

**Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)  
Survey Summary  
2017-2018**

**Response to Title 16 V.S.A. §2904**

**REPORT**

**November 12, 2018**

**Summary Report to the Secretary of  
Education**

**Submitted by MTSS Program Manager  
Tracy B. Watterson**



**Table of Contents**

What is the Multi-tiered System of Supports Survey?..... 3

Statement on Sharing of the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Survey Summary ..... 3

Executive Summary ..... 4

    Key Results..... 4

Introduction ..... 5

Multi-tiered System of Supports Definition..... 5

Multi-tiered System of Supports Survey Findings..... 6

    Student Support Services ..... 6

Reporting Requirements of Title 16 Funding..... 7

    Health and Nutrition Services and Supports..... 7

    Staff Trained in Trauma Informed Practices ..... 8

    Trauma Informed Practices Trainings ..... 8

    Preventative Program for Substance Abuse Intervention..... 8

    Mental Health and Social Services and Supports..... 9

    Academics and Behavioral Support Services..... 10

Support for New Staff ..... 11

School Narratives ..... 11

    School MTSS Success Stories ..... 11

Greatest Need for Additional Support ..... 12

    Additional Support Needed to Strengthen MTSS..... 12

Conclusion ..... 13

## **What is the Multi-tiered System of Supports Survey?**

The Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Survey annually provides the Agency of Education with the data to fulfill the following two data collections. This survey becomes available in mid-May each year, with a due date of June 1st.

While [16 V.S.A. § 2904](#) is Vermont statute, collecting the MTSS Survey data is a positive step in ensuring principals reflect current implementation efforts in their schools as well as areas for improvement and growth. The survey offers schools an opportunity to share success stories of their multi-tiered system of supports\*. In addition, the data collected provides the MTSS Team with information to determine professional learning opportunities and technical assistance to Vermont educators to support the implementation of MTSS, planning for its sustainability and continuous improvement.

Thank you to all the superintendents and principals who ensured that the MTSS Survey data for SY17-18 was completed for the schools in your supervisory union or school districts. By completing the survey, you insured that pertinent data is available for making decisions to improve education for all students.

\*A request has been made for technical correction to change educational support system to multi-tiered system of supports.

## **Statement on Sharing of the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Survey Summary**

This report is provided to the Secretary of Education and other Agency of Education (AOE) Teams. This document will be available to Vermont public schools' superintendents and principals as well as on the Vermont (VT) AOE website.

## Executive Summary

The *Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Survey Summary 2017-2018* provides an analysis and evaluation of the data reported by 260 schools representing 57 Supervisory Unions and Supervisory Districts (SU/SD). This data, collected from approximately 85 percent of VT K-12 public school principals, impacts the professional learning and technical assistance provided by the AOE MTSS Team during SY18-19. According to the data, all schools reported implementing MTSS. Approximately 46 percent of those responding to the survey shared success stories from different components of MTSS framework.

## Key Results

1. Seventy-four percent of students referred to the Educational Support Team (EST) received an initial EST support plan.
2. The number of initial EST referrals increased by 1 percent (254 students).
3. There was a decrease by 2 percent in both the number of students who received an initial 504 plan or an initial Individual Education Program (IEP).
4. The data suggests that the EST process is becoming more effective in responding to all students' needs.
5. Thirty-two percent of schools reported that 100 percent of staff are trained in Trauma-informed practices.
6. The data shows a trend toward greater understanding of the Systemic and Comprehensive Approach.
7. The High-quality Instruction and Intervention component was reported as the highest need for additional supports.

Last year's survey\* results indicated that the Systemic and Comprehensive Approach component was the least often implemented of the five components and the one for which additional supports were most often requested. In response, the MTSS Team developed professional learning modules, offered monthly Office Hours, and established the Educational Equity Brief series. This year's data shows a reduction in the number of schools reporting Systemic and Comprehensive Approach as their major need for additional supports.

\*In response to feedback from the field this survey question was revised for this year's survey.

Finally, the report acknowledges that the analysis conducted has limitations. These limitations include that data was not provided by all Vermont schools and all data was self-reported. The 2017-18 survey data is compared to 2016-17 data; however, the MTSS team revised portions of the survey based on feedback from the 2016-17 survey. Two questions about trauma-informed practices were added to the survey since that data had not previously been collected. The questions on implementation of MTSS components and evaluating MTSS effectiveness were removed. In addition, the option of Coordinate Service Plan was included in the question on categories of Mental Health and Social Services and Support.

Technical assistance is available from the AOE MTSS Team by contacting Tracy Watterson, MTSS Program Manager, [tracy.watterson@vermont.gov](mailto:tracy.watterson@vermont.gov). Information about MTSS is located on the Multi-tiered System of Supports [webpages](#).

## Introduction

The reporting window for the *Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Survey* ends on June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The collected data is used to inform the Secretary of Education the status of each school's multi-tiered system of support and the funding sources used to provide supports to students. This data is also shared with other AOE teams to support a common unity of purpose.

The methodology used to collect this data was a survey with multiple choice items and open-ended questions. The principal of each school or their designee reported the data. The first item in the survey identified the principal and the second item identified the school. The remaining items addressed required information as well as information useful to the MTSS Team's annual work plan. Most questions required a response. The survey data is analyzed and reported by the AOE MTSS Team. The data is used to inform the MTSS Team of the need for professional learning opportunities, technical assistance, and resources to support Supervisory Unions and School Districts (SU/SDs) implement a tiered system of supports.

The data presented in this report is the most recent data available at the time of publication. The data does not include every public school in Vermont for the school year covered. The report is not intended to be an exhaustive compilation of a school's comprehensive system of educational services data, nor does it attempt to validate selected multi-tiered system of supports practices reflected in the data by a school. The data reflects what the survey asks and what information is reported.

## Multi-tiered System of Supports Definition

A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a comprehensive, evidence-based, and systemic framework for teaching and learning that unifies general and special education in an intentional, ongoing collaboration. \*

- MTSS is designed to meet students' academic and non-academic needs.
- MTSS provides students with differentiated and intensified assessment, instruction, and intervention.
- MTSS relies on appropriately qualified professionals and their expertise to implement the framework (adapted from the *VT MTSS Field Guide, 2014*).

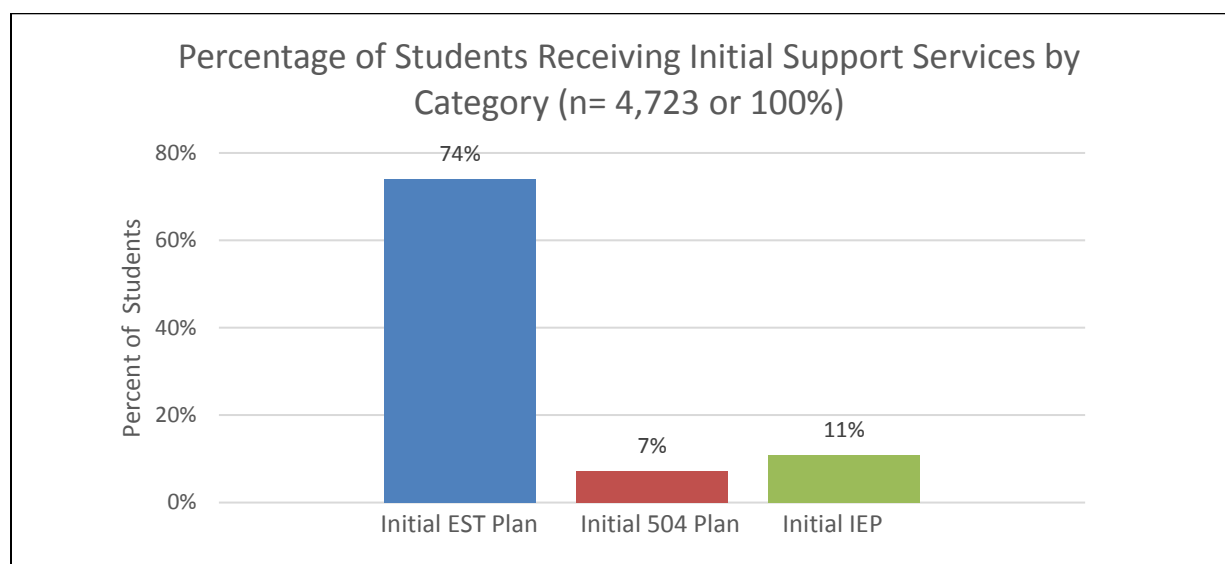
\*The definition of Vermont MTSS is currently being updated in response to VTmtss Field Guide 2.0.

## Multi-tiered System of Supports Survey Findings

### Student Support Services

In the 2017-18 school year, an initial referral to an Educational Support Team (EST) was made for 4,723 students. Of those students who were initial referrals to the EST, 74 percent (3,491 students) received an initial educational support plan, 7 percent (342 students) were referred for further evaluation and received an initial 504 plan, and 15 percent (728 students) received a special education evaluation. Of the group of 728 students who received a special education evaluation, 70 percent (508 students) were found eligible for special education and received an initial Individual Education Program (IEP). This reflects about 11 percent of the 4,723 students newly referred to the EST.

The summary data below represents the percent of students receiving initial services by category: EST Plan, 504 Plan, and IEP.



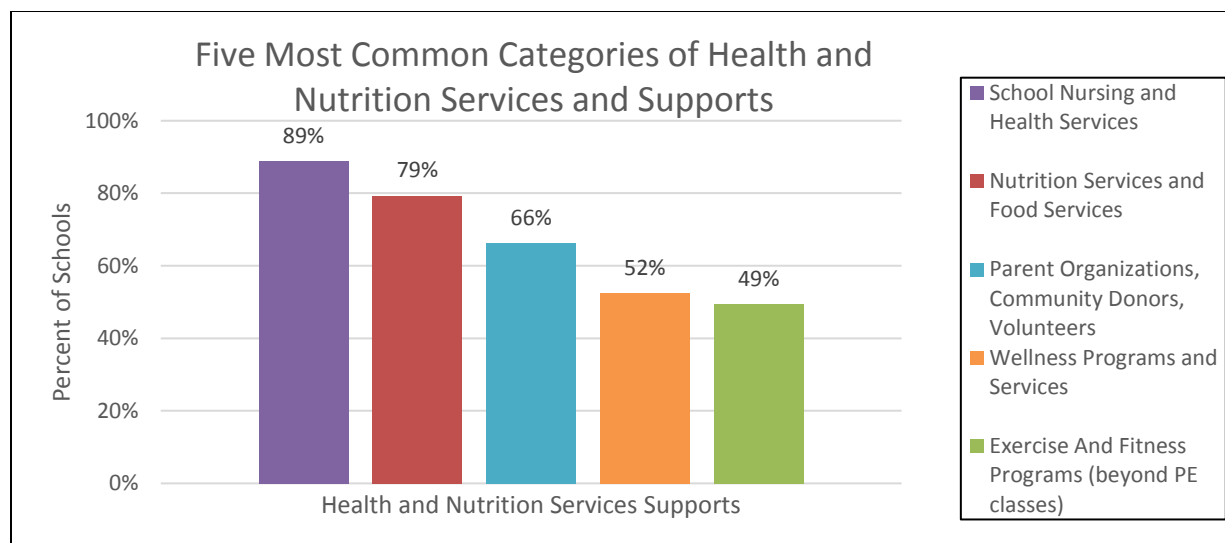
This year's data indicates a 2 percent increase in referrals to school Educational Support Teams (ESTs). There also appears to be a 2 percent decrease in referrals that resulted in new special education or section 504 plans. While the apparent trend of this data suggests an increased capacity for schools to both identify and address student needs, it should be noted that school reporting is incomplete. There are 35 schools, nearly 12 percent, that did not report data for the 2017-18 school year. These schools serve over 10,000 students, so this missing data compromises our ability to accurately evaluate current trends.

## Reporting Requirements of Title 16 Funding

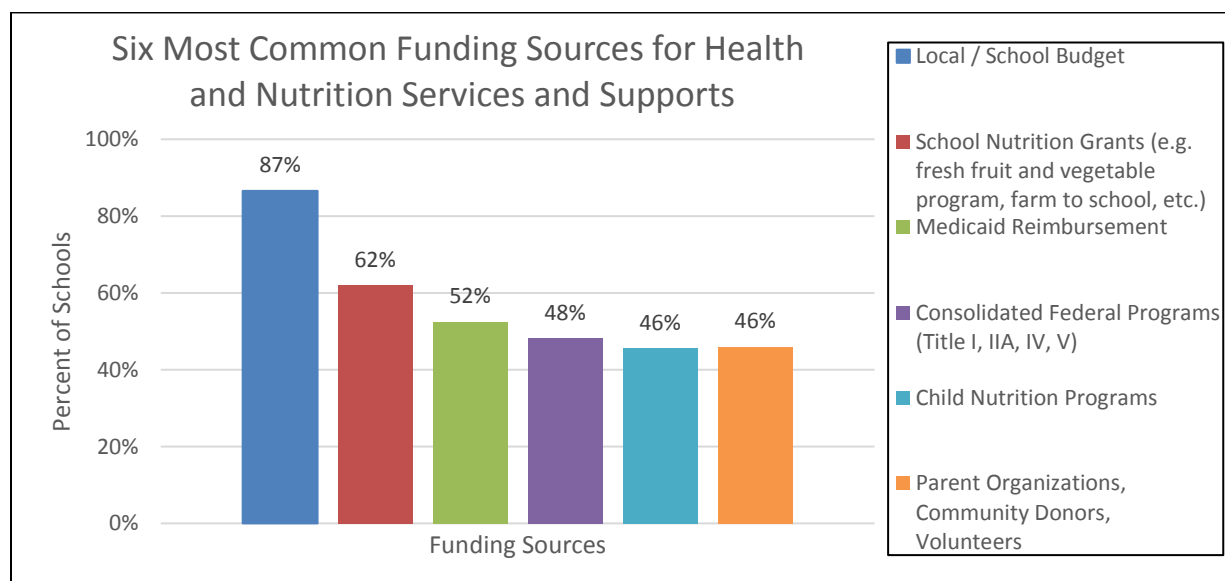
Based on the reporting requirement of Title 16, this section details the description and justification of how funding sources are used to support student services.

### Health and Nutrition Services and Supports

The five most common categories of Health and Nutrition Services and Supports offered by schools include School Nursing and Health Services (89 percent), Nutrition Services and Food Services (79 percent), Parent Organizations, Community Donors, Volunteers (66 percent), Wellness Programs and Services (52 percent), and Exercise and Fitness Programs (49 percent).

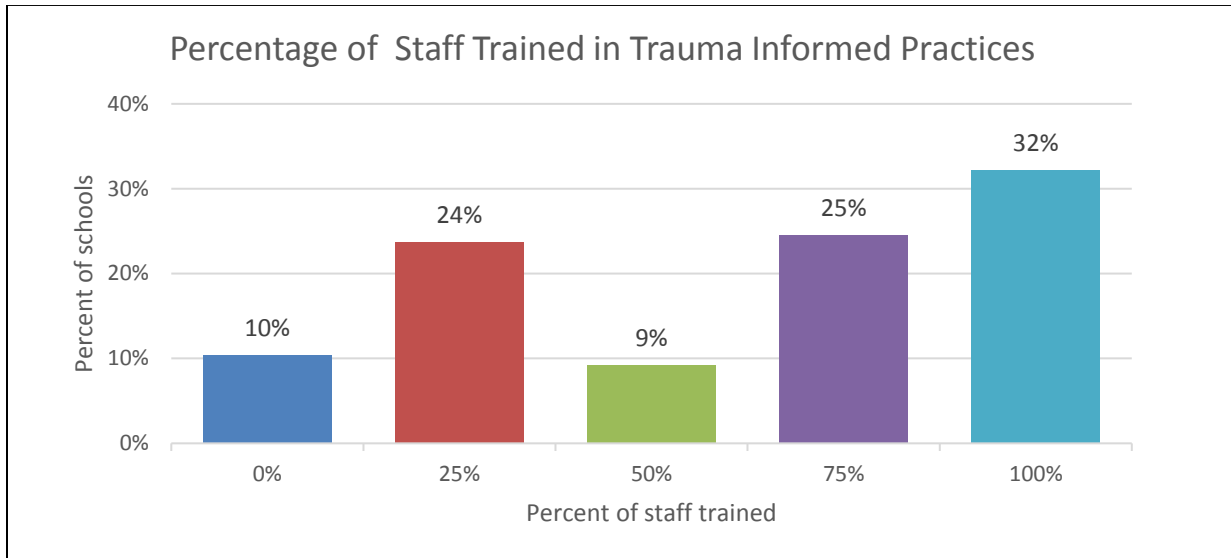


The six most common funding sources for Health and Nutrition Services and Supports are Local/School Budget (87 percent), School Nutrition (62 percent), Medicaid Reimbursement (52 percent), Consolidated Federal Programs (CFP) (48 percent), Parent/Community (46 percent), and Child Nutrition Programs (46 percent).



### Staff Trained in Trauma Informed Practices

Thirty-two percent of schools reported that 100 percent of staff are trained in Trauma Informed Practices. Twenty-five percent reported 75 percent of staff are trained, and nine percent indicated 50 percent of staff are trained, twenty-four percent indicated 25 percent of staff are trained, and ten percent indicated 0 percent of staff are trained in Trauma Informed Practices.



This is the first time this question has appeared on the survey.

### Trauma Informed Practices Trainings

Principals were asked to identify the Trauma Informed Practices training their staff participated in within the past three years. A compilation of 120 responses is available upon request by contacting [nancy.hellen@vermont.gov](mailto:nancy.hellen@vermont.gov).

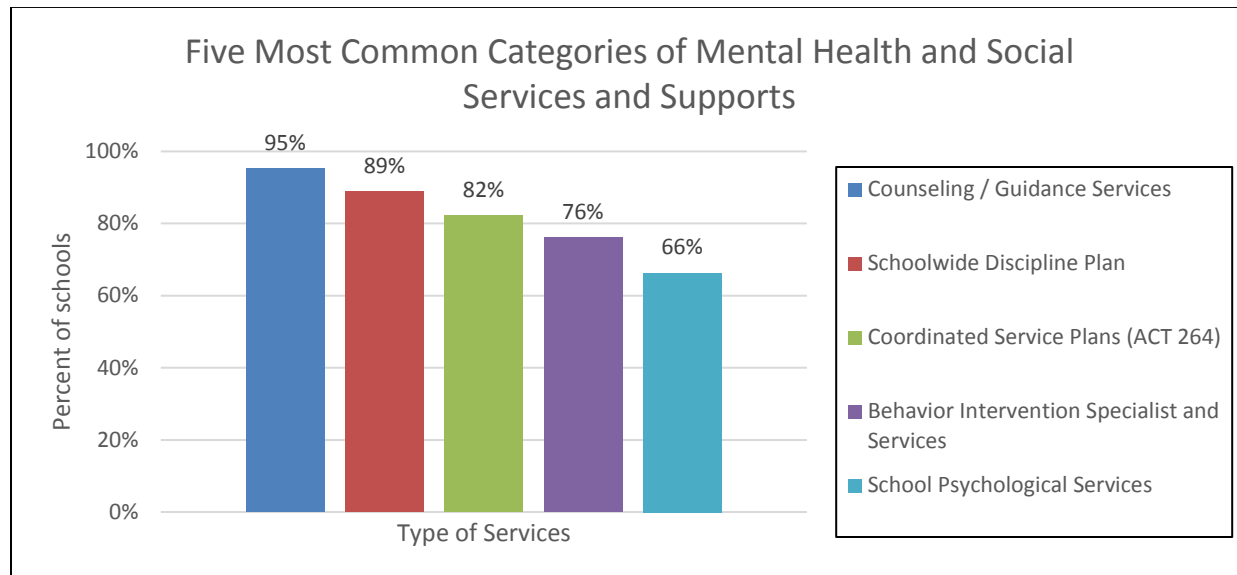
### Preventative Program for Substance Abuse Intervention

Thirty-eight percent of schools have a preventative program for substance abuse intervention. Sixteen percent of schools have a *Memorandum of Understandings for Substance Abuse Treatment Providers*. Substance abuse treatment is most often found in secondary settings, so it is not expected that all school engage substance abuse treatment providers.



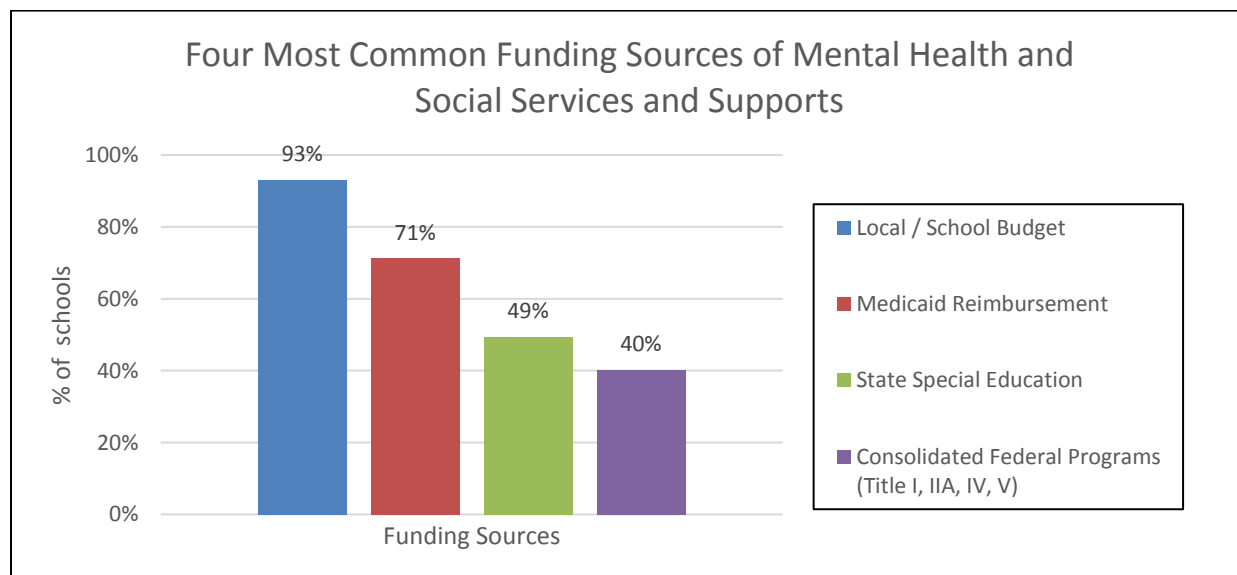
### Mental Health and Social Services and Supports

The five most common categories of Mental Health and Social Services and Supports offered by schools include Counseling/Guidance Services (95 percent), Schoolwide Discipline Plan (89 percent), Coordinated Service Plans (ACT 264) (82 percent), Behavior Intervention Specialist and Services (76 percent), and School Psychological Services (66 percent).



The most common categories of mental Health and Special Service Supports aligned similarly as reported last year. The category choice of Coordinated Service Plan was new this year.

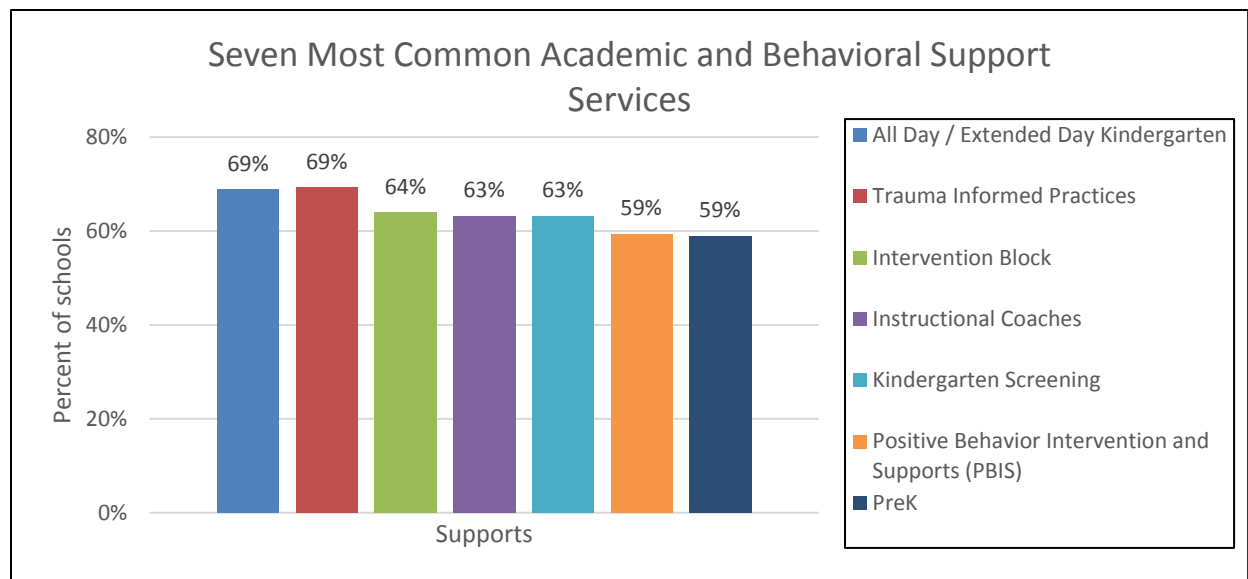
The four most common Mental Health and Social Services and Supports funding sources were Local/School Budget (93 percent), Medicaid Reimbursement (71 percent), State Special Education (49 percent), and CFP (40 percent).



This year's data shows a decrease in the use of State Special Education and CFP funds by 9 percent and 12 percent respectively. Of note, the use of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) (Early Intervening Services) funds was reported as 24 percent this year, a decrease of 9 percent.

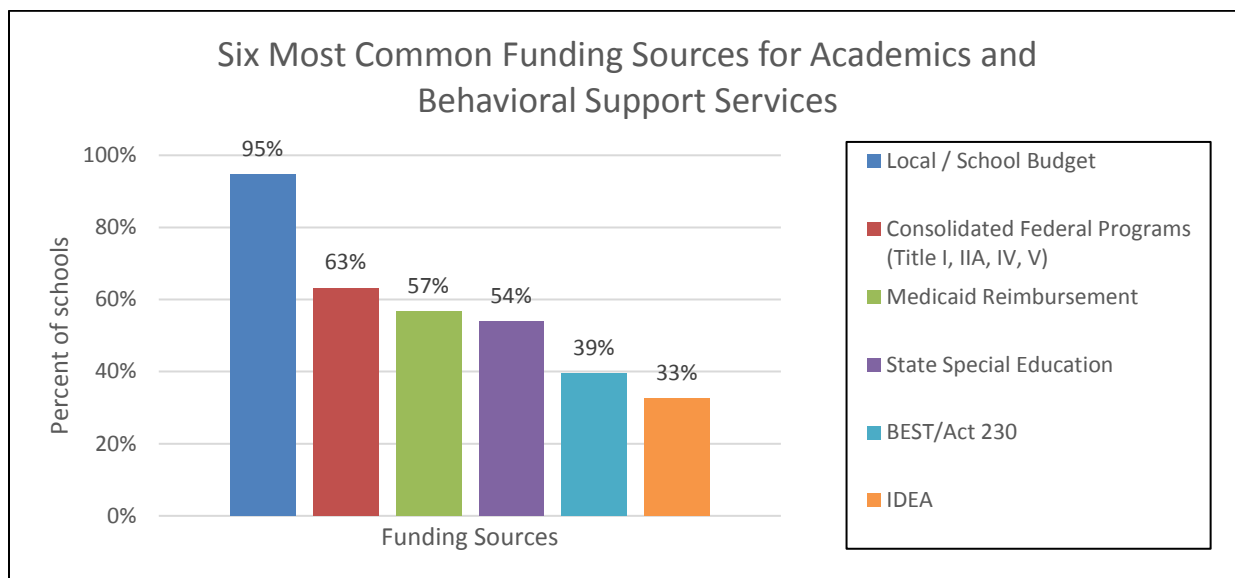
### Academics and Behavioral Support Services

All schools offer Academic and Behavioral Support Services. The seven most common Academic and Behavioral Support Services offered by schools included All Day/ Extended Kindergarten (69 percent), Trauma Informed Practices (69 percent), Intervention Block (64 percent), Instructional Coaches (63 percent), Kindergarten Screening (63 percent), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) (59 percent) and Prekindergarten (PreK) (59 percent).



This year's data shows Trauma Informed Practices increased by 12 percent, Intervention Block increased by 6 percent and Instructional Coaches decreased by 7 percent.

The six most common Academic and Behavioral Support Services funding sources were Local/School Budget (95 percent), CFP (63 percent), Medicaid Reimbursement (57 percent), State Special Education (54 percent), BEST (Building Effective Strategies for Teaching) /Act 230 (39 percent) and IDEA (33 percent).



This year’s data shows a 3 to 8 percent decrease in the use of the top five funding sources for Academics and Behavioral Support Services. The BEST/Act 230 was the only funding source in which an increase, 3 percent, was reported.

### Support for New Staff

Seventy-three percent of schools reported providing procedures to support new staff in a multi-tiered system of supports. The type of procedures used to support new staff was not requested in the survey.

### School Narratives

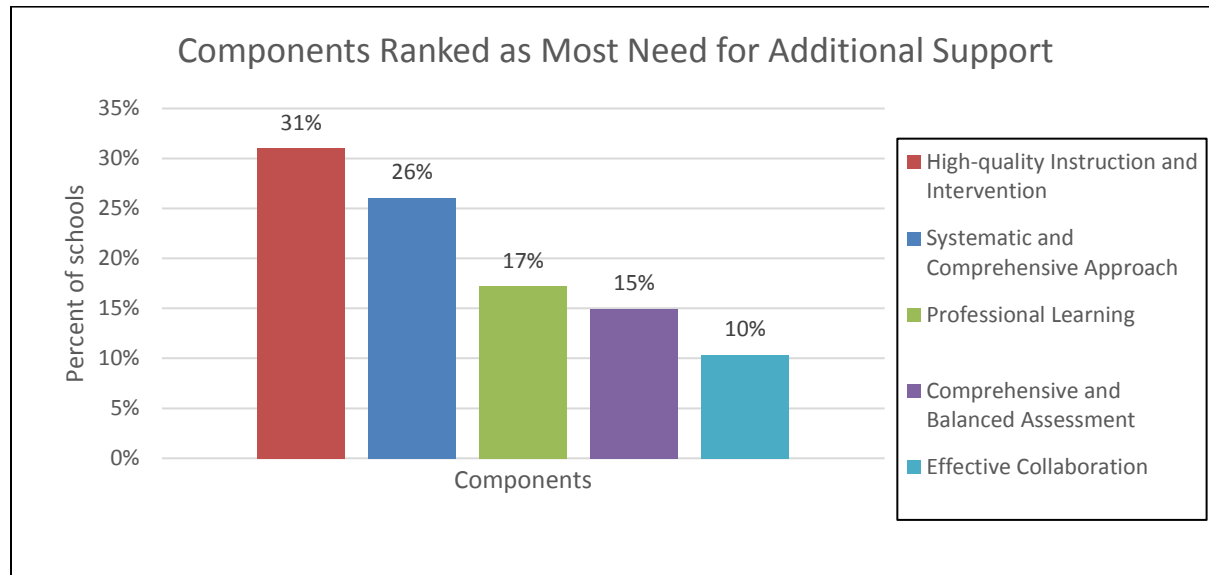
This section contains narratives of school’s success stories as well as their greatest needs for additional support in implementing an MTSS framework.

### School MTSS Success Stories

As part of the survey principals were asked to share multi-tiered system of support success stories. The MTSS team noticed the most frequently reported success stories were in the following general areas: Programs and Interventions, Data and Monitoring, Effective Collaboration, Student Results including individual student stories, Schedule Modifications and Staffing –Expertise. A compilation of 120 responses is available upon request by contacting [nancy.hellen@vermont.gov](mailto:nancy.hellen@vermont.gov).

## Greatest Need for Additional Support

Thirty-one percent identified High-quality Instruction and Intervention as their greatest need for additional support. Of reporting schools, 26 percent identified Systemic and Comprehensive Approach, 17 percent identified Professional Learning, and 15 percent identified Comprehensive Assessment as the greatest need for additional support. Effective Collaboration was indicated at 10 percent as the category in most need for additional support.



This year's data shows the component of High-quality Instruction and Intervention as the most need for additional support by 31 percent of the schools, this was an increase of 11 percent. Expertise (Well-designed Professional Learning) increased by 6 percent. The component of Systematic and Comprehensive Approach decreased in rank to 26 percent of schools compared to last year's data indicated it as the greatest need by 42 percent of schools.

## Additional Support Needed to Strengthen MTSS

Principals were asked to describe additional support needed to strengthen their school's multi-tiered system of supports.

When organized into the five MTSS components the component Expertise-Professional Learning was the most reported as additional support needed. The other components were reported in the following order from most reported to least: Systemic and Comprehensive Approach, High-quality Instruction, Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System, and Effective Collaboration. Note that the nature of the components and the specific practices are interwoven making categorizing responses inexact and reflects reporter interpretation of the current MTSS in their educational setting.

## Conclusion

The annual MTSS survey reported the status of schools' tiered system of supports. Based on the data collected there was an increase in the use of trauma-informed practices as an Academic and Behavioral Support Services. The data shows over half of staff are trained in trauma-informed practices. In addition, highlighted program initiatives included social-emotional learning (SEL), PBIS, and restorative practices. While new referrals to school Educational Support Teams increased by 2 percent, fewer referrals resulted in new special education or section 504 plans. The decrease in special education and 504 plans suggests that educators are being more successful at early interventions to meet students' needs.

The data compiled from this survey will inform future professional learning and technical assistance opportunities provided by the MTSS Team.

MTSS will be a critical component of the AOE's response to [Act 173 \(2018\)](#). It is imperative that 100 percent of schools respond to this survey to provide the MTSS Team with an accurate picture of implementation efforts and needed additional supports.

For more information about a multi-tiered system of supports, or to request assistance, please reference:

[AOE MTSS webpage](#), or contact Tracy Watterson, MTSS Program Manager,  
[16 V.S.A. §2902](#);  
[Education Quality Standards \(EQS\), section 2121.5](#);  
[tracy.watterson@vermont.gov](mailto:tracy.watterson@vermont.gov)

To all those who took the time to respond to this annual survey, we thank you.