for MTSS implementation in Kansas.

The evaluation was guided by five evaluation questions:

Scope: How many schools and districts are participating in MTSS?

Implementation: Annually, how many schools and districts are (a) exploring the use of MTSS to meet students' academic and behavioral needs, (b) adopting and installing components of MTSS (e.g., assessments, curriculum, instruction, etc.), or (c) successfully implementing MTSS with fidelity?

Student Outcomes: How are students in schools and districts that are fully implementing MTSS performing?

Statewide System and Infrastructure: How effective are KSDE and MTSS Core Team activities in supporting statewide implementation of MTSS with fidelity by schools and districts?

Sustainability: How successful are schools and districts in sustaining MTSS?

WestEd designed a multi-year, mixed-methods evaluation system. The evaluation system was designed to give a complete picture of the implementation and early impact of MTSS. A mixed methods design was used to provide a full and comprehensive view of MTSS implementation across Kansas from the perspectives of key stakeholders and participants and to offer an in-depth portrait of implementation in selected schools and districts across the state. The system was piloted and refined in 2011 prior to full implementation in 2012 through 2014. Key data collection activities included:

- An annual survey, entitled the Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices with responses from more than 500 schools per year;
- Two-day site visits to six schools where core and intervention instruction and team meetings were observed and interviews and focus groups were conducted with leadership teams, teachers, and staff;

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- Periodic interviews with KSDE leadership;
- Periodic interviews with all members of the Core Team;
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- Document review;
- Annual observation and participation in the Kansas MTSS Symposium;
- Annual collection of grade-level universal screening data for selected schools; and
- Annual analysis of school-level state assessment data.

Evaluation Findings

Scope and Reach of Kansas MTSS

The scope and reach of MTSS as a statewide initiative is well-established in Kansas, with 48.0% of all schools having participated in formal MTSS training. The state may be at a "tipping point" in terms of statewide scale-up and installation of MTSS across the state.

At this point in time, 48.0% of the 1,472 schools in Kansas have participated in formal MTSS Structuring or Implementation training in one or more content areas (reading, math, and behavior). These schools represent 67.0% of the 293 districts across the state showing that approximately two-thirds of public school districts in Kansas have schools that have participated MTSS formal training between 2005 and 2014. Eighteen districts have taken a district-wide approach to implementing MTSS. About 224,000 (43.0%) of all Kansas public school students are enrolled in schools that have participated in Structuring or Implementation training since 2008, the point at which the current MTSS framework and training model being evaluated began being used.

Over the course of the MTSS evaluation, participation in formal MTSS training and local implementation has increased across the state. To date, 704 schools have participated in one or more Structuring trainings to plan and prepare to implement the MTSS framework in reading, math, or behavior, with 408 (58.0%) of these continuing on to complete Implementation Training. The majority of training has been in the area of reading, followed by behavior and then math.

Based on 2014 interviews with the state-level Core Team, members' assessment of the current status of MTSS implementation in Kansas is that:

> "Everyone knows what MTSS is."
>
> "The whole state knows what a multi-tier system is but they may not have chosen to do it."
>
> "The message is out there: MTSS is the school improvement approach in the state."

Given that there is no state mandate for schools and districts to implement MTSS, Core Team members and KSDE leadership are encouraged by the growth in the number of implementing schools over the past five years. They expect continued scaling-up of MTSS implementation across the state.

Successful Implementation of Kansas MTSS

Hallmarks of strong implementation include adherence to the Kansas MTSS framework, specifically leadership at the school- and district- levels; high-quality core curriculum,

instruction, and assessment practices; an empowering culture with increased teacher collaboration; data use; ongoing professional development; and the alignment and integration of school improvement initiatives.

Over the course of the evaluation, common practices and features of schools fully implementing MTSS show what it takes for successful MTSS implementation. The consistent implementation of these practices results in a smoothly run system that is achieving its intended outcomes.

What MTSS Looks Like in Schools

Commonalities among the case study schools provide a good picture of what MTSS looks like in practice. At the elementary and middle grades level, we typically see a school-level leadership team involving classroom teachers, special education teachers, one or more administrators, and sometimes a counselor or school psychologist. This group serves to train teachers and paraprofessionals; it reviews school-wide data and makes decisions using the data-based feedback loop. Frequently this group is charged with vetting and deciding upon which curricular interventions to use and organizing the three-times-per-year universal screening. In addition to the leadership team, schools at full implementation often have a formal or informal MTSS site coordinator—frequently the Title I teacher. This coordinator usually meets with grade-level teams on a weekly basis to review progress monitoring data and/or review and adjust the student groupings for intervention. At the elementary level, it is not uncommon for student groups to change on a weekly basis. At the middle school level, groups change less frequently but usually on a monthly basis or at the end of a marking period. At the high school level, seat time and credit requirements often result in intervention time being offered as an elective "class" with adjustments made on a semester basis.

At the elementary and middle grades level, we see schools that have carved one or two intervention blocks into their daily schedules. These blocks are sometimes the result of slightly longer school days or shortened periods, or, at the middle and high school levels, by shortening the time between classes. During intervention blocks, all students participate in a small group activity based on the results of their universal screening and diagnostic assessment data. Students identified as at-risk or below grade level participate in focused skill-based reading and/or math interventions. At the elementary school level, we might see groups of three to five students working with a teacher or paraprofessional on very specific reading and language skills such as consonant blends. At the middle school, it is typical to see small groups working on reading with age-appropriate stories that teach and reinforce basic reading skills such as fluency or comprehension.

Schools establish a consistent schedule for intervention time. Students typically leave their classrooms and walk to their designated intervention group, which may be meeting in another classroom or school space, such as the library. Students generally participate in

intervention activities for four days a week, with the fifth day reserved for quick progress monitoring assessments, the results of which are used to determine the appropriate group and activities for the following week. Grade-level teams meet weekly to coordinate the intervention time, determine interventions to be used, and review data.

Supports for Implementation

Key supports identified through the evaluation include leadership, ongoing professional development, integration of school improvement initiatives, and paying attention to fidelity. Across evaluation data sources, these supports emerged as key to ensuring a high level of implementation. None of the factors are surprising, as they have been identified in other studies as important facilitators to school-level program implementation.[1]

Leadership

Consistently across all data sources, leadership at the school and district levels is necessary for successful implementation. District and principal leadership and support are needed to make big changes and hard decisions, such as changes to schedules, staffing, and allocation of resources. The priorities of district and school leadership also send clear messages to teachers about what the focus of their efforts should be. For example, in Wichita, the superintendent and school board clearly articulated that implementing an MTSS framework in reading and behavior is the work and focus of the whole district. They laid out a five-year implementation plan that included initial and ongoing professional development, the development of tools and processes to support and track the work, and the creation of cross-district teams to inform and guide the process. In Wichita schools, the impact of these leadership actions is evident; schools are engaging in the key MTSS practices with a high degree of fidelity and there is use of common language across the district to describe these practices.

Fidelity

In this evaluation, fidelity to the MTSS framework was determined through school-level self-report in response to the annual Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices. Survey items addressed the degree to which the key features of the MTSS framework are being addressed in schools implementing MTSS. For the case study schools, the evaluators also observed for fidelity to the framework during their site visits.

[1] See for example: Kincaid et al., 2007; Fixsen et al., 2009; Mendenhall et al., 2013.

Professional development/preparation to implement

Consistent with the implementation science literature[2], schools identify professional development, especially ongoing professional learning supports, as key to implementation. Schools report that it is helpful to participate in a year of Structuring training before actual implementation. Implementation is also supported by working with a Recognized MTSS Facilitator and/or a school-based MTSS coordinator. Working with a facilitator provides school staff with an external expert who can answer questions and/or help work through challenges. Similarly, an in-house coordinator can provide such supports as professional learning for data use and advice for small group instructional interventions.

Integration across school improvement initiatives

Research supports the idea that coherence and alignment among various school programs are important factors in supporting their implementation.[3] When MTSS is established as the framework under which all school improvement initiatives are organized, as opposed to "just one more" initiative, there is a greater level of support for implementation among school staff. Such coherence is evident in MTSS case study schools in the coordination of staff, resources, and schedules. Examples of state initiatives that have been aligned with MTSS include the Kansas Learning Network (KLN), which supports low-performing Focus and Priority Schools identified under the ESEA waiver, school accreditation standards, teacher evaluation systems, and the adoption of the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards.

Attention to fidelity of implementation

Case study and survey data indicate that schools that established formal processes for monitoring fidelity of implementation seemed to achieve stronger or higher levels of implementation. These schools had teams, such as the MTSS leadership team, who monitored to ensure that teachers were teaching the core curriculum, that progress monitoring occurred, that students participated in interventions, and that the interventions were delivered with fidelity. These schools closely followed the state-developed Structuring and Implementation guides in monitoring MTSS practices.

Challenges to Implementation

As consistently described across data sources, high-quality implementation of MTSS is not necessarily easy or smooth. To implement MTSS with fidelity requires systems change,

[2] Fixsen et al., 2005.

[3] Beaver & Weinbaum, 2012; Newmann et al., 2001

which the literature and experience indicates is never without challenge.[4] Some challenges consistently noted by schools implementing MTSS in Kansas include:

Changes in staff and leadership

In the early phases of implementation, there is frequently a "champion" for MTSS at the school level. This champion is often a teacher, Title I teacher, or principal. When this leader or champion leaves a school before MTSS is firmly ingrained or institutionalized, MTSS implementation may be difficult to sustain. Related, while a great deal of professional development for teachers and staff occurs early in the implementation process, if ongoing professional development is not continued, there can be a loss of understanding and knowledge about MTSS, particularly with staff turnover.

Course selection and credit accumulation at the secondary level

Implementation of MTSS in middle and high school is complicated by course selection and, at the high school level, credit accumulation issues. Because of the way most middle and high schools schedule classes, intervention time usually takes the place of an actual class, typically an elective. Students are locked into the intervention period for an entire semester regardless of how quickly they master the targeted skills or content. Furthermore, students may be forced to give up an elective class they enjoy in order to participate in intervention, which may be a disincentive to getting needed academic support.

Scheduling time for implementing the MTSS framework

It is challenging for educators to find time in their daily schedules to implement all of the required tasks and practices of the MTSS framework. Scheduling challenges also include the time it takes to find, vet, organize, and prepare for the daily intervention activities. Time for collaborative teacher teams to review student progress and to plan interventions is also difficult to work into the school day.

Integrating multiple MTSS content areas

To date, most schools have started MTSS implementation with one MTSS content area (reading, math, or behavior) and once implementation is solid, consider adding an additional area. Schools find it a logistical challenge to integrate a second or third MTSS area, because this expansion raises organizational and coordination questions such as whether two leadership teams are required and/or two intervention periods.

Staff knowledge and skill in designing intensive interventions

Some school staff report concerns or challenges in finding the appropriate intervention for students who are not progressing as expected when using a particular intervention. The

[4] See for example, Fixsen et al., 2005; Hall & Hord, 2006.

question becomes how to appropriately address the needs of students who need more intensive, highly individualized support.

Stages of Implementation

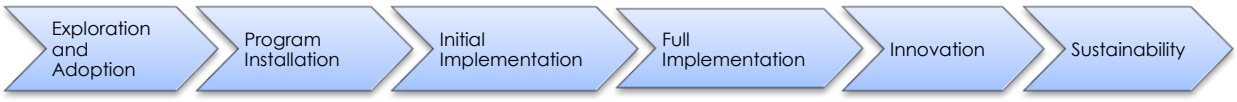
Implementation of MTSS at the school level is increasingly consistent with the Kansas MTSS framework. Schools are moving from exploration or learning about MTSS to more advanced implementation stages over time.

The evaluation was designed to gauge the stage of implementation of each school implementing MTSS. Progress of MTSS implementation at the school level appears to be consistent with the Kansas MTSS framework. MTSS is being implemented to some degree in 94.4% of the 555 schools that responded to the Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices. Schools are increasingly at the initial implementation stage that includes a key set of practices related to universal screening, leadership practices, assessment, instruction, data use, and professional development.

Stages of Implementation

Dean Fixsen and colleagues (2005) developed a typology to describe program implementation along a continuum of six stages. The Fixsen framework was used to inform WestEd's thinking about the range of implementation of MTSS in school buildings and districts. The increasing levels or stages of implementation include exploration and adoption, installation, initial implementation, full implementation, innovation, and sustainability. The stages can be viewed as markers along a continuum of implementation, as depicted in Figure 1. Given that it can take 3–5 years for a program to reach the full implementation stage, for the purposes of this evaluation, WestEd focused on the first four stages. A school's stage of implementation was determined by the school's response to a set of 22 items on the Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices.

Figure 1. Stages of Implementation



Adapted from Fixsen et al. (2005)

The 2014 statewide Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices yielded results that provide a snapshot of MTSS implementation in schools across Kansas. Among the 555 respondents, 75.5% reported that they were currently implementing MTSS and another 10.7% of respondents reported they are planning to implement. About 81.0% (448) of respondents are implementing MTSS at the initial implementation level or higher, and this is likely an underestimate as it is based only on those schools responding to the survey. A large majority (84.8%) of respondents are implementing in reading, more than

half are implementing in math (56.9%), and 43.7% of respondents are implementing in behavior (see Appendix B for a summary of the 2014 survey findings). The percentage of schools scoring at the full implementation stage remained stable at 8.3% for 2014. A similar pattern of responses was reported in 2012 and 2013.

Table 1 shows responding schools' stages of MTSS implementation by year. Among the 2014 respondents, 46 schools (8.3%) scored at the full implementation stage and have institutionalized the practices of MTSS to a high degree of self-reported fidelity. Another 72.4% were at the initial implementation stage. A comparison with 2012 and 2013 results shows that the percentage of schools scoring in the initial implementation stage increased significantly, from 32.8% in 2012, to 67.9% in 2103, to 72.4% in 2014. This corresponds to a parallel change in schools scoring in the exploration stage which shifted from 40.5% (2012) to only 11.8% (2013) and 12.6% (2014), indicating movement from exploration to initial implementation from one year to the next.

Table 1. Classification of Responding Schools by Stage of Implementation

Stage of Implementation	2012		2013		2014	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
No stage	77	11.7	55	9.3	31	5.6
Exploration	266	40.5	70	11.8	70	12.6
Installation	58	8.8	16	2.7	6	1.1
Initial Implementation	215	32.8	402	67.9	402	72.4
Full Implementation	40	6.1	49	8.3	46	8.3
Total Implementers	579	88.2	537	90.7	524	94.4
Total	656	100.0%	592	100.0%	555	100.0%

Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

Statewide 2014 MTSS survey data indicate that MTSS is being implemented to some degree in 94.4% of responding schools; that is, those respondents that scored in one of the stages of implementation. This percentage increased steadily from 88.2% in 2012 and 90.7% in 2013. Survey responses in 2014 indicated that 72.4% of responding schools were at the initial implementation stage and 46 schools (8.3%) were at the full implementing stage.

Table 2 shows how schools moved between the stages of implementation from 2013 to 2014. The table is based on the 292 schools that responded to the survey in both 2013 and

2014. Looking at the row of initial implementation in 2013, we see that of the schools scoring in the initial implementation stage in 2013, 88.5% remained at initial implementation in 2014, 7.4% scored at full implementation in 2014, and 4.1% scored at the exploration stage. Of those schools at full implementation in 2013, 37.8% remained at full implementation and 62.2% scored at the initial implementation stage. It is important to note that the criteria used for survey scoring at the full implementation stage are quite stringent and a different response to one or two items can move a school from full to initial implementation, one year to the next. As noted above, systems change is not a linear process. Schools may move back and forth on the stages continuum, gradually making progress over time.

Table 2. Movement of Schools between Stages of Implementation, 2013 to 2014

Stage of Implementation	Exploration 2014	Installation 2014	Initial Implementation 2014	Full Implementation 2014
Exploration 2013	18 (51.4%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (45.7%)	1 (2.9%)
Installation 2013	3 (42.9%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (57.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Initial Implementation 2013	9 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	192 (88.5%)	16 (7.4%)
Full Implementation 2013	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (62.2%)	14 (37.8%)

Note: This table is based on the subset of schools that responded to the survey in both 2013 and 2014.
Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

To achieve full implementation, schools must meet nine specific criteria, corresponding to 20 items on the Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices. For the initial implementation stage, schools need to achieve between one and eight of the criteria. Table 3 below shows the number of criteria achieved by schools in the initial and full implementation stages. The table indicates that 58 schools scored eight of the criteria and almost achieved the full implementation stage, that is, they missed only one of the nine criteria necessary for full implementation.

Table 3. Number of Implementation Criteria Achieved by Schools, 2014

Number of Criteria Met	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
1	36	8.0%
2	42	9.4%
3	41	9.1%
4	53	11.8%
5	57	12.7%
6	57	12.7%
7	58	13.0%
8	58	13.0%
9 (Full Implementation)	46	10.3%
Total	448	100.0%

Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

Further analysis of the self-reported survey data shows that the criterion related to data-based decision making is the one that is met the least consistently, with only 43.9% of schools meeting the criterion in 2014. The items related to data-based decision making include that the school leadership team reviews data monthly. In contrast, the criterion related to universal screening is the mostly likely to be met, with 87.5% of schools reportedly conducting universal screening three times per year (once a year for high school).

Requirements for Fully Implementing MTSS

Analysis of the 2014 school survey data shows that schools scoring in the full implementation stage on the school survey appear to share common practices and characteristics. These trends are demonstrated in a series of charts presented in Appendix C. These practices were also evident in the case study schools, which, except for one high school, scored at full implementation.

Schools in the full implementation stage are more likely than schools in the lower stages to:

- Have participated in formal MTSS training experiences, both Structuring and Implementation training.
- Describe their MTSS work as a district-led rather than a building-led initiative.

- Operate well-established building-based leadership teams and teacher Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).
- Have shared vision and common language across staff about MTSS.
- Implement the following key/core MTSS practices:
  - Analysis of universal screening data
  - Use of screening and progress monitoring data to inform instructional decision-making
- Demonstrate increases in students scoring at benchmark on universal screener and as proficient or above on the state assessment, and decreases in office discipline and special education referrals.
- Provide the ongoing professional development needed to sustain MTSS implementation over time.
- Report the following practices:
  - The MTSS framework, principles, and practices are widely accepted and institutionalized in the school
  - MTSS is integrated with overall school improvement efforts
  - Schools have the leadership and support needed to sustain MTSS implementation over time
  - Staff support MTSS

Fully implementing schools are also less likely than schools scoring in lower stages of implementation to report that the following are a barrier to MTSS implementation:

- Staff turnover
- Changes in district leadership
- Competing school improvement initiatives
- Lack of time to implement MTSS with fidelity within the school day

These results are consistent across 2013 and 2014 data.

In short, these are the factors that appear to represent "what it takes" to implement MTSS with fidelity (see Infographic, "MTSS implementation: What does it take?" In Appendix D):

- Strong building-based and district-supported leadership
- Ongoing professional development
- High-quality core curriculum, assessment, and instruction
- An empowering culture of shared vision, common language, staff support, and wide implementation of MTSS principles and practices
- Strengthening of and support for implementation through leadership, documented impact on student outcomes, alignment and integration with

other school improvement initiatives, and adequate planning and collaborative problem-solving within the school day.

The Benefits of Kansas MTSS

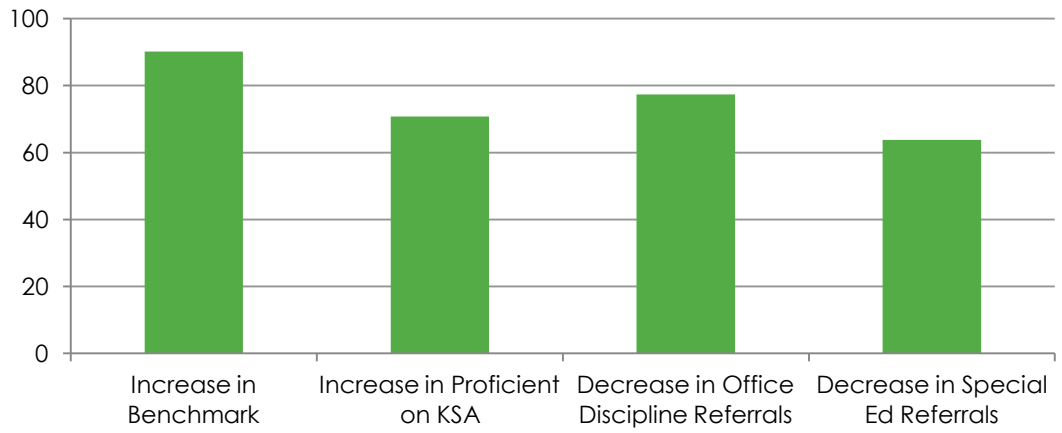
The consistent implementation of MTSS practices is substantially contributing to improved student outcomes at the local level as well as resulting in benefits to teachers, improved instruction, and school functioning. Data from multiple sources, including the school survey, focus groups, interviews, and school site visits, indicate that MTSS is resulting in increased learning for students, including improved skills in reading and math that position students for ongoing achievement at expected levels.

Benefits to Students

Qualitative Data

As noted in Figure 2, respondents to the Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices reported that to "some" or "to a great extent" implementing MTSS has had a positive impact on student outcomes: students scoring at benchmark (89.5%); students scoring as proficient on the state assessment (70.3%); decrease in Office Discipline Referrals (77.1%); and decrease in special education referrals (63.4%).

Figure 2. Percentage of Schools Reporting MTSS Impact on Student Outcomes "to some extent" or "to a great extent," 2014



Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

Interview and focus group data from the Core Team, KSDE leadership, case study school interviews, and Wichita focus groups with teachers; principals and MTSS Facilitators also support the positive impact of MTSS on student achievement and behavior.

Commonly reported benefits included (1) local school and district data showing improvements in both academics and behavior (e.g., universal screening data, progress

monitoring data) and the progress of students from lower levels of tiered interventions; (2) improvements in school culture and attitudes about student discipline, including schools taking a systemic view and intentional review of student data; (3) students receiving support and intervention earlier and thus "catching up" due to early intervention; (4) increased individual student goal setting based on their own data, (5) increased student motivation and pride in accomplishments; and (6) increased efficiency in the special education referral and evaluation process, which now includes more data-based information about referred students.

Building-Level Status Form Data

Universal screening assessment data from a sample of schools shows gains on average for reading and math, with the exception of third grade math. The largest gains were evidenced in Kindergarten.

Behavior data, which are tracked as office discipline referrals by grade level, show a decrease in students scoring at benchmark (see Tables 4–6). Specifically, in reading the greatest gains are in Kindergarten and first grade. Similar growth was found for math in Kindergarten but the trend did not hold for grade 1. The behavior data show a loss of progress over the course of the school year. It is important to note that Building-Level Status Form data are from a small number of schools and cannot be considered causal. The low number of reporting schools, especially in math (9–11 schools) and behavior (5 schools) makes the Building-Level Status Form data inconclusive.[5]

When interpreting these data it is important to consider that universal screeners are not pre/post tests but rather are designed to measure student academic growth over the school year. During that period, the expectations increase as the school year progresses. As a result, a student who scores below benchmark in September may grow in his/her skills but may not yet reach the higher end-of-year benchmark. Similarly, a student above benchmark in the fall may not stay at that level if he/she does not acquire the expected increase in skills over the school year. Benchmark screening data are summarized in tables 4 through 8 and figures 3 through 5 below. The tables show the average change in the percentage of students scoring at benchmark by grade and subject. The tables also show the minimum observed difference and the maximum observed difference.

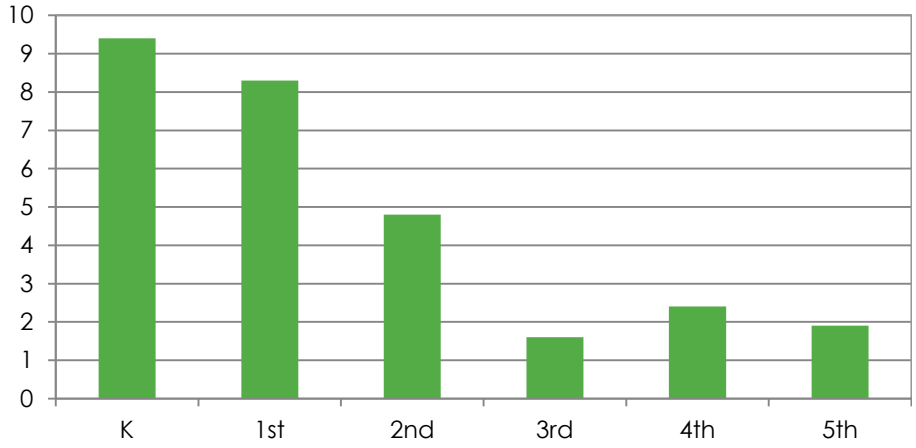
[5] BLSF data in reading and math were collected only from schools at the full implementation stage that serve any of grades K–5. Behavior data were collected only from schools at the full implementation stage that serve any of grades 6–8.

Table 4. Reading: Average Change in Percentage of Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring, 2013/14

Reading	Change in % at Benchmark (Spring minus Fall)			
Grade	Average	Minimum Difference	Maximum Difference	N
K	9.4	-37	37	18
1st	8.3	-12	38	18
2nd	4.8	-14	36	19
3rd	1.6	-23	18.8	19
4th	2.4	-7	22.7	19
5th	1.9	-12.8	23	17

Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

Figure 3. Reading: Average Increase in Percentage of Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring, 2013/14



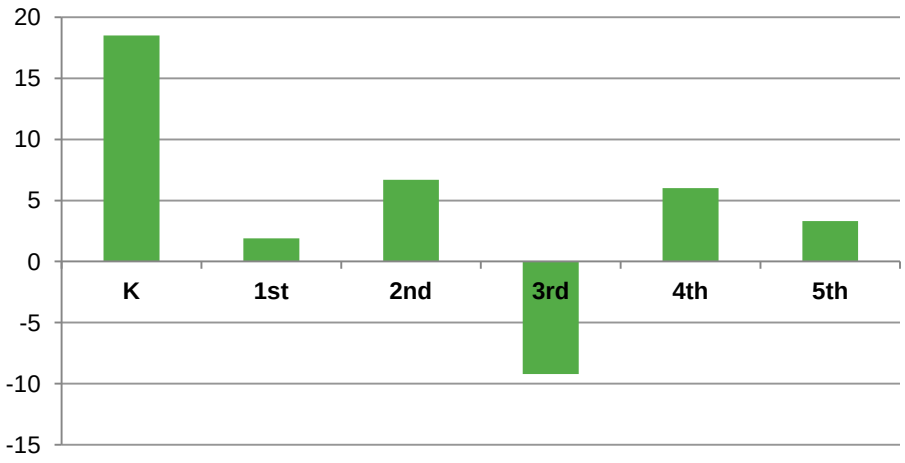
Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

Table 5. Math: Average Change in Percentage of Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring, 2013/14

MATH	Change in % at Benchmark (Spring minus Fall)			
Grade	Average	Minimum Difference	Maximum Difference	N
K	18.5	5.1	36.1	9
1st	1.9	-37.6	25.8	10
2nd	6.7	-7.2	17	9
3rd	-9.2	-35.9	15	11
4th	6	-9.3	24	11
5th	3.3	-33	24.8	10

Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

Figure 4. Math: Average Change in Percentage of Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring, 2013/14



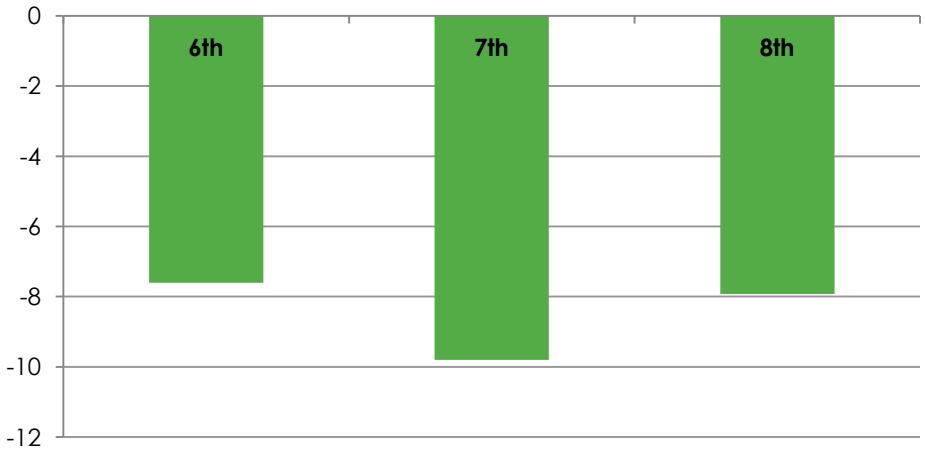
Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

Table 6. Behavior: Average Change in Percentage of Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring, 2013/14

BEHAVIOR	Change in % at Benchmark (Spring minus Fall)			
Grade	Average	Minimum Difference	Maximum Difference	N
6th	-7.6	-16.6	1.5	5
7th	-9.8	-18.21	0.6	5
8th	-7.92	-16.1	-0.7	5

Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

Figure 5. Behavior: Average Change in Percentage of Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring, 2013/14



Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

State Assessment Analyses

To examine the achievement of students in schools implementing MTSS, WestEd also analyzed student performance on the Kansas State Assessment in math and reading. Evaluators did not have access to individual student data. Further, data were aggregated to the school level due to low numbers of students in each cell when looking at achievement by grade.

Table 7 presents the school-wide elementary math data and Table 8 presents the elementary reading data. The tables show the percentage of tested students school-wide who scored in the "meets" or "exceeds" standards category in 2011, 2012, and 2013 for schools according to their 2013 implementation stage, compared to other elementary schools. The tables also show change over time. Note that Kansas State Assessment results saw a sharp decline statewide in 2013 compared to previous years, possibly due to a change in standards that was not reflected on the assessments.

For math (Table 7), schools statewide saw decreases between 2012 and 2013 in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards, with fully implementing schools reporting the smallest percentage point decrease.

Table 7. Average Percentage of Elementary Schools Meeting or Exceeding Standards on the Kansas Mathematics Assessment, by Stage of Implementation, 2011, 2012, and 2013

Stage of Implementation†	N	2011	N	2012	N	2013	Percentage Point Change 2011 to 2012	Percentage Point Change 2012 to 2013
Full Implementers	36	88.80	36	88.30	36	82.00	-0.50	-6.30
Initial Implementers	244	89.05	245	89.41	245	82.05	0.36	-7.36
Installation	6	86.62	6	91.45	6	79.56	4.83	-11.89
Exploration	24	89.36	23	90.49	23	83.15	1.13	-7.34
Some Training*	169	88.42	164	88.25	158	80.60	-0.17	-7.65
No Implementation/ No Training*	386	87.74	380	87.51	376	80.50	-0.23	-7.01

† Note that the stage of implementation is based on each school's categorization as of the 2013 survey.
*Note: Schools in these categories did not respond to the survey and therefore could not be classified by stage of implementation.
Source: Authors' analyses of Kansas State Department of Education data

The average percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in elementary reading (Table 8) declined over time among MTSS implementers at all stages, as well as all elementary schools statewide. The decreases from 2012 to 2013 are larger than the decreases evidenced from 2011 to 2012.

Table 8. Average Percentage of Elementary Schools Meeting or Exceeding Standards on the Kansas Reading Assessment, by Stage of Implementation, 2011, 2012, and 2013.

Stage of Implementation†	N	2011	N	2012	N	2013	Percentage Point Change 2011 to 2012	Percentage Point Change 2012 to 2013
Full Implementers	36	87.33	36	87.00	36	83.48	-0.33	-3.52
Initial Implementers	244	89.81	245	89.43	245	86.34	-0.38	-3.09
Installation	6	88.45	6	89.71	6	82.15	1.26	-7.56
Exploration	24	91.06	53	90.26	23	87.44	-0.8	-2.82
Some Training*	169	88.40	164	86.94	158	83.14	-1.46	-3.8
No Implementation/ No Training*	386	89.07	380	87.41	376	84.04	-1.66	-3.37

† Note that the stage of implementation is based on each school's categorization as of the 2013 survey.
*Note: Schools in these categories did not respond to the survey and therefore could not be classified by stage of implementation.
Source: Authors' analyses of Kansas State Department of Education data

School-level analysis of achievement data is not particularly sensitive because it can mask differences between grade levels. Nonetheless, it is the only student achievement data available to compare schools fully implementing MTSS to other schools. Due to the fact that the 2014 assessment was different from prior years and to problems with implementing the statewide assessment in 2014, no new statewide data on the achievement of schools implementing MTSS is available. The analyses above relied on data from 2011 through 2013. Hard data on student achievement is not available statewide. State assessment data is inconclusive as to any patterns or trends in the achievement levels of schools implementing MTSS.

Benefits to Teachers

Data from interviews, focus groups, surveys, and case studies also identified benefits for teachers in schools implementing MTSS. These benefits include increased teacher collaboration through common planning and data review meetings, greater awareness of student levels of functioning and how to meet those needs, and increased use of data. Teachers reported that "MTSS makes them better teachers."

Teachers and school leaders in the case study schools and at the district level reported that through MTSS implementation teachers: (1) develop a common language; (2) develop a culture of collaboration with less isolation, and the breaking down of "silos"; (3) improve instruction and classroom/behavior management; (4) demonstrate greater ownership of

and comfort with looking at and using data; and (5) show wider acceptance of shared responsibility for all students.

These reported impacts of MTSS enhance teachers' work and skills and increase instructional quality and teacher capacity to serve all students, reaffirming what has been found in the literature on what is needed to support school improvement.

KSDE Support for Kansas MTSS Implementation and Sustainability

KSDE has established an effective statewide infrastructure to support and sustain MTSS implementation. Components include the MTSS Core Team, the cadre of Recognized MTSS Facilitators, the annual MTSS Symposium, an extensive and frequently updated website of materials, research, and resources on MTSS, and an ongoing dissemination plan implemented in coordination with the Kansas Technical Assistance System Network (TASN). Professional development materials are well aligned with national professional learning standards (Learning Forward, 2012).

Respondents to the 2014 school survey reported that, "to some extent" or "to a great extent," KSDE has established the necessary infrastructure to sustain and extend MTSS implementation over time (77.4%), that KSDE effectively disseminates information about MTSS (75.9%), that there are sufficient resources (76.0%), and that MTSS is clearly aligned with other state and local improvement initiatives (79.3%). Sixty-one percent of respondents agreed that there are sufficient Recognized MTSS Facilitators to support MTSS statewide.

Effective Dissemination

Information gathered from principals of schools around the state indicates a high level of agreement that the KSDE disseminates information about MTSS effectively. The 2014 school survey results showed that 75.9% of respondents agreed "to some extent" or "to a great extent" that KSDE/MTSS Core Team effectively disseminates information about MTSS.

Dissemination about MTSS occurs in several ways, most notably the KSDE's annual MTSS Symposium and the KSDE website, the TASN website, and the http://www.KansasMTSS.org website. Support for MTSS implementation statewide was also included in Principle 2 of the state's ESEA Flexibility Waiver (http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/map/ks.html) and MTSS is a requirement for Focus and Priority Schools identified under the waiver.

The Symposium is a two-day event that includes pre-session MTSS and related practices training with the MTSS Core Team and national content experts (e.g., Anita Archer in reading and Randy Sprick in behavior). For each of the past five years, over 1,000 participants have attended the Symposium. The 2014 Symposium included

approximately 1,300 participants from Kansas and a number of other states, a pattern of cross-state participation that is growing year by year. Kansas' MTSS Symposium is becoming known as the "go to" conference for in-state and out-of-state implementers of MTSS.

State Level Resources Available to Schools and Districts

The statewide availability of resources for MTSS implementation includes the cadre of Recognized MTSS Facilitators, the MTSS materials, and the Core Team and their support for district-level training. Schools and districts contract with educational service centers or individual Recognized MTSS Facilitators to provide training and support. Direct Core Team support is provided to schools identified as "Priority" schools under the state's ESEA flexibility waiver. To facilitate coordination and integration, MTSS and the work of the Core Team have been integrated with the Kansas Technical Assistance System Network (TASN), which provides technical assistance to support school districts' systematic implementation of evidence-based practices designed to improve achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities (http://ksdetasn.org).

The Kansas MTSS website contains a wealth of resources and information about MTSS with guidance documents to support the exploration of, planning for, and implementation of MTSS. The website is frequently updated with new information and resources, including Structuring and Implementation guides. These are "open source" materials available to anyone.

Quality of Kansas MTSS Training and Guidance Materials

In 2014, WestEd conducted a second extensive and systematic review of MTSS training and guidance documents. The documents reviewed include those that were developed to be used in formal MTSS training and by schools engaged in the Structuring and Implementation process. The purpose of the document review was to assess the alignment of the training materials with nationally accepted standards for professional development and to update findings from the original 2012 review. All documents reviewed are available on the KSDE MTSS website at http://www.kansasmtss.org. WestEd found that MTSS training programs and materials are well aligned with evidence-based professional development principles and practices.[6]

[6] The Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning (2012) were used as the standard. Learning Forward identifies seven standards, and several corresponding indicators for professional development designed to support adult learning, change teacher practice, and result in positive outcomes for all students.

Further Investments KSDE Needs to Make

Evidence collected from a number of sources suggests that KSDE has been very thoughtful and intentional in its approach to supporting MTSS implementation and sustainability. Evidence from the 2014 school survey, the Core Team, KSDE leadership, case study principal and administrator interviews and focus groups, the document review, and the MTSS website demonstrates that KSDE and the Core Team are effectively supporting implementation of MTSS with fidelity. Examples include the regular updating of training materials to incorporate and reflect the changing research base, the development of new refinement training, and the oversight of Recognized MTSS Facilitators until a high level of fidelity to the training is achieved. The incorporation of "lessons learned" from the Core Team's current approach to working with schools and districts (e.g., the change to a focus on district level capacity building prior to school building training) provides further evidence of KSDE's responsiveness.

When asked what investments or actions KSDE needs to take to further strengthen MTSS, the Core Team's responses focused on the following: (1) a statewide data system that would create the ability to look at data across the state and trends at the state level; (2) the integration of reporting requirements; (3) staying on message: "MTSS is the work"; (4) periodic updates to the State Board; and (5) investment in coaching capacity at the district and school level.

Many of these same issues were identified by KSDE leadership, which also noted the need to more fully integrate early childhood into the MTSS framework and to provide additional district-level support, particularly with implementation issues at the middle and secondary levels. KSDE leaders also emphasized the need for continued investment in resources to support Core Team capacity, statewide professional development, and ongoing support to districts and schools.

Refinement of Kansas MTSS Statewide Implementation

MTSS implementation is being refined in Kansas to focus at the district, rather than the individual, school level, and to the use of an "integrated model" where the areas of reading, math, and behavior are approached simultaneously.

Implementing MTSS on a school-by-school basis has brought the initiative to this point, but to fully build capacity across the entire system to continuously implement the MTSS framework with a high level of fidelity, it will take a coherent, systematic, district-focused approach. This evaluation and experience with school-level implementation also pointed to the need to integrate the three MTSS areas of reading, math, and behavior. The shift to investment at the district level in using the comprehensive, integrated three-tier MTSS: CI3T framework will require increased capacity on the part of the Core Team.

Four 2014 evaluation activities addressed changes in MTSS implementation from the perspective of those directly involved either at the state, district, or school building level.

As described by Core Team members and KSDE leaders, there are two major changes occurring in MTSS implementation in Kansas: (1) a shift from a focus of implementation at the individual school level to an emphasis on district-level or district-wide implementation and (2) a change from a "one area at a time" approach (i.e., reading, math, or behavior) to an integrated approach where a district and the schools within it embark on all three areas at once, integrating academics and behavior into one multi-tiered system of support. This refined approach is referred to as the Kansas MTSS: CI3T model, which brings together the Kansas MTSS framework and the comprehensive, integrated, three-tiered model of prevention (http://ci3t.org/) developed by Dr. Kathleen Lane and Dr. Wendy Oaks. The integrated model brings together all of the components of Kansas MTSS and CI3T into a single, integrated whole.

Role of the Core Team

The move to an integrated approach has changed the role of the Core Team. The Core Team has moved from a model where members specialized in one content area to integration of and collaboration in how the team members deliver services, provide training, and work with districts. It has also changed from a focus on the development of the cadre of Recognized MTSS Facilitators to an emphasis on working directly with districts to develop their capacity to support schools within the district. As one team member described it, "The Core Team really is our 'boots on the ground' for having a sense of how MTSS is being implemented through our state training system." And another noted, "We are in the beginning stages of recreating ourselves." "We'll be state coaches."

Changes at the Local Level

The follow-up visit to Wichita, as the evaluation's example of district-wide MTSS implementation, revealed a number of changes over the course of the district's four years of work: (1) an increased reliance on data for decision-making; (2) an acceptance of shared responsibility for the success of all students; and (3) a renewed focus on quality core instruction.

For the case study school principals, several reported administrative or leadership changes at the local level. Other changes in MTSS implementation included: (1) scheduling adjustments; (2) selecting new curriculum or intervention materials; (3) a decision to use certified teachers rather than para-educators for implementing interventions; (4) an emphasis on more "standardized" practices in terms of interventions, overall curriculum, or use of collaborative team time; and (5) adding a new MTSS area (e.g., math or behavior). The overall impression is that schools are attempting to fine-tune, tighten up, or improve MTSS implementation but are challenged by administrative and staff turnover and reorganization.

Shift in Focus for Investment

Since the inception of MTSS in Kansas, a large part of the Core Team's work was to train and monitor Recognized MTSS Facilitators who then provided MTSS training to schools and school-level teams (trainer-of-trainers model). This investment in the cadre of Recognized MTSS Facilitators was intended to make statewide expert training and ongoing support available to schools as they moved through the stages of MTSS implementation. In 2014, KSDE and the Core Team made the decision to shift their focus from further development of the cadre of Recognized MTSS Facilitators to an investment in the development of district capacity for the implementation of MTSS. Recognized MTSS Facilitators are still available to support individual schools or districts through contracts with one of Kansas's regional Educational Service Centers; however, the Core Team will be working with district teams with the intent of developing district-level capacity for system-wide implementation of MTSS. The 2014 school survey showed that 60.6% of respondents agreed that "to some" or "to a great extent" there are sufficient Recognized Facilitators to support MTSS statewide. A current list of MTSS Facilitators is available at http://kansasmtss.org/training.html.

The shift to investment at the district level using the integrated MTSS: CI3T framework will require increased capacity on the part of the Core Team. According to the 2014 school survey, a slight majority (56.1%) of respondents described MTSS as a "district-led" initiative; however, this does not necessarily mean that the district has taken a district-wide approach (as Wichita has done). While 67.0% of Kansas districts have had schools who have participated in formal MTSS training, according to the data on annual training participation, just 18 districts have engaged in district-wide training and are taking a district-wide approach to MTSS. The MTSS Core Team will need to strengthen its capacity to meet the anticipated demand for district-level support.

Conclusion

This is a final, summative report of the four-year MTSS external evaluation conducted by WestEd for the Kansas State Department of Education. The evaluation was designed to assess the state's progress in creating a statewide system of support to local schools and districts in order to increase school capacity to use resources in ways that enable every child to be successful.

The Core Team's shift in MTSS implementation from a focus at the school to the district-level marks a critical turning point in MTSS implementation in Kansas. In the absence of a state mandate, the degree of MTSS scale-up or lasting systems change envisioned by the KSDE and the Core Team cannot be achieved statewide through a one-building-at-a-time approach, such as that initially used to launch MTSS. Recent research supports the state's district-focused strategy for expanding MTSS.[7] School districts in the U.S. that have been able to demonstrate system-wide school improvement indicate that district-level support is essential if the system's lowest performing schools are to improve.[8] However, in other respects, Kansas is at a "tipping point" with regard to MTSS implementation.[9]

Experts on scaling-up of new innovations estimate that the threshold for scaling-up an evidence-based program is reached when at least 60.0% of the "service units" (in this case schools implementing MTSS) in a system are using the program (in this case MTSS) with fidelity and positive outcomes.[10] It is at this point of implementation, they hypothesize, that the system itself would need to have changed to sustain the outcomes of the program.

MTSS has met this "scaling up" or "tipping point" standard for implementation in Kansas, based on the Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices, which indicates 90.0% of schools that responded to the survey are implementing MTSS to some degree, i.e., scoring in at least one of the stages of implementation. Further, participation data for formal MTSS training show that 67.0% of Kansas school districts and 48.0% of all public schools have participated in some level of formal MTSS training. The move to focus at the district level at this point makes good "implementation sense."

Kansas is on the brink of the threshold that will tip the scale of implementation to full scale-up of MTSS. As Fixsen and colleagues have observed, the capacity for scaling-up innovations statewide is dependent upon the ability to capitalize on opportunities to

[7] Zavadsky, 2012.

[8] Zavadsky, 2013.

[9] Gladwell (2000) defines "tipping point" as "the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point."

[10] Fixsen et al., 2013.

"develop and institutionalize the infrastructure needed to support the full and effective use of innovations."[11] As data from this evaluation show, Kansas is doing just that.

Next Steps for Scaling-Up Kansas MTSS

Kansas must keep its focus on MTSS, continuing to integrate the framework into the state's other statewide policy initiatives while it also continues to use its statewide networks, expert Core Team, and training and professional development resources to continue to build the state's capacity to sustain and grow MTSS.

Comprehensive data and findings from this evaluation provide clear indicators of what it takes for a school to reach full implementation of MTSS. Successful implementation requires:

Leadership—at the building and, increasingly, at the district level

High-quality core curriculum, assessment systems, and instruction—a coherent system that starts with a strong curricular and instructional foundation, informed by assessments

Empowering culture—where a majority of staff support MTSS and all staff speak a common language and share a collective vision of MTSS, with wide-spread acceptance of the MTSS principles and practices and protected time for collaboration around instruction and assessment

Professional development—ongoing professional development to support implementation with fidelity, training for new staff, and ongoing coaching and facilitation

Support for implementation—integration and alignment of MTSS practices with school needs and other initiatives, documentation of impact on student outcomes, district-wide support, and opportunity for collaboration within the school day

Kansas is both at a turning point and tipping point with regard to MTSS. Next steps for MTSS in Kansas may be summed up as, "stay the course." Investment in district-level capacity building, the strengthening of the Core Team, and continual adherence to the MTSS framework as more and more districts and schools join the MTSS ranks will sustain and expand MTSS over time. Investment in a statewide data system would enable KSDE to document the impact MTSS is having on student outcomes. An "on- message" approach from the state level on down appears to be the way to move forward with expansion and sustainability.

[11] Fixsen et al., 2009, p. 1.

Next Steps for Sustaining Kansas MTSS

Next steps for MTSS in Kansas may be summed up as "stay the course." Investment in district-level capacity building, the strengthening of the Core Team, and continual adherence to the MTSS framework as more and more districts and schools join the MTSS ranks will sustain and expand MTSS over time. Investment in a statewide data system would enable KSDE to document the impact MTSS is having on student outcomes.

There is high confidence in the sustainability of Kansas MTSS across all respondents. Schools responding to the 2014 Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices reported few major barriers to sustainability. Two main barriers to sustaining MTSS were noted by survey respondents: (1) the time it takes to implement MTSS with fidelity within the school day, where 89.0% of respondents indicated that this was a barrier "to some" or "to a great extent" and (2) lack of fiscal resources, which 88.8% reported concern "to some" or "to a great extent."

Similarly, follow-up interviews with the case study schools and the district case study site, Wichita, also showed high confidence in the sustainability of MTSS. Even in the face of a number of administrative changes at the local level, the majority of the case study school principals interviewed in 2014 are optimistic about MTSS sustainability. They have an established system in place that can be built upon and strengthened. They advocated for continued administrative and district-level leadership and support, refresher professional development, and mentoring for new staff. They noted the importance of keeping teachers motivated by giving teachers clear direction with flexibility and time to work together.

Interviews and focus groups conducted in 2014 with the Core Team, KSDE leadership, and with case study school principals surfaced similar issues. The factors identified as essential for sustainability included: (1) building leadership; (2) district commitment/ownership; (3) "social validity"—staff buy-in; (4) increased capacity to support the integrated model as more cohorts come onboard (e.g., statewide coaches); (5) capacity to support schools/districts that were trained in the "old model"; (6) integrate the new model and keep schools "on track"; (7) a "culture of collaboration" to support MTSS; (8) fidelity to the process; and (9) a statewide data system to demonstrate impact.

Several other key sustainability issues raised by the Core Team and KSDE leadership included the integration of MTSS content areas, the need to integrate MTSS with other state initiatives, and ensuring support to districts and district support to schools. They also reported a need for the state to maintain the focus on MTSS, including maintaining it as a State Board priority, so that school/district attention is not diverted by potentially competing priorities. Related is the idea that the TASN grants can be leveraged to increase the impact of MTSS. The state has aligned new school accreditation standards with the MTSS framework, and TASN grants will be awarded contingent on MTSS core features. State-level leadership also acknowledged that the work of implementation needs the

commitment of statewide resources, through TASN's statewide projects, which provide direct support to schools and districts. Investment in the Core Team will be necessary to maintain the expanded role of Core Team members in supporting district-level implementation. State leaders see MTSS as the vehicle through which districts and schools will achieve systems change and improvement.

The evaluation activities over the past four years—from the annual online survey to the school case studies, the in-depth study of Wichita as the evaluation's district-wide example, and the interviews with the Core Team—have provided a valuable perspective on the challenges and capacity required to sustain a statewide initiative such as MTSS. Staff buy-in and support, the integration and institutionalization of MTSS practices so that it becomes routine, the "way of doing things," and the umbrella for all school improvement efforts appear to be key. Training of staff, flexible scheduling, and the purchase of resource materials are all necessary but not sufficient. Sustained and continued district and school leadership support for MTSS through words and action are critical for statewide and local sustainability.

Recommendations

To support high-quality MTSS implementation with fidelity in schools and districts across Kansas, KSDE will want to:

- Support robust and accurate statewide data collection to establish and monitor the impact of MTSS implementation on students.
- Invest in district-level/district-wide training and support and capacity development to assist in further scaling-up of MTSS across Kansas.
- Balance the decreased investment in the cadre of Recognized MTSS Facilitators with increased district-level/district wide training and ongoing support to schools within districts.

Appendices

Appendix A: Evaluation Methods

In this section we outline the evaluation methods implemented during 2014 and used as data sources for this report. These methods and data sources build upon the evaluation efforts in 2012 and 2013.

School Survey

In the spring of 2014, WestEd fielded the third collection of the online survey Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices. This survey was designed to be completed by the principal of every K-12 public school building in Kansas, even those not implementing MTSS. Requests for survey completion were sent by email to schools from the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services, Brad Neuenswander, using KSDE email lists. An initial email request and several follow-up requests were sent.

The survey was designed to gauge the extent to which schools are implementing MTSS. Responding schools were asked an extensive series of questions about their practices and perspectives in the following areas:

- Leadership and Empowerment
- Assessment Practices
- Curricular and Instructional Practices
- Data-based Decision-making
- Tiered Interventions
- Student Outcomes
- Professional Development
- Barriers and Supports to Implementation
- Integration and Sustainability

Survey methods and results can be found in the Executive Summary of the Effective Instructional Practices Survey Findings which is in Appendix B of this report.

The survey was designed to categorize each responding school into one of five stages of implementation based on their responses (see table A 1 below). The stages are based on the essential features and required practices of MTSS, as outlined in the KSDE's MTSS Innovation Configuration Matrix. Among the respondents in 2014, 46 schools or 8.3% scored at the full implementation stage and have institutionalized the practices of MTSS to a high degree of self-reported fidelity. The percentage of schools at full implementation

is the same as in 2013. Another 72.4% were at the initial implementation stage, which is an increase over the previous two years, suggesting that over time, schools are implementing the MTSS framework to a greater degree. Overall, 94.4% of schools scored in one of the stages of implementation. Over time, the evaluators will continue to track the stage of implementation of responding schools through future administrations of the survey.

Table A1. Classification of Responding Schools by Stage of Implementation

Stage of Implementation	2012		2013		2014	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
No stage	77	11.7	55	9.3	31	5.6
Exploration	266	40.5	70	11.8	70	12.6
Installation	58	8.8	16	2.7	6	1.1
Initial Implementation	215	32.8	402	67.9	402	72.4
Full Implementation	40	6.1	49	8.3	46	8.3
Total Implementers	579	88.2	537	90.7	524	94.4
Total	656	100.0%	592	100.0%	555	100.0%

Source: Authors' analyses of primary data collected

Limitations of the survey include that schools indicating they were implementing MTSS were over-represented in the respondent pool. This may be an indication that those schools not implementing MTSS were less inclined to respond to the survey. While the results provide an accurate impression of the practices being used in schools implementing MTSS, the survey responses do not provide a precise account of the number of schools implementing MTSS as a percentage of all schools across the state. Another limitation of the survey is the fact that the data come from self-reports. Further, the survey was sent to principals at all schools; however, it is possible that the principal may not have been the person at the school with the most knowledge of MTSS practices. Principals were instructed that they could respond to the survey in consultation with others, and survey data show that most respondents were indeed self-identified principals.

Building-Level Status Form Collection

Building-Level Status Form (BLSF) data represent the grade level universal screening results gathered in the Fall, Winter, and Spring of each year. The data report the percentage of students in each grade and time period who are at Benchmark (Tier 1) and those who score at the Supplemental (Tier 2) and Intensive levels (Tier 3). These data were

requested only from schools that were classified as fully implementing MTSS according to the school responses on the Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices. Data were requested for the 2013/14 school year.

BLSF data were collected from fully implementing schools for specific grade levels and MTSS focus areas:

- Math—grades preK–5
- Reading—grades preK–5
- Behavior—grades 6–8

BLSF data are used to examine change in the percentage of students scoring at benchmark from the fall to the spring of each academic year. An analysis of the BLSF data is provided in the section entitled "Benefits to Students."

Extant KSDE State Assessment Data

In addition to BLSF data, extant school-level data from the Kansas state assessment were examined to address student outcomes. This analysis can be found in the section on student outcomes (see section entitled "Benefits to Students").

WestEd requested school-level assessment data from the KSDE Research and Evaluation Team, which provided school-level data (for schools with 10 or more students reporting) for the 2010/11, 2011/12, and the 2012/13 school years. State assessment data from 2014 were not produced and would not have been comparable given that the assessment changed from the previous years.

We examined the percentage of students scoring at meeting and exceeding the standards for schools grouped by stage of implementation as determined by the Effective Instructional Practices Survey. We also looked at change in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards from 2011 to 2012 to 2013 for schools classified as fully implementing compared to schools that had not participated in MTSS. This analysis was done separately for math and reading.

Building-Level Training Participation

The MTSS Core Team has been tracking school and district participation in formal MTSS training since 2005/06. These data were provided to the WestEd evaluation team to determine the scope of MTSS training participation across the state (Evaluation Question 1). Several analyses of these data are conducted to examine which types of schools and districts are participating in training.

Focus Groups with Recognized MTSS Facilitators

To address Evaluation Questions 4 and 5 regarding the effectiveness of the statewide MTSS system and infrastructure and questions about the sustainability of MTSS, WestEd gathered qualitative data in group interviews with Recognized MTSS Facilitators. In September 2013, at the annual MTSS Symposium in Wichita, Kansas, WestEd evaluators conducted two focus groups with Recognized MTSS Facilitators.

Interviews with KSDE Leadership and Core Team Members

In the fall of 2014, individual telephone interviews were conducted with five key individuals in leadership roles at KSDE to obtain an update on MTSS implementation from their perspective. Interviews addressed status and progress in MTSS implementation, changes to MTSS and the training model, facilitators and barriers to implementation, and integration of various policy initiatives.

Case Studies

A key source of data for Evaluation Question 2 on implementation is in-depth case studies of MTSS implementers. In October 2013, WestEd evaluators conducted site visits to two "full implementation" schools and one "initial" implementer. Observations and data from the case studies are found in the section on Evaluation Question 2.

The three case study schools were selected from the pool of schools classified as "fully implementing" MTSS based on their survey responses; in other words, only schools categorized as "fully implementing" MTSS according to their survey responses were considered for case studies. No high schools met the criteria for full-implementation, and a high school case study site was selected from the pool of initial implementers.

Two-day site visits were conducted with each case study school. The onsite activities included: (1) direct observation of how MTSS operates in school buildings, including observation of instruction and intervention at Tier 1 (core), Tier 2 (strategic), and Tier 3 (intensive) instruction and intervention levels; (2) individual and/or group interviews with teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and others who support implementation of MTSS; and (3) a review of other extant data on student outcomes and related MTSS documents.

Appendix B: Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices Summary, 2014

MTSS 2014 Survey of Effective School Practices: Executive Summary

Introduction

This Executive Summary presents a summary of responses received for the *MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices*. This survey was conducted in March and April 2014 by WestEd as part of the external evaluation of Kansas MTSS. The purpose of the survey was to gather school-level data about the implementation of MTSS and the effective instructional practices being used in schools across the state. The 2014 administration of the survey was the third and final administration as part of the evaluation.

Principals of 1,472 public schools in Kansas were asked to complete the on-line survey, even if they were not currently implementing MTSS. The survey was voluntary and principals could refuse to participate. At the end of the survey, 554 valid responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 38 percent statewide.

The survey was organized by the following topic areas:

- Introductory Questions
- Leadership and Empowerment
- Assessment Practices
- Curricular and Instructional Practices
- Data-based Decision-making
- Tiered Interventions
- Student Outcomes
- Professional Development
- Barriers and Supports to Implementation
- Integration and Sustainability

The survey was designed to categorize schools by stage of implementation based on their responses. Scoring criteria were developed based largely on the Kansas *MTSS Innovation Configuration Matrix.* Fixsen et al. (2005) conceptualize the implementation of an innovation along a continuum of six stages: Exploration, Installation, Initial Implementation, Full Implementation, Innovation, and Sustainability. The survey was used to categorize schools into four of the six stages, up to Full Implementation.

Summary of Survey Results

The survey provides a snapshot of MTSS implementation across schools in Kansas. The respondents to the survey were currently implementing MTSS (75.5%) with another 10.7 percent of respondents planning to implement. The majority of those implementing are doing so in reading (84.8%). More than half of respondents are

implementing Math (56.9%) and 43.7 percent of respondents are implementing in behavior.

Data from the survey indicates that schools are using the MTSS resources provided by or via state. A majority of schools have: participated in an MTSS Introductory Session (86.8%); participated in MTSS Leadership Essentials (57.8%); participated in an MTSS Symposium (66.2%); accessed documents or materials on the MTSS website (79.5%). Additionally, over 60% of schools reported having participated in Structuring and/or Implementation Training with a recognized MTSS facilitator.

Leadership

In more than half of the responding schools, MTSS is a district-led initiative (56.1%). Districts are providing a range of supports for MTSS implementation, with the two most common being curriculum and intervention materials (70.4%) and PD on MTSS or specific interventions or assessments (74.3%). But few schools report having a building-based MTSS facilitator or coach, either full (15.1%) or part-time (14.9%).

Implementation

The practice of universal screening is more common in the areas of reading and math, than in behavior. Almost three-quarters of schools (73.8%) implementing in reading report conducting universal screening at least three times a year, as do 61.5 percent of schools implementing in math. However, only 18.9% of schools implementing in behavior report universal screening in behavior at least 3 times per year.

Schools are reporting usually or always engaging in data-based decision-making practices to support MTSS, such as reviewing school-wide academic data or using data to provide interventions. Similarly, a large percentage of schools report usually or always engaging in recommended MTSS tiered-intervention practices, such as monitoring student progress on interventions (87.5%) and using decision rules to determine the need, intensity, and duration of interventions (73.2%). Most schools also report providing protected daily core instruction (94.3%) and daily protected intervention time (85.8%).

Student Outcomes

Most respondents report to “some” or “to a great extent” that implementing MTSS has had positive impacts on student outcomes: students scoring at benchmark (89.5%); students scoring as proficient on the state assessment (70.3%); decrease in Office Discipline Referrals (77.1%); and decrease in special education referrals (63.4%).

Professional Development

Schools appear to be implementing the recommended MTSS practices to some extent. For example, 94 percent of schools report having provided professional development to teachers and other staff on MTSS implementation. However, 40.5 percent of respondents indicate that they received no on-going support from a recognized MTSS Facilitator.

Barriers and Supports to Implementation

Schools report many factors as supporting implementation and few as major barriers. The three supports that respondents most frequently identify as "major supports" to implementation are: (1) district support (53.3%), (2) building leadership support (58.9%), (3) impact on student outcomes (47.6%). The three barriers that respondents most commonly identify as "major barriers" are: (1) the time it takes to implement (18.3%), (2) the complexity to implement (8.8%), and (3) the quality of their facilitator (6.2%).

Integration and Sustainability

Schools appear to be taking steps to integrate MTSS into other initiatives, or to integrate other initiatives with MTSS. Most respondents report they have aligned resources to support MTSS to a great extent (50.4%) and that to a great extent MTSS is integrated with other school improvement initiatives (68%). Additionally, a majority report that MTSS is institutionalized in their school to some or a great extent (94.5%), that staff support MTSS (96.2%) and that they have the leadership to sustain MTSS (95.6%).

In terms of long-term sustainability of MTSS, the most common areas of concern are the time it takes to implement (42.3%) and fiscal concerns (48.5%).

Stages of Implementation

The evaluators categorized each responding school into a stage of implementation based on their survey responses. Among the current respondents, 46 schools or 8.8 percent scored at the "full implementation" stage and have institutionalized the practices of MTSS to a high degree of self-reported fidelity. The largest percentage of respondents (76.7%) are at the "initial implementation stage." The table below shows that over the three years of the evaluation, schools are increasingly moving into the initial implementation stage. The criteria to achieve full implementation are quite rigorous and few schools achieve all of them.

Stage	2012*	2013*	2014
Exploration	40.5%	11.8%	13.4%
Installation	8.8%	2.7%	1.2%
Initial Implementation	32.8%	67.9%	76.7%
Full Implementation	6.1%	8.3%	8.8%

*Some responding schools were classified as "no stage" and thus the totals may not equal 100%.

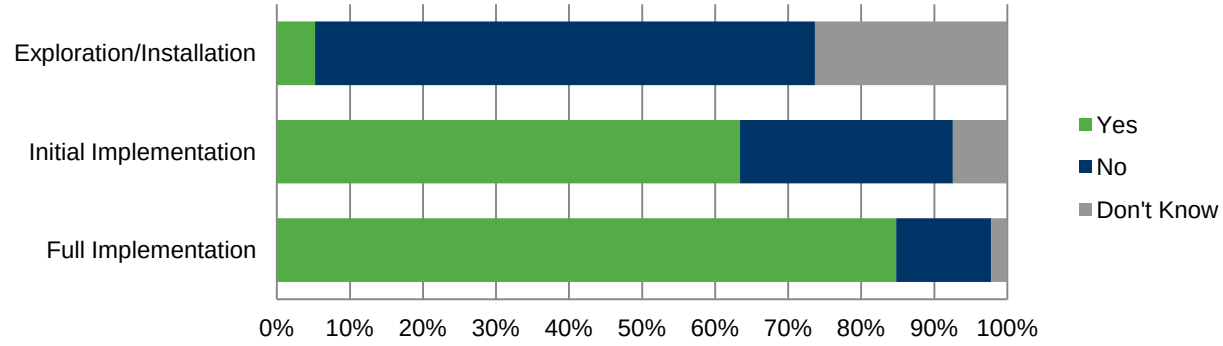
Conclusion

Data from the 2014 implementation of the *MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices* are relatively consistent with the 2013 survey. The data show that for schools implementing MTSS, and that is 75.5 percent of survey respondents, the majority are engaging in the key MTSS practices of training, universal screening, providing protected core and intervention time, using data, and progress monitoring. The survey respondents report that to a great extent, their schools are aligning resources to support MTSS implementation, MTSS is integrated with other school improvement initiatives and is becoming institutionalized in their schools.

Appendix C: Analysis of Kansas MTSS School Survey of Effective Instructional Practices, by Stages of Implementation

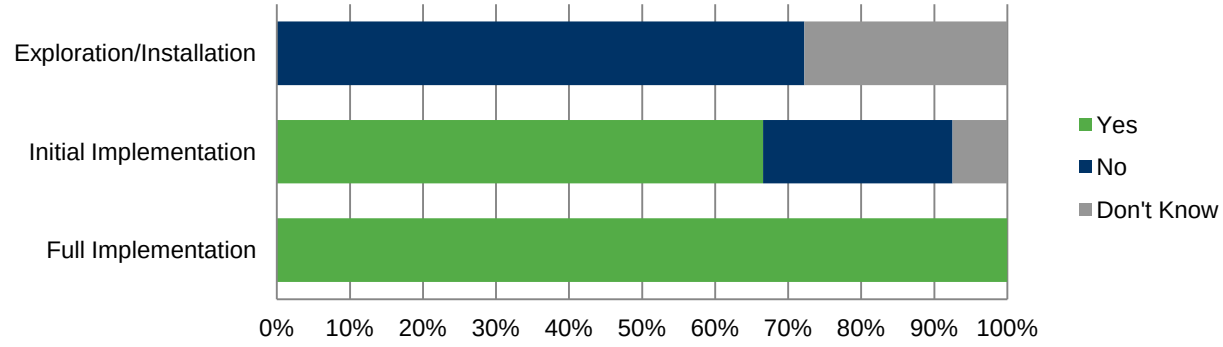
Has your school participated (or is currently participating) in MTSS Structuring?

Figure C1. School Participated in Structured Training



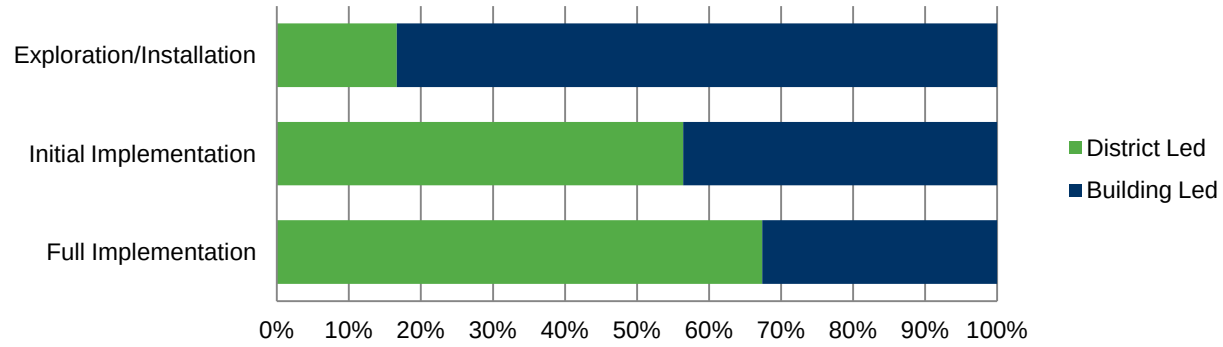
Has your school participated (or is currently participating) in MTSS Implementation training?

Figure C2. School Participated in Implementation Training



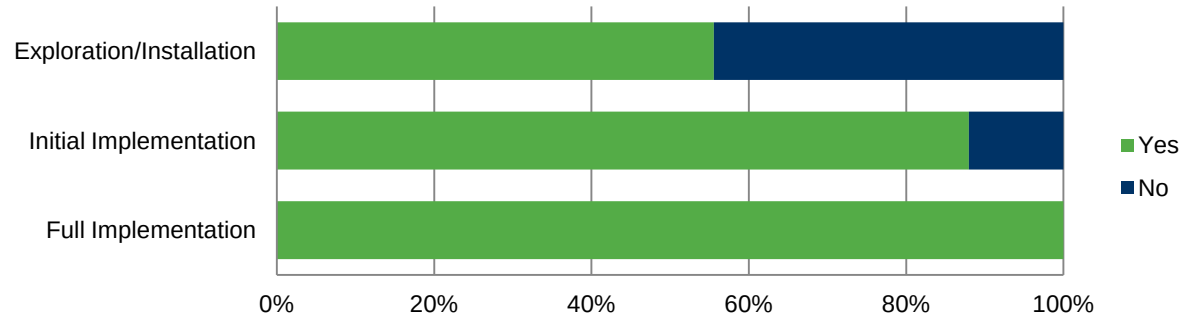
Thinking about MTSS in your district, is MTSS more district- or building-led?

Figure C3. MTSS District- or Building-Led?



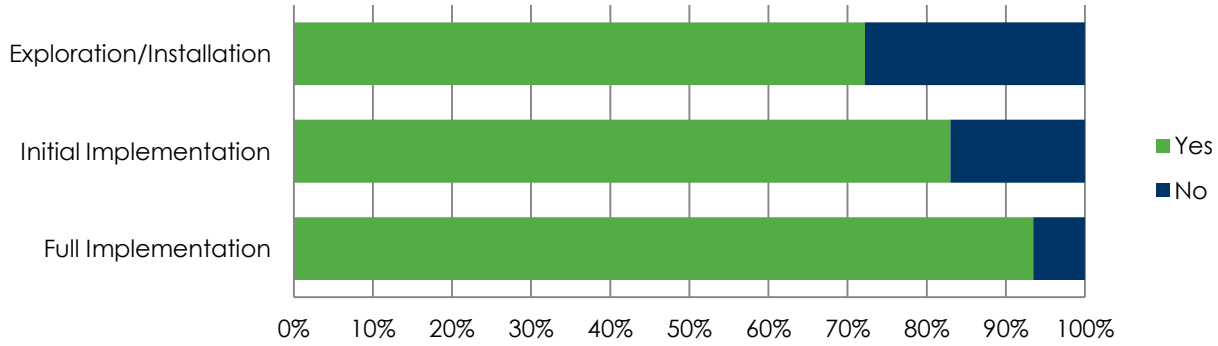
Does your School have a build-based Leadership Team?

Figure C4. Building-Based Leadership Team?



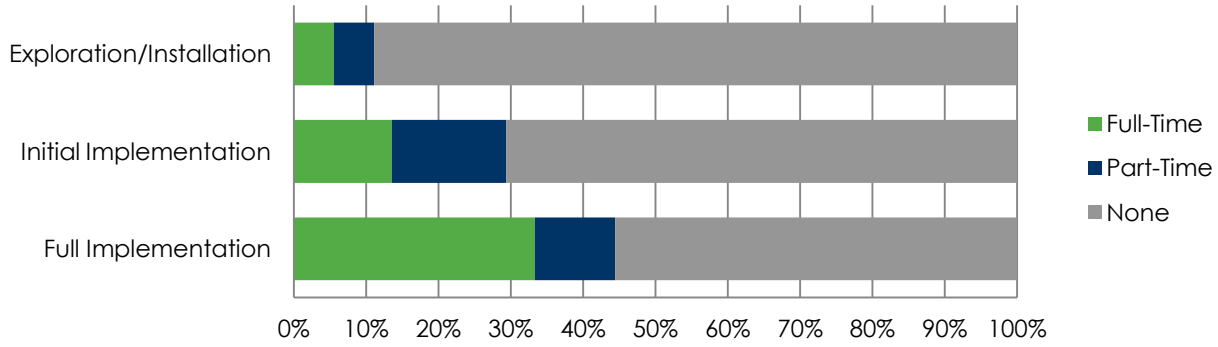
Does your school have collaborative teacher teams or professional learning communities?

Figure C5. Collaborative Teacher Teams or PLCs?



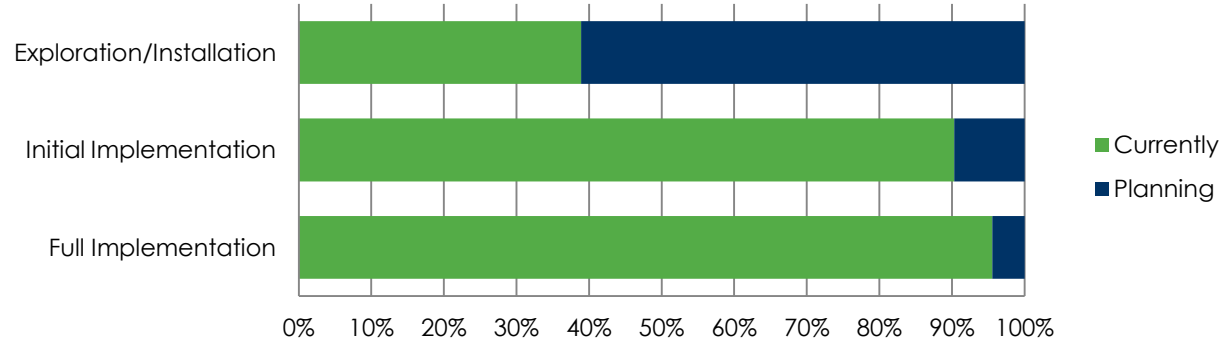
Does your school have a building-based MTSS facilitator or coach that is employed by your school or district?

Figure C6. Building-based MTSS Facilitator or Coach?



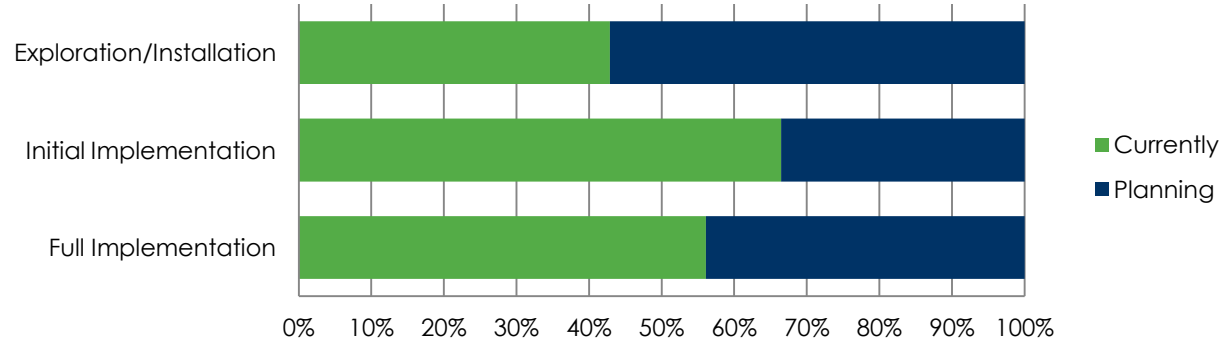
In which content areas are you implementing or planning to implement? – Reading?

Figure C7. Planning to Implement Reading?



In which content areas are you implementing or planning to implement? – Math?

Figure C8. Planning to Implement Math?



Please indicate the extent to which the following leadership practices occur at my school: Shared vision for MTSS at my school? Common language about MTSS?

Figure C9. Shared Vision for MTSS at My School

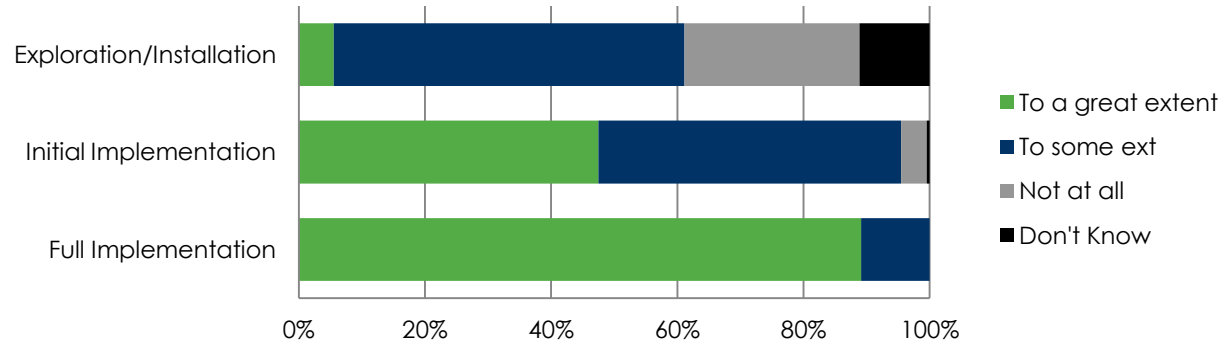
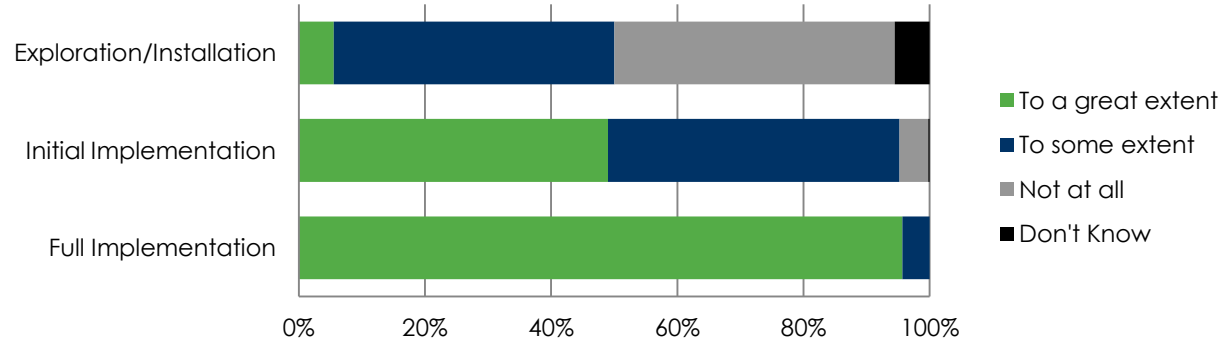
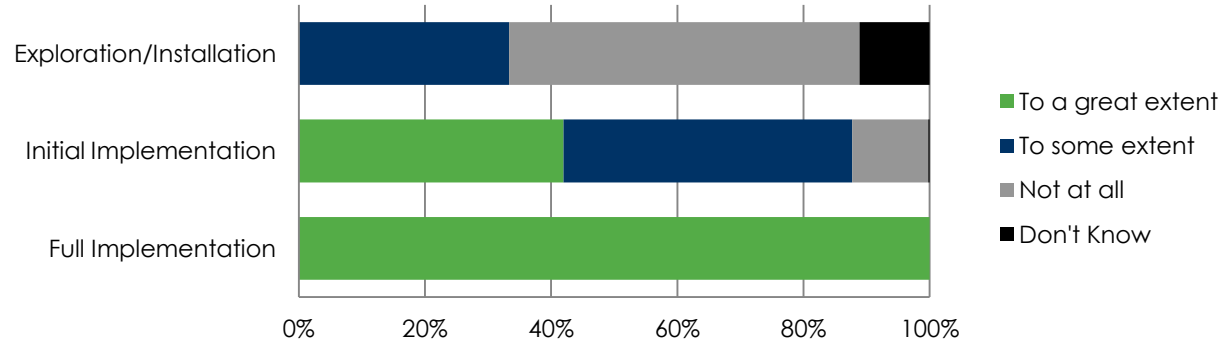


Figure C10. Common Language About MTSS



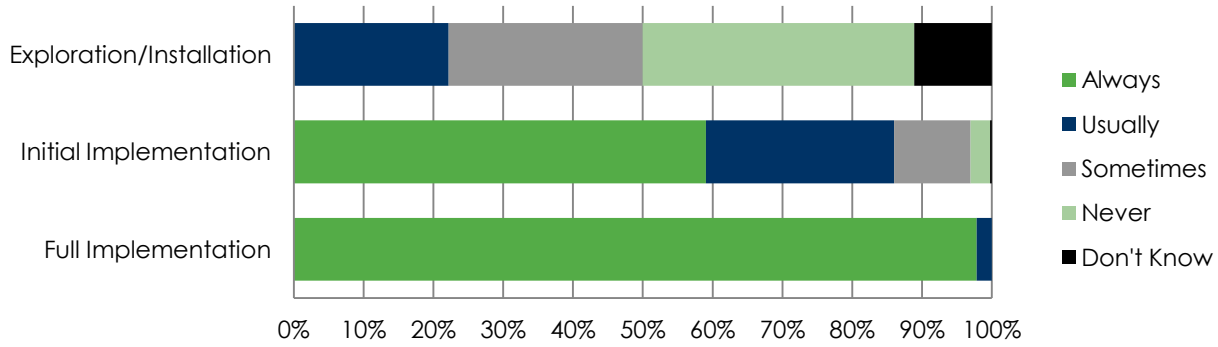
The Leadership Team analyzes universal screening data after each collection.

Figure C11. Leadership Team Analyzes Universal Screening Data



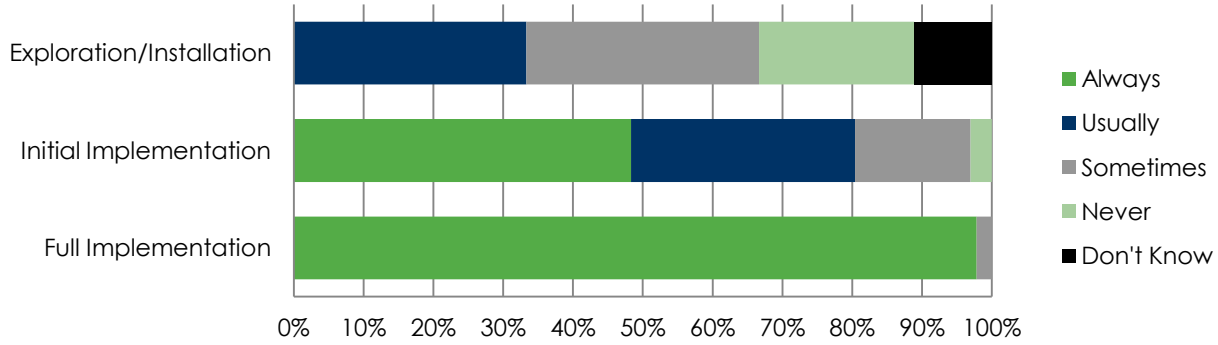
Universal screening data are used to inform decisions at the school and system level.

Figure C12. Screening Data Informs Decision Making



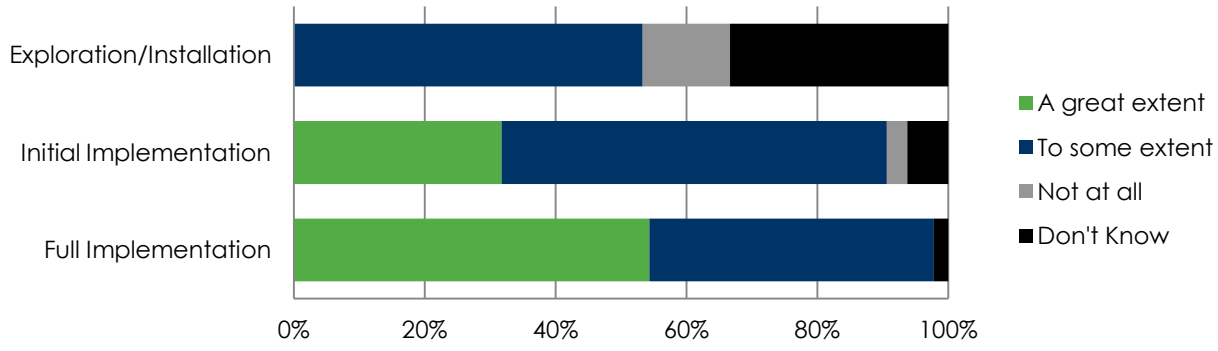
Progress monitoring data are used to inform decisions at the school and system level.

Figure C13. Progress Monitoring Informs Decisions



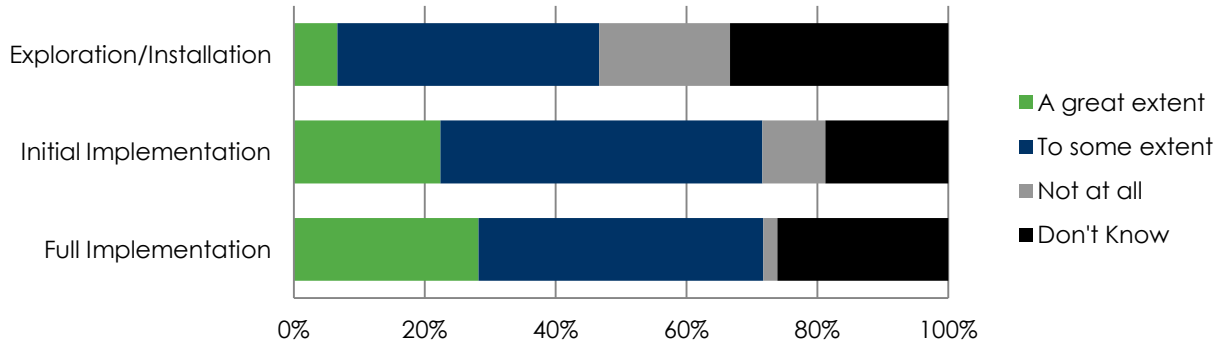
Overall, we have seen an increase in students scoring at benchmark on the school's universal screening assessment.

Figure C14. Increase in Students at Benchmark on Screener



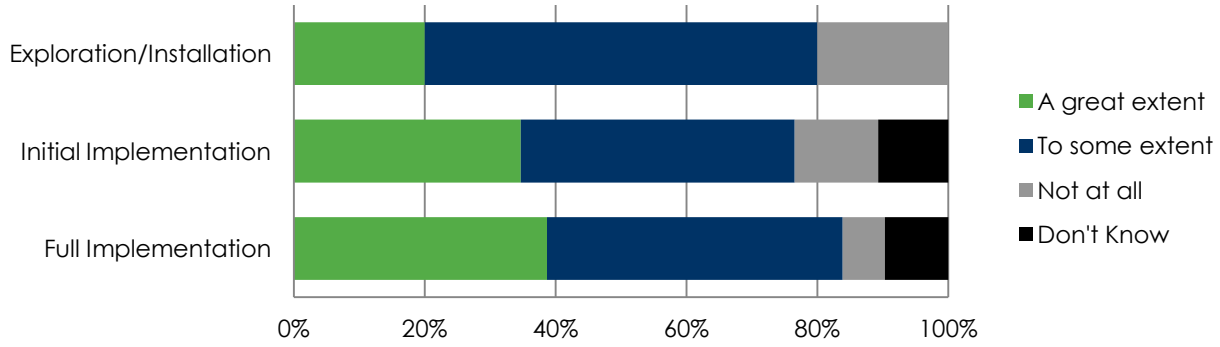
Overall, we have seen an increase in the percentage of students scoring at proficient or above on the state assessment.

Figure C15. Increase in "Proficient" or Above on State Assessment



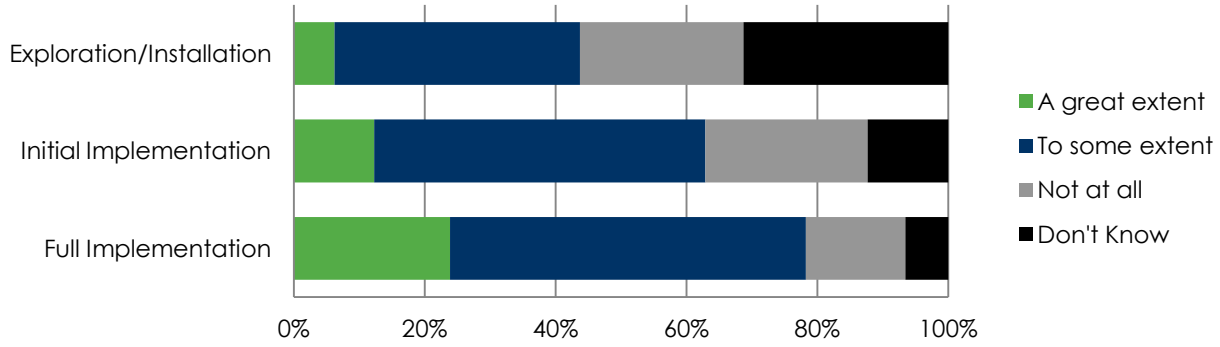
Overall, we have seen a decrease in the number of Office Discipline Referrals.

Figure C16. Decrease in Office Discipline Referrals



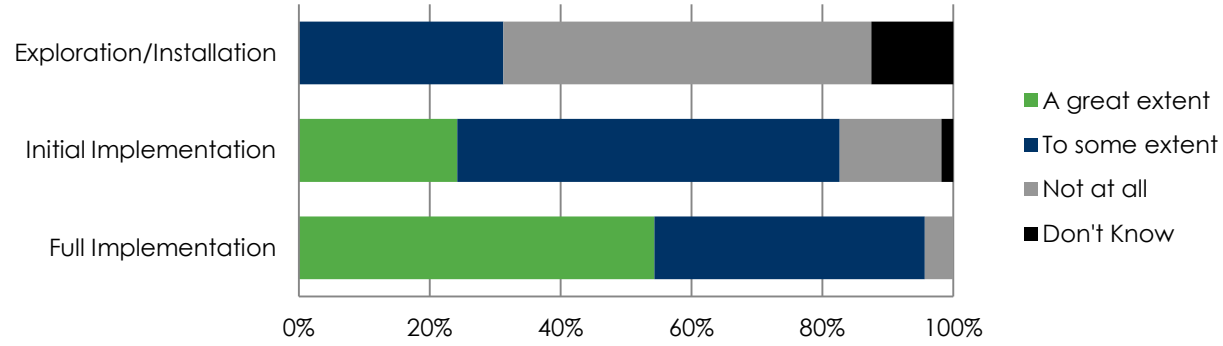
Overall, we have seen a decrease in the numbers of new special education referrals.

Figure C17. Decrease in Special Education Referrals



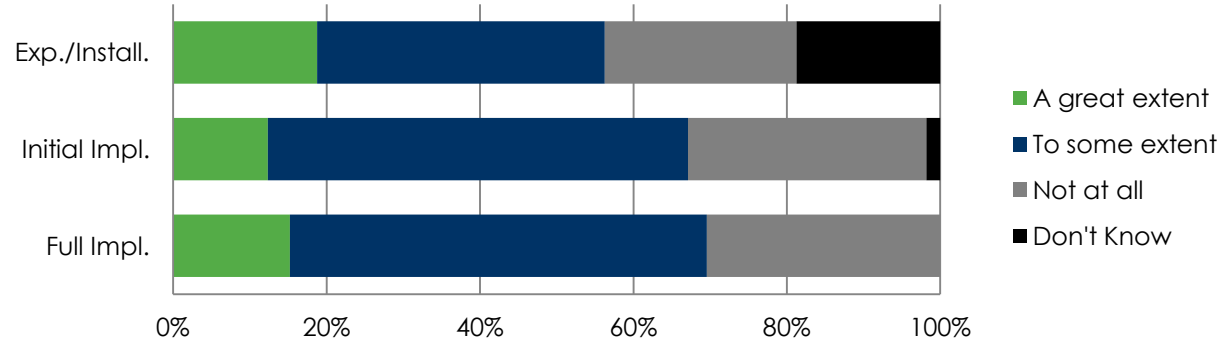
Our school has sufficient resources to provide ongoing professional development to support MTSS implementation.

Figure C18. Professional Development Resources to Support MTSS



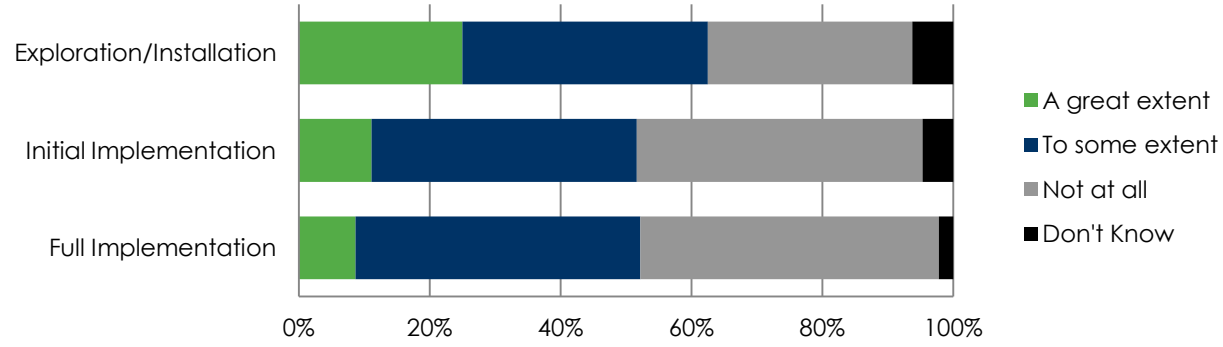
Thinking about sustaining MTSS over time, to what extent is each of the following a barrier to sustaining MTSS in your school? Instructional staff turnover?

Figure C19. Barrier: Staff Turnover



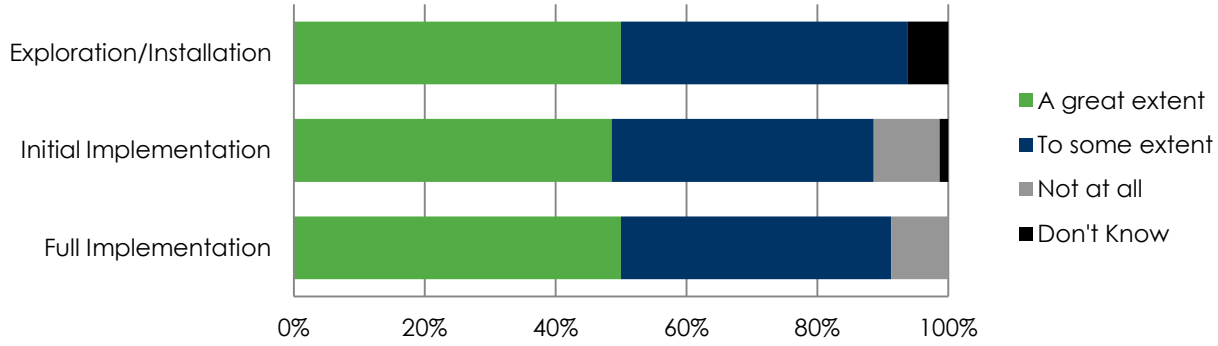
Thinking about sustaining MTSS over time, to what extent is each of the following a barrier to sustaining MTSS in your school? Changes in leadership at the building level?

Figure C20. Barrier: Change in District Leadership



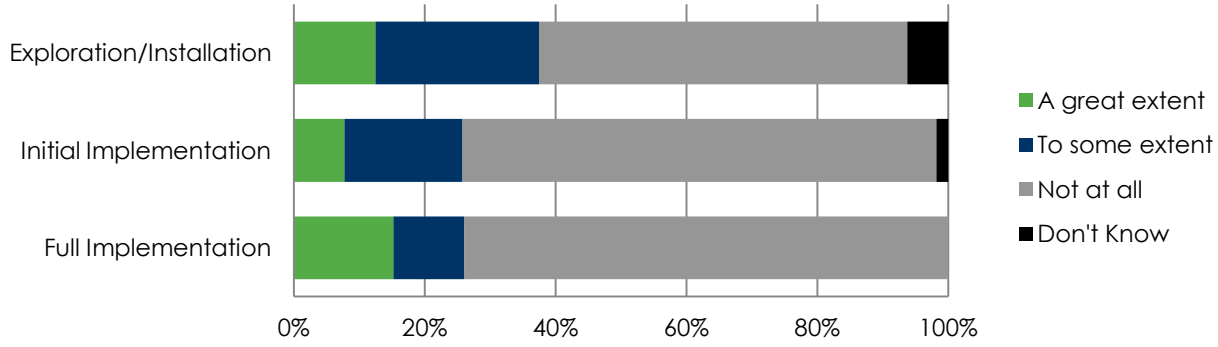
Thinking about sustaining MTSS over time, to what extent is each of the following a barrier to sustaining MTSS in your school? Lack of fiscal resources?

Figure C21. Barrier: Lack of Fiscal Resources



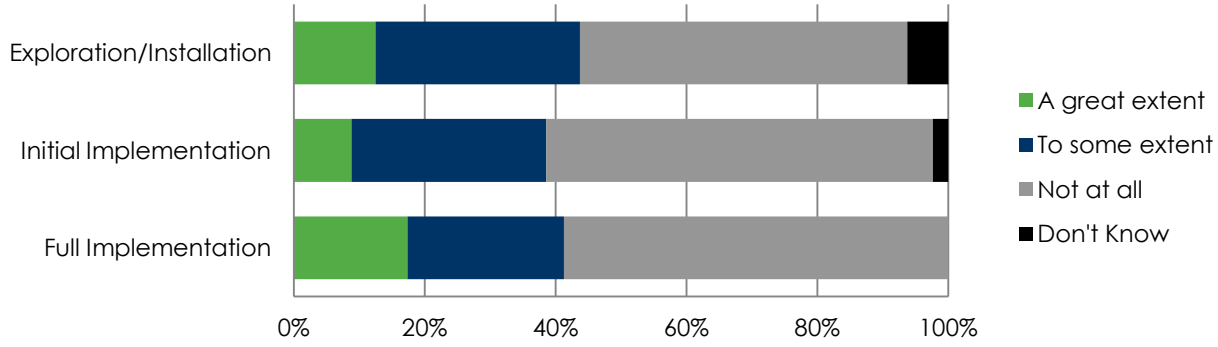
Q53 Thinking about sustaining MTSS over time, to what extent is each of the following a barrier to sustaining MTSS in your school? Lack of building leadership support?

Figure C22. Barrier: Lack of Building Leadership Support



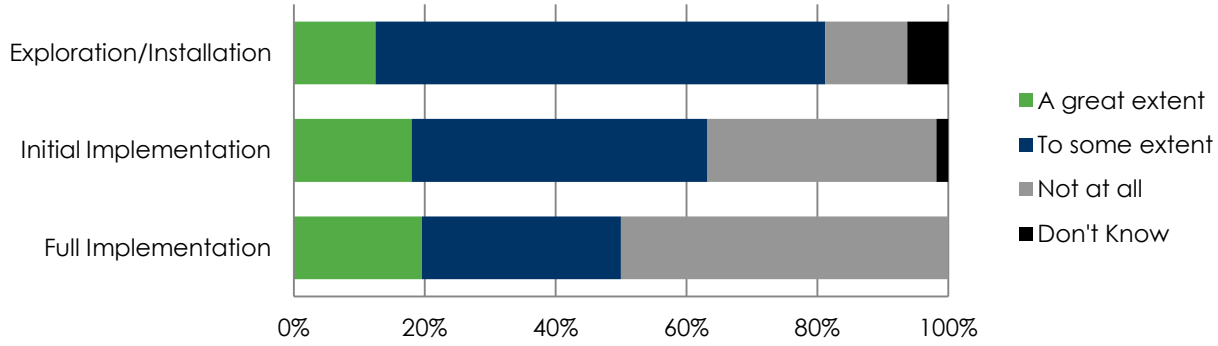
Thinking about sustaining MTSS over time, to what extent is each of the following a barrier to sustaining MTSS in your school? Lack of district/central office support?

Figure C23. Barrier: Lack of District Central Office Support



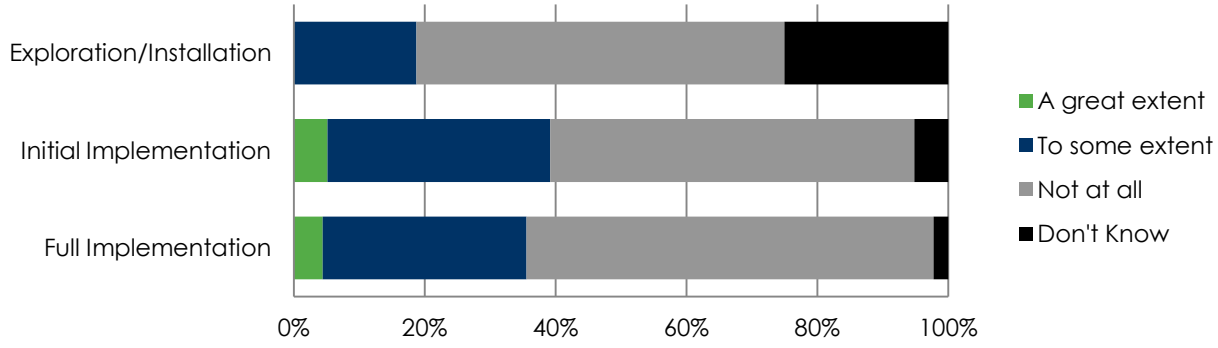
Thinking about sustaining MTSS over time, to what extent is each of the following a barrier to sustaining MTSS in your school? Lack of instructional staff support?

Figure C24. Barrier: Lack of Instructional Staff Support



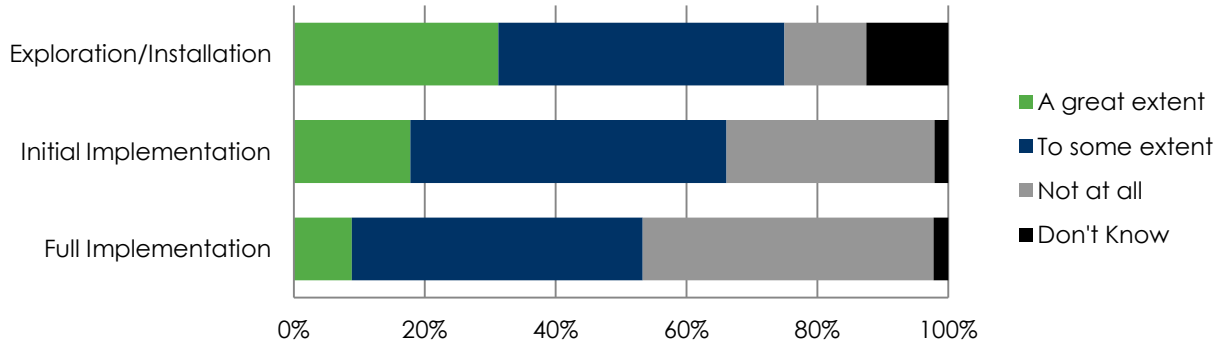
Thinking about sustaining MTSS over time, to what extent is each of the following a barrier to sustaining MTSS in your school? Lack of parent support/parent opposition to MTSS?

Figure C25. Barrier: Lack of Parent Support



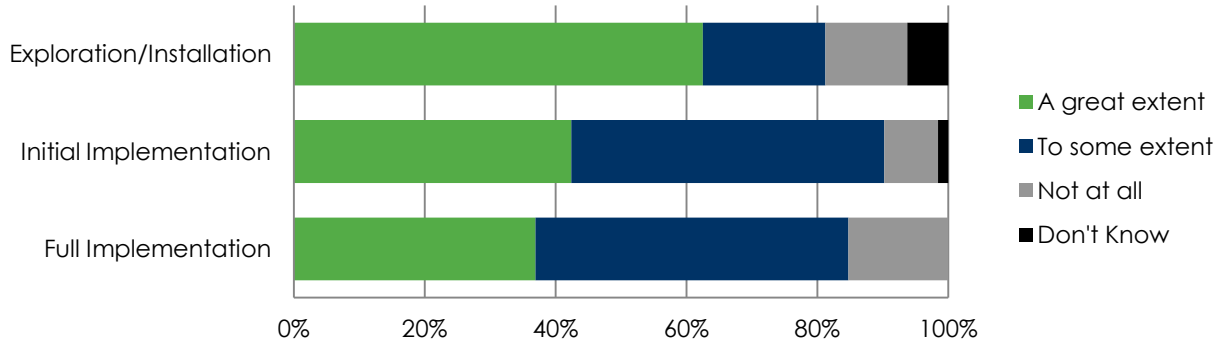
Thinking about sustaining MTSS over time, to what extent is each of the following a barrier to sustaining MTSS in your school? Competing school improvement initiatives?

Figure C26. Barrier: Competing School Improvement Initiatives



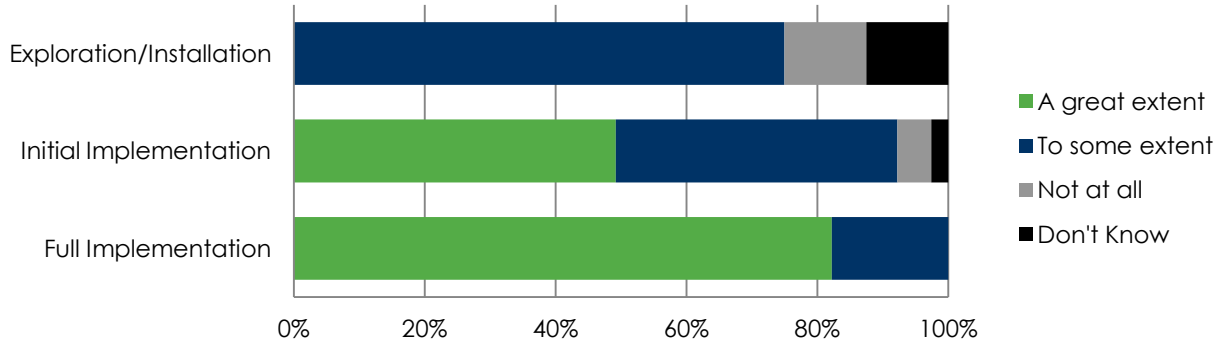
Thinking about sustaining MTSS over time, to what extent is each of the following a barrier to sustaining MTSS in your school? Time to implement the model with fidelity within the school day?

Figure C27. Barrier: Lack of Time to Implement with Fidelity



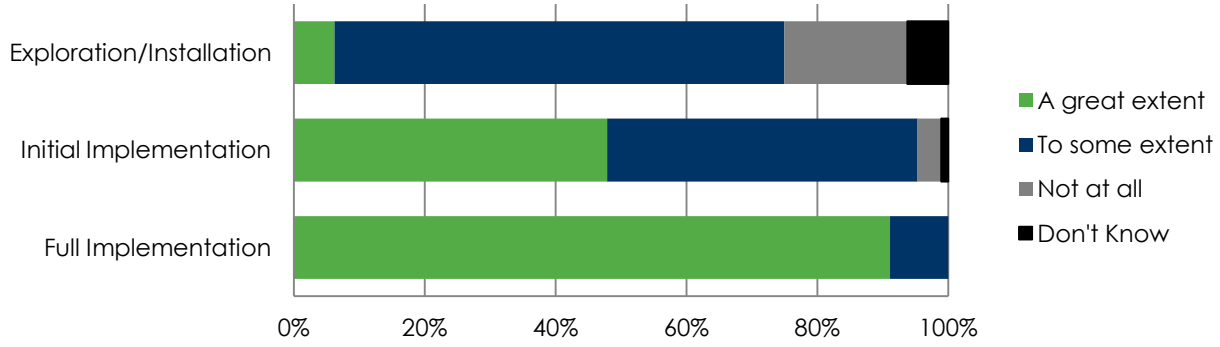
To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about the integration of MTSS in your school? Our school has aligned resources within federal, state, or local education programs to support the implementation of MTSS.

Figure C28. MTSS Aligned Resources within Federal, State, or Local Education Programs



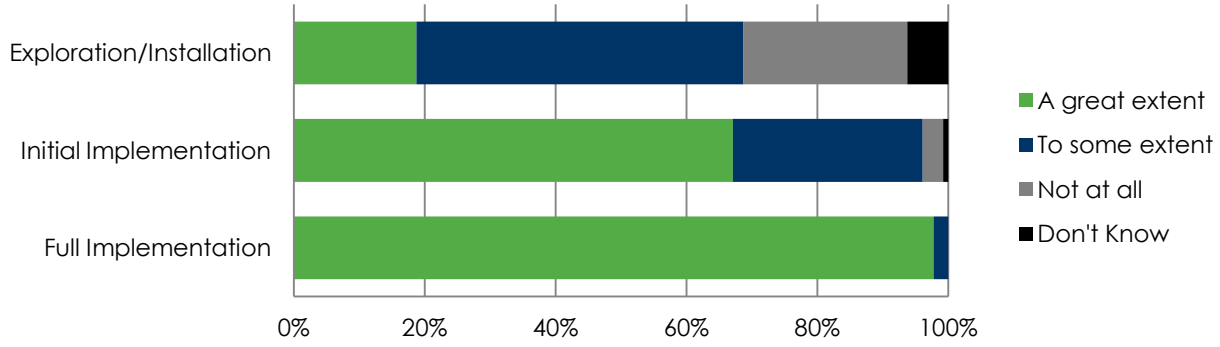
Q52 To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about the integration of MTSS in your school? MTSS frameworks, principles, and practices are widely accepted/institutionalized in our school.

Figure C29. MTSS Institutionalized



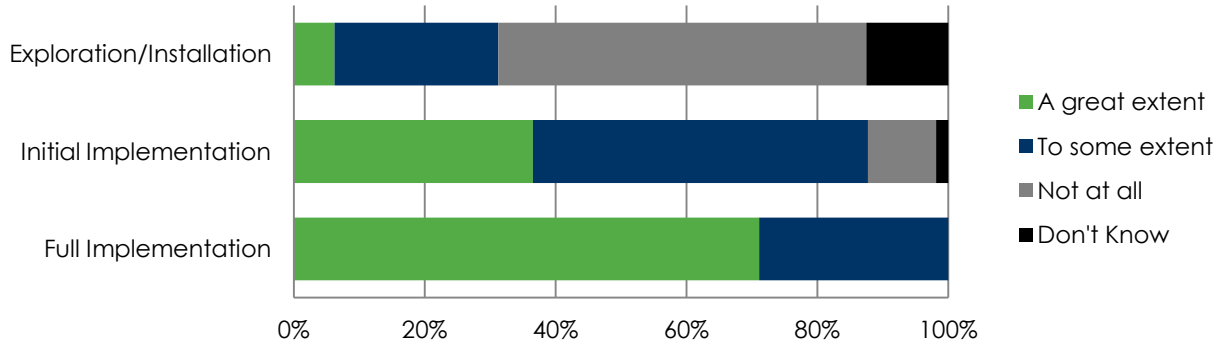
To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about the integration of MTSS in your school? MTSS is integrated with our school improvement efforts.

Figure C30. MTSS Integrated with School Improvement



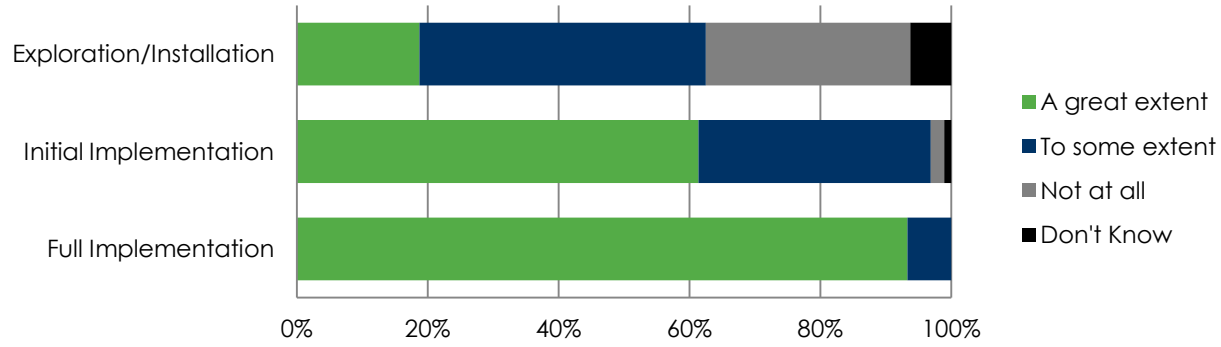
To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about the integration of MTSS in your school? Our school has the on-going professional development needed to sustain MTSS implementation over time.

Figure C31. Ongoing Professional Development to Sustain MTSS



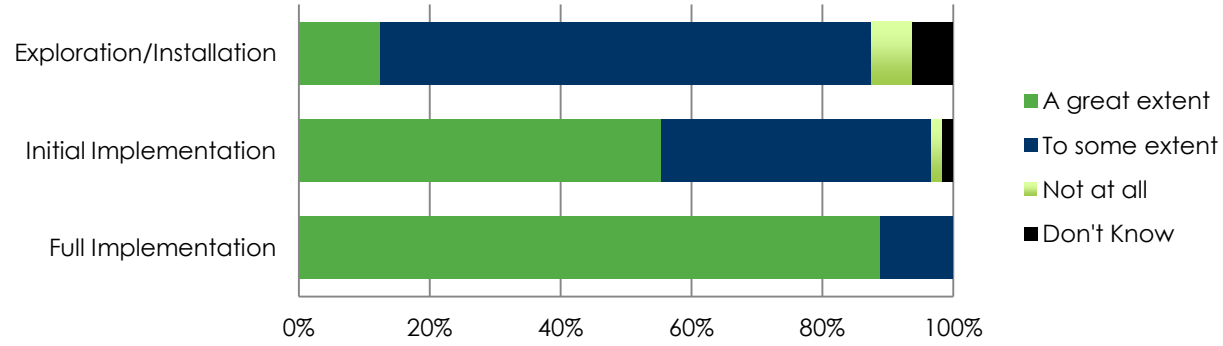
To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about the integration of MTSS in your school? Our school has the leadership and support needed to sustain MTSS implementation over time.

Figure C32. Have Leadership to Sustain MTSS



Q52 To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about the integration of MTSS in your school? Staff at our school support MTSS.

Figure C33. Staff Support MTSS

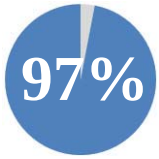


Appendix D: Infographic: MTSS Implementation: What does it take?

MTSS IMPLEMENTATION

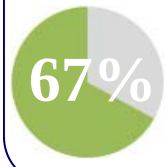
What does it take?

Leadership



Building leadership team that includes the principal in 97% of responding schools.

Leadership for sustainability reported in 98% of schools at Full Implementation.

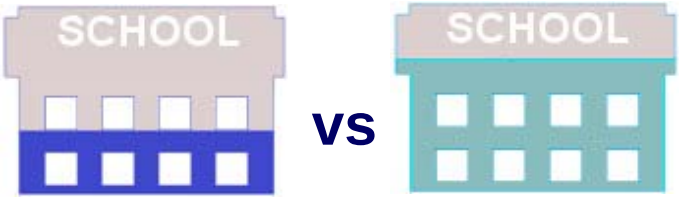


District- led initiative in 67% of schools at Full Implementation Stage.

Professional Development

Ongoing professional development to support sustainability:

Initial **Full**



36% **71%**

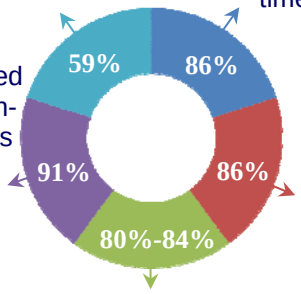
MTSS facilitation and ongoing coaching help support implementation.

High Quality Core Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction

Leadership teams monitor for fidelity, Tiers 1-3

Provide protected daily intervention time

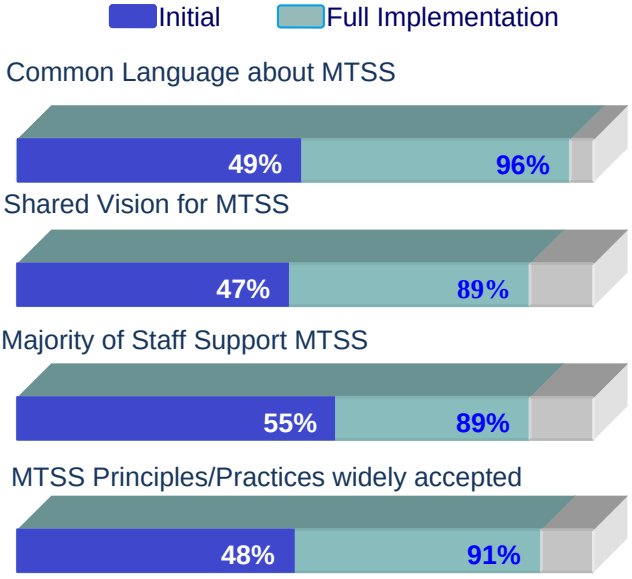
Curriculum based universal screening assessments are used to determine the need for interventions.



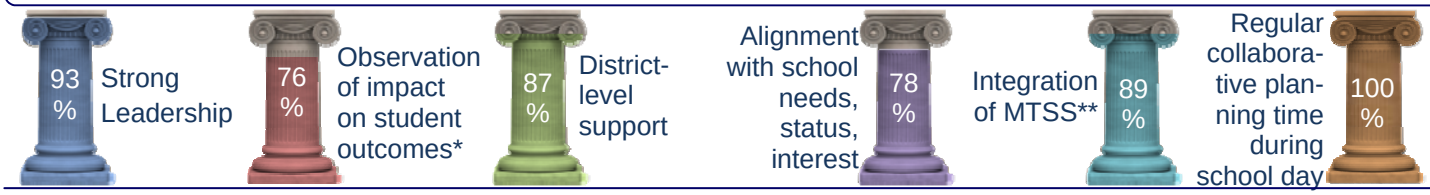
Leadership team reviews universal screening data after every administration

Teams use data frequently & comprehensively to monitor progress & make decisions at the school & individual student level.

Empowering Culture



Support for Implementation



*Increase in universal screening benchmarks & state assessment scores; decrease in office discipline & special ed. referrals

**89% of schools at Full Implementation report integration of MTSS with other school improvements vs 62% Initial Implementation Schools

October 2014

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