



Report

Vermont Multi-tiered System of Supports (VTmtss) Survey Summary

SY2023-2024 Report

September 12, 2024

Issued by the Vermont Agency of Education Vermont Multi-Tiered System of Supports Team

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Vermont Multi-tiered System of Supports (VTmtss) Survey Summary Overview

Vermont Multi-tiered System of Supports (VTmtss) Framework

The [VTmtss Framework and Field Guide](#)¹ articulates the components of an effective school system necessary to provide each and every student with the academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and mental health supports and services they need to succeed. The Framework details components of a systemic approach to decision-making for excellence and equity within a culture of continuous improvement.

What is the VTmtss Survey?

The VTmtss Survey measures school leaders' self-reported use of the systems-based best practices described in the VTmtss Framework to support all students, improve school systems, and provide timely, high-quality instruction and interventions.

The VTmtss Survey provides the Agency of Education (AOE) with data to fulfill the legal requirements in [16 V.S.A. § 2904](#)². This statute states: "Annually, each superintendent shall report to the Secretary in a form prescribed by the Secretary, on the status of the educational support systems in each school in the supervisory union."

More information about the data collection process and VTmtss Survey questions can be found on the [Data Collection and Survey](#)³ webpage.

Purposes of the VTmtss Survey Summary Report:

- Summarize and analyze the statewide use of systemic and comprehensive approaches during the SY2023-2024 related to the VTmtss Framework indicators
- Provide research and resources related to each of the 30 survey questions so that school and district leaders can learn more about the importance of each indicator measured by the survey
- Inform improvement planning at the school and district level

Ways to Make Use of the VTmtss Survey Data:

- Analyze trends over time at the state and district levels for the last three school years through 2023-2024.
- Assess district-wide strengths or areas of improvement in comparison to the state-level data.
- Disaggregate the data by school-level demographic differences such as student population size, grade band, etc.
- Compare data analysis using systems-level data (e.g., cross-tabulation)

School, district, or SU-level data is available upon request from the VTmtss Team.

VTmtss 2023-2024 Survey Participants

Of the 288 K-12 public school principals who were sent the VTmtss Survey, 285 submitted responses, resulting in a 99% response rate across 52 Supervisory Unions and Supervisory Districts (SU/SD).

This survey data is a point-in-time reflection that provides a starting point for systems-level improvement discussions. Due to the very high response rate, these self-reported findings are considered an accurate representation of VTmtss practices in Vermont public schools. However, the survey questions are subject to some interpretation bias.

Format of this Report:

The structured format of this survey report for each of the 31 questions is as follows:

- Descriptions of the best practices measured by each question.
- Visual representation of the statewide SY2023-2024 data with comparison data as appropriate.
- A brief analysis of what the data demonstrates and indicates, and helpful resources for the topic.

Contact Information:

Principals are encouraged to compare their school survey results to this statewide report. We recommend that superintendents request district-level data from the VTmtss Team by contacting Tracy.Watterson@vermont.gov.

More information about VTmtss is available on the [Vermont Multi-Tiered System of Supports](#)⁴ webpage.

Key Findings

To determine the following key findings, the VTmtss team considered patterns emerging through the Survey data and noticeable trends emerging from multiple years of Survey data.

1. Over the past three school years, the amount of Educational Support Team (EST) plans being completed before the end of the school year has been consistently increasing. Between SY2022-2023 and SY2023-2024 this increased by 6%.
2. There was a 9% increase in principals reporting that student voice informs lessons (67%). However, less than half report that student voice is frequently considered as data during EST meetings, or that students are provided relevant resources or information about academic EST plans.
3. There is a pattern of increasing family engagement among all Survey indicators. For example, the best practice of “*having a process for systemic feedback from families*” increased by 13%. However, families and caregivers are being engaged

in decisions about their own student more frequently than in decisions about the school system itself.

4. Although general educators appear to frequently collaborate with various staff members to inform lessons, they collaborate least often with families and other general education teachers.

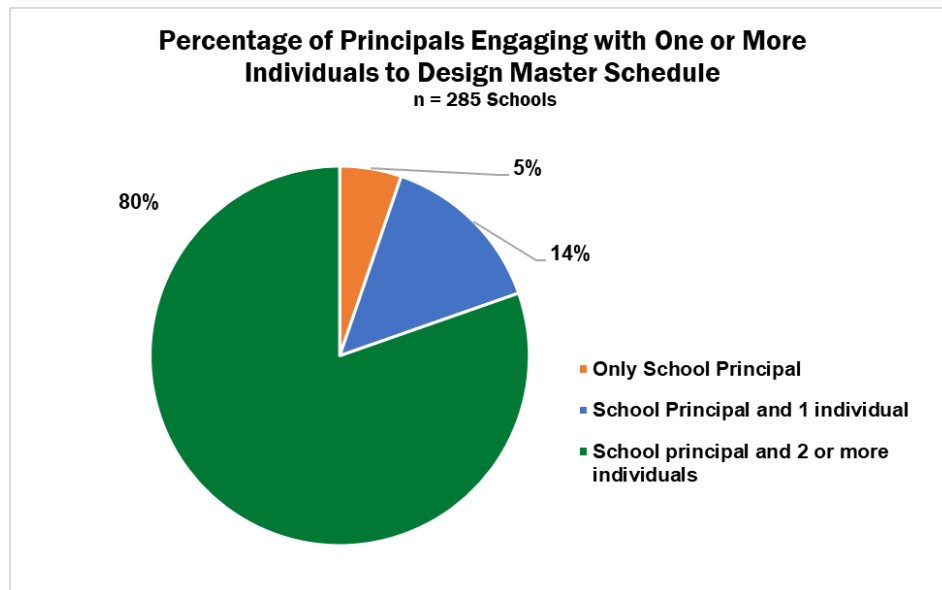
VTmtss Survey Detailed Findings

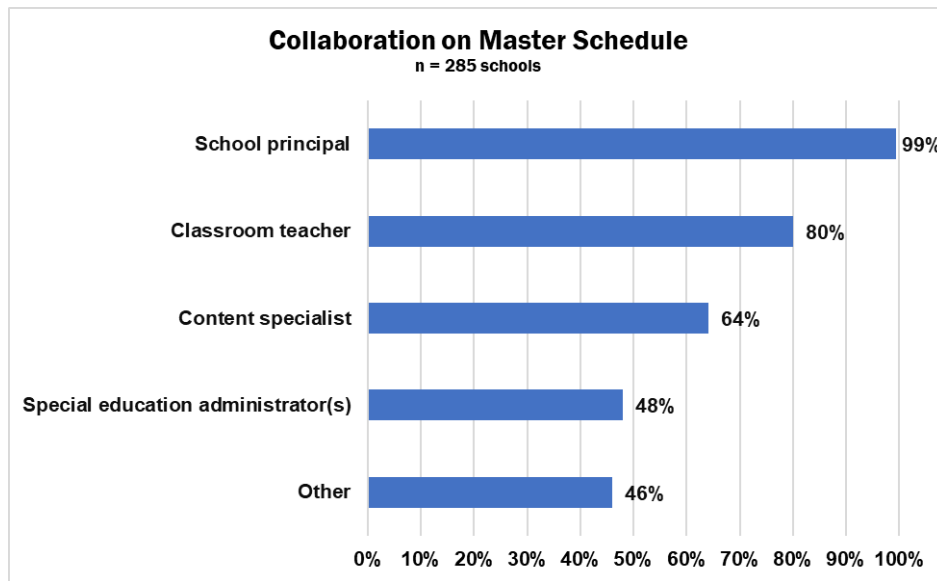
Questions A through K asked for the principal and superintendent contact information, SU/SD and school names, total student population, and grade span of the school.

Questions 1 - 8: Systemic and Comprehensive Approaches to Inclusive Student Supports

Question 1: Select all staff members involved in the creation of the school's master schedule.

Collaborative scheduling enables leaders to maximize expertise and resource capacity within their system, potentially reducing the need for individualized student support outside core instruction. Enhancing students' access to high-quality and inclusive interventions hinges on different educators' ability to communicate availability and unique scheduling guidelines ([District Management Group, p. 50](#))⁵. Designing equitable systems requires innovative practices that leverage diverse talents and insights to inform decisions, fostering alignment with the school's vision ([Build Equity, Join Justice – A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), pp. 70-71)⁶.





Most Vermont school principals report collaborating with at least one other staff member to design the school schedule (94%), with 80% of principals including at least two staff members (see appendix, [table 1a](#)). Only 5% of the 285 principals surveyed reported creating the schedule independently.

Principals primarily collaborate with classroom teachers (80%) to create the master schedule. Other roles that may contribute to scheduling include content specialists (64%), special education administrators (48%), and a wide variety of other school staff roles such as special educators, guidance counselors, or other types of school administrators reported as “other” (see appendix, [table 1b](#)).

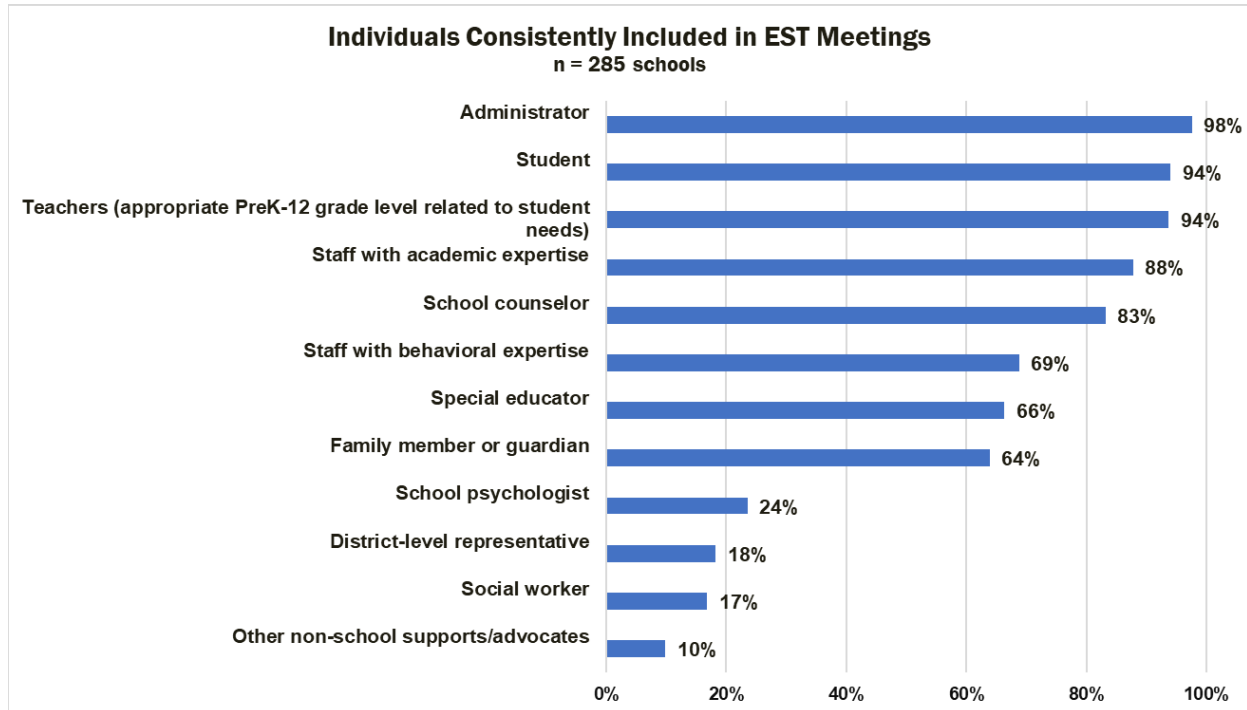
Additionally, six principals reported that the entire staff helps to inform the master schedule, and multiple principals reported the use of a leadership team. This indicates there are schools developing inclusive scheduling throughout Vermont.

Educational Support Teams (EST)

Question 2: Select all individuals who are consistently included in your school’s EST meetings.

The Educational Support Team (EST) meetings should prioritize diverse role representation. This should include administrators, teachers, special educators, behavioral and academic interventionists, counselors, and psychologists. Ideally, family members, students, and advocates should contribute to EST plan development even when they cannot do so in person. This inclusive approach enhances the team's understanding of student needs, improves the quality of short-term support plans, and minimizes bias in student referrals. Furthermore, collaborating with families, students, and communities as partners, especially for students requiring support, fosters enthusiasm and success by building strong relationships, enhancing problem-solving, clarifying expectations, and cultivating a supportive culture of trust ([Build Equity, Join Justice - A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), p. 71)⁶.

The [Educational Support Team Plan Forms](#)⁷ template can track of how families, students, and other staff are represented in EST meetings. For guidance around Specialized Service Providers see this link [Specialized Service Providers \(SSPs\): Making Connections with VTmtss](#)⁸.



Most principals (over 90%) report that administrators, teachers, and students are consistently included in EST meetings. More than half report including expert staff members, school counselors, special educators, and family members or guardians (see appendix, [table 2](#)). This indicates a broad range of individuals contributing their unique expertise about a student to developing EST plans throughout Vermont schools. Fewer than 25% of all responding principals report that a psychologist, district-level representative, social worker, or other advocate(s) attend EST meetings consistently.

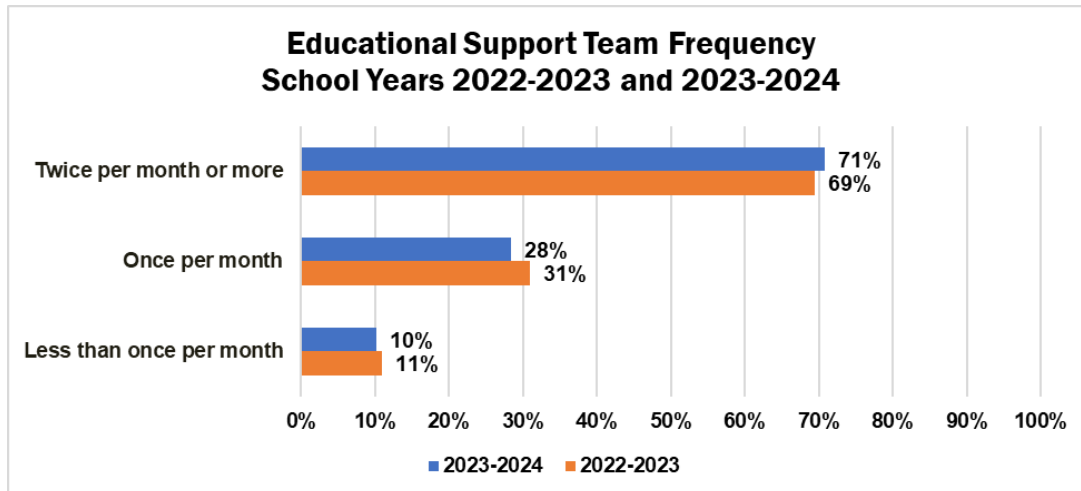
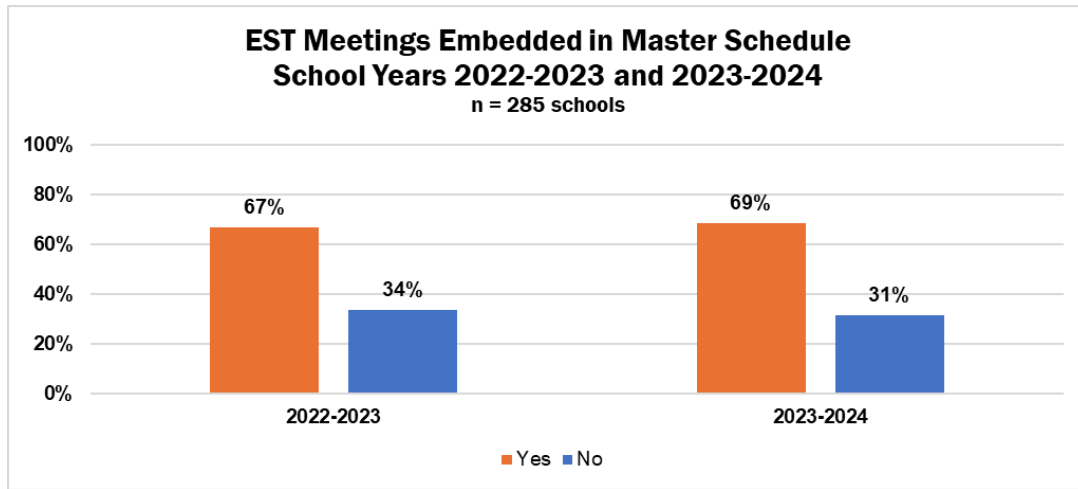
Questions 3 - 4: Educational Support Team (EST) Meeting Frequency

Question 3: Is any EST meeting embedded within your school's master schedule?

Question 4: How frequently does your EST meet throughout the year?

The AOE recommends that Educational Support Teams (EST) meet at least twice per month. Doing so allows for more efficiency in assessing students and reviewing the progress of students who may already be on an EST plan. Frequently reviewing EST data helps identify any patterns arising from collective student data to inform systemic areas that are potentially in need of improvement. Furthermore, making time for intentional monitoring of student progress improves decision making around

instructional changes, intervention outcomes, or the need for more support. Refer to [Educational Support Team - A Deeper Look](#)⁹ for guidance.



More than half of principals embed EST into the school schedule (69%), and almost three-quarters of all principals surveyed report that EST meetings happen at least twice a month (71%) (see appendix [table 3a](#)). Fewer principals report that EST meets less than once per month (10%), which may indicate that many EST teams throughout VT are meeting frequently enough to allow for timely student-need assessment and time to evaluate student progress (See appendix, [table 3b](#)).

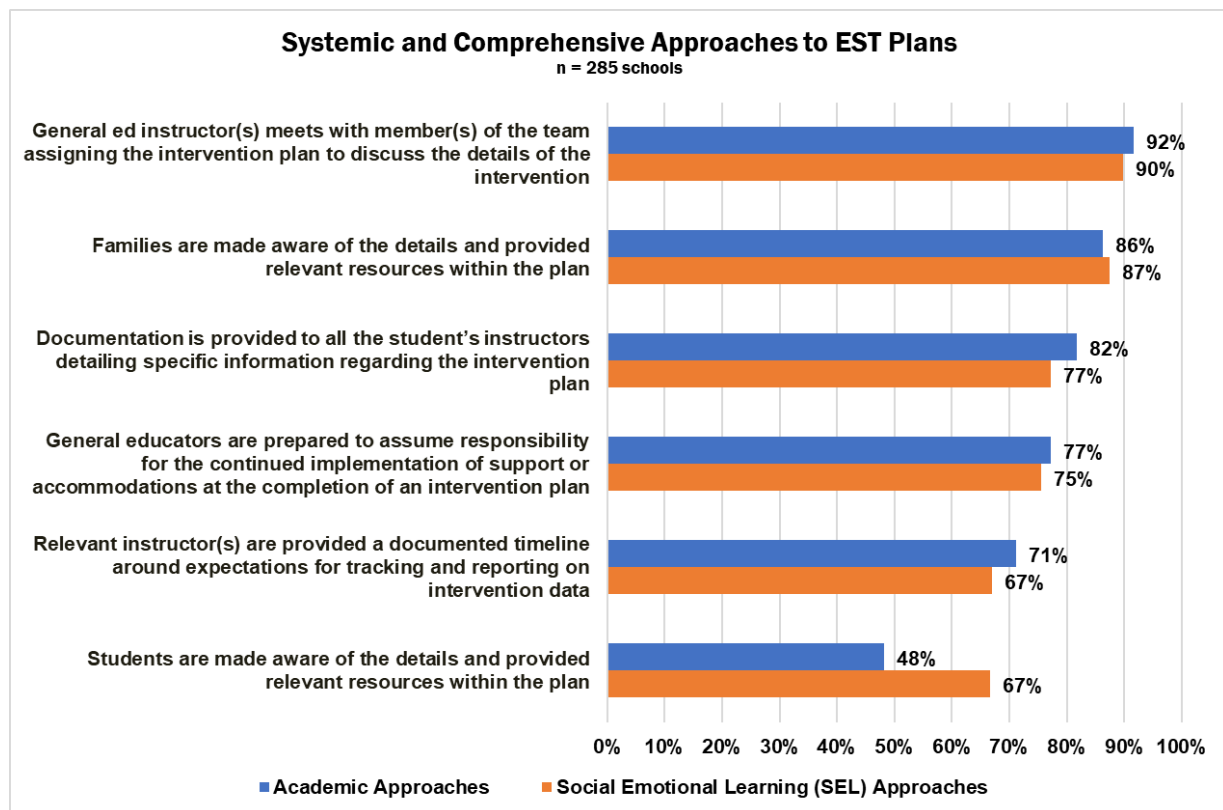
Questions 5 - 6: Responsive Decision Making - Academic and Social-Emotional EST Plans

Question 5: Select the systemic approaches always used in your school to enhance any academic intervention plans developed for a student by your school's EST.

Question 6: Select the systemic approaches always used in your school to enhance any Social Emotional Learning (SEL) support or behavioral intervention plan developed by your school's EST.

Principle 8 of the VTmtss Framework emphasizes dynamic collaboration among students, families, and professionals as essential for effective problem solving and decision making. A systemic approach to decision making promotes excellence and equity by allowing flexible service structures, which can prevent practices that can often separate students. This approach focuses on coordinated, needs-based interventions rather than emphasizing disability characteristics and service locations ([Build Equity, Join Justice - A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), p. 63)⁶. Valuing strong partnerships and including students and staff in decision-making fosters a culture of trust ([VTmtss Field Guide, p. 18](#))¹⁰.

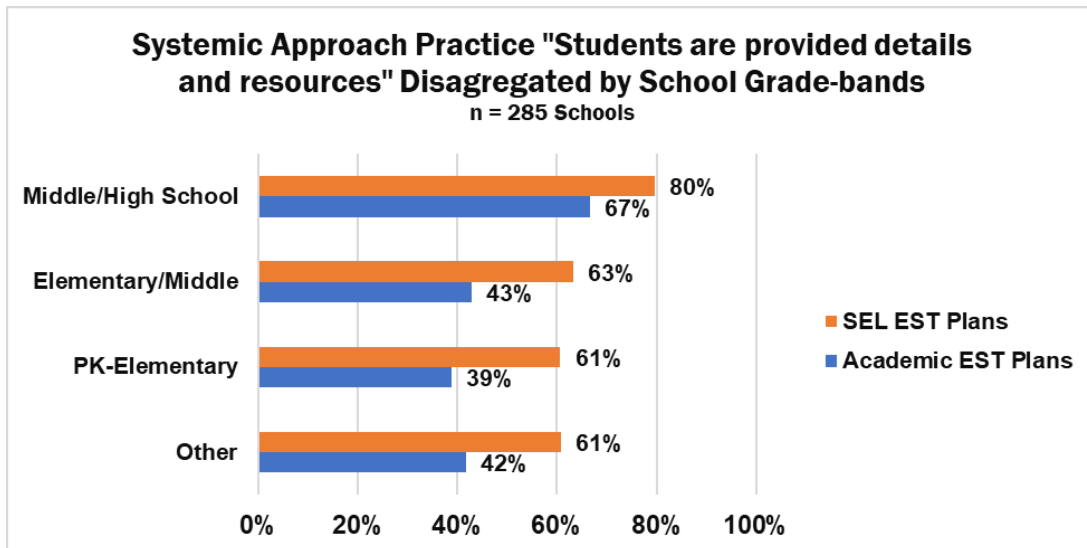
For leaders interested in improving systemic supports to engage students in their interventions, the Educational Support Team ([EST Practice Profile](#))¹¹ offers a continuum of best practices for developing high-quality academic and social-emotional intervention plans.



This indicator is divided into two questions to assess differences in approaches to academic and social-emotional learning (SEL) EST supports, even though a single EST team oversees both support plans. The first graph reveals that nearly 75% of Vermont principals apply a range of best practices to both academic and SEL supports. However, a slightly higher percentage use these practices for SEL support. The most significant gap reported was the practice of informing students about the details and

providing resources. Here, 67% of principals use this practice for SEL support, compared to 48% for academic support, showing a 19% difference (see appendix, [table 4](#)).

An additional noteworthy finding is that the option of, “*general educator meets with relevant instructors to discuss intervention*,” increased from 83% and 84% of principals reporting this practice for SEL and academic plans respectively, to 90% and 92% of principals reporting the use of this best-practice, an increase of around 10% (see appendix, [table 4](#)).

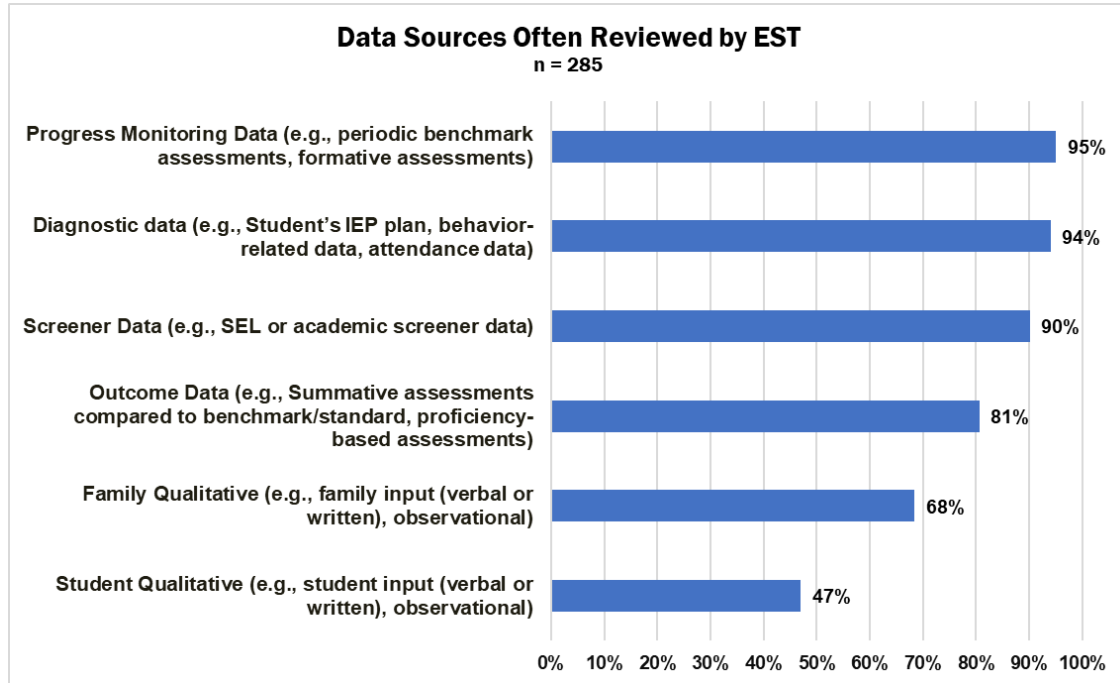


After disaggregating the systemic approach option of “students are made aware of details and resources within the EST plan” by grade band, more schools with higher grade-levels (middle and/or high schools) reported this student-engagement practice than lower grade-level schools (Pre-K and elementary). The discrepancy between engaging students for academic plans less often than they report for SEL support plans, remains despite the grade-band disaggregation (see appendix, [table 5](#)). The VTmtss Team encourages developmentally appropriate strategies be implemented to increase student engagement for both academic and social emotional support plans.

Question 7: Which of the following data sources does your EST often review during EST meetings?

The more consequential a decision is about a student, the more critical it is that EST teams have a comprehensive and balanced view of the student’s performance and a clear process for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting student data. Maintaining a comprehensive data system promotes the use of reliable, valid, and culturally responsive analytics that may inform the improvement needs of the student or school system. To reduce bias and equitably inform the personalized needs of students, the use of student or family qualitative data is a critical aspect of EST processes, creating a culture of trust for families and students.

Resources that can further describe this indicator include the [Educational Support Team \(EST\): Making Connections with VTmtss](#)¹² tool which informs improvement plans by connecting EST best practices to the VTmtss Framework, and an AOE guidance document on developing equitable assessment systems called [Essential Components for Ensuring Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems are Culturally Relevant and Equitable](#)¹³.

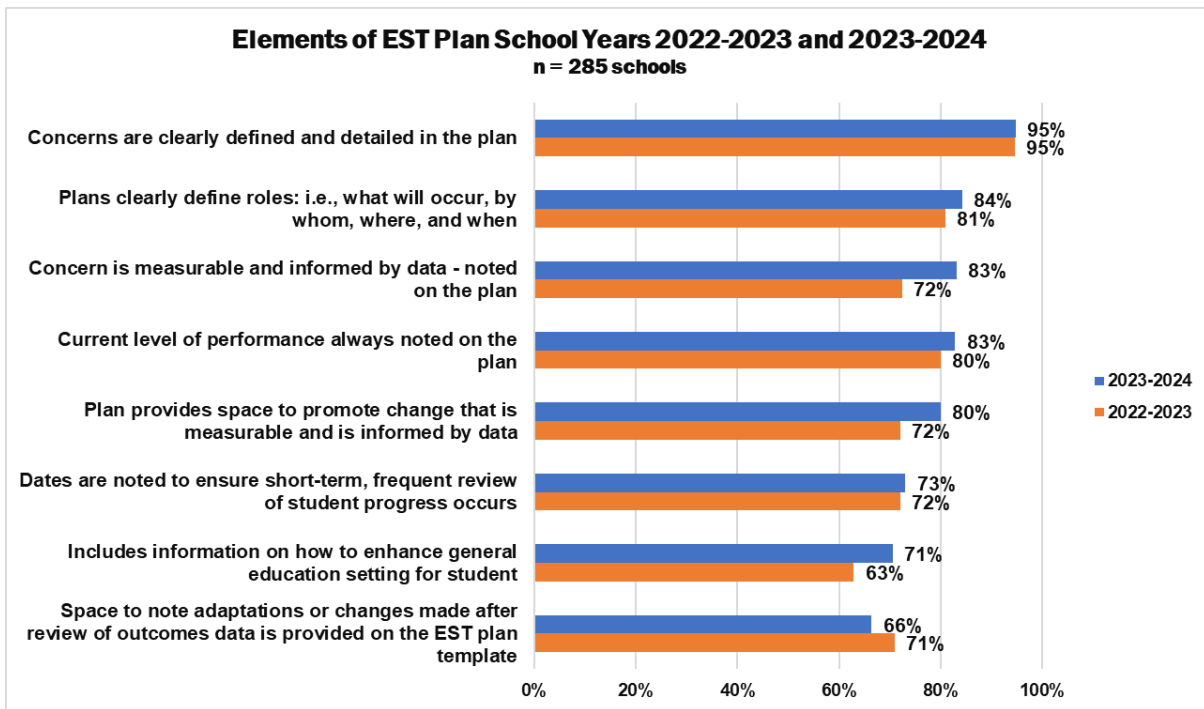


Consistent with findings in questions 5 and 6, principals report that student qualitative data (verbal or written) is the least utilized type of data reviewed during EST meetings (47%). An analysis of a sample of 81 schools with only grades 6-12 indicates that 64% of them frequently use qualitative student data to inform EST plans (see appendix, [table 6](#)).

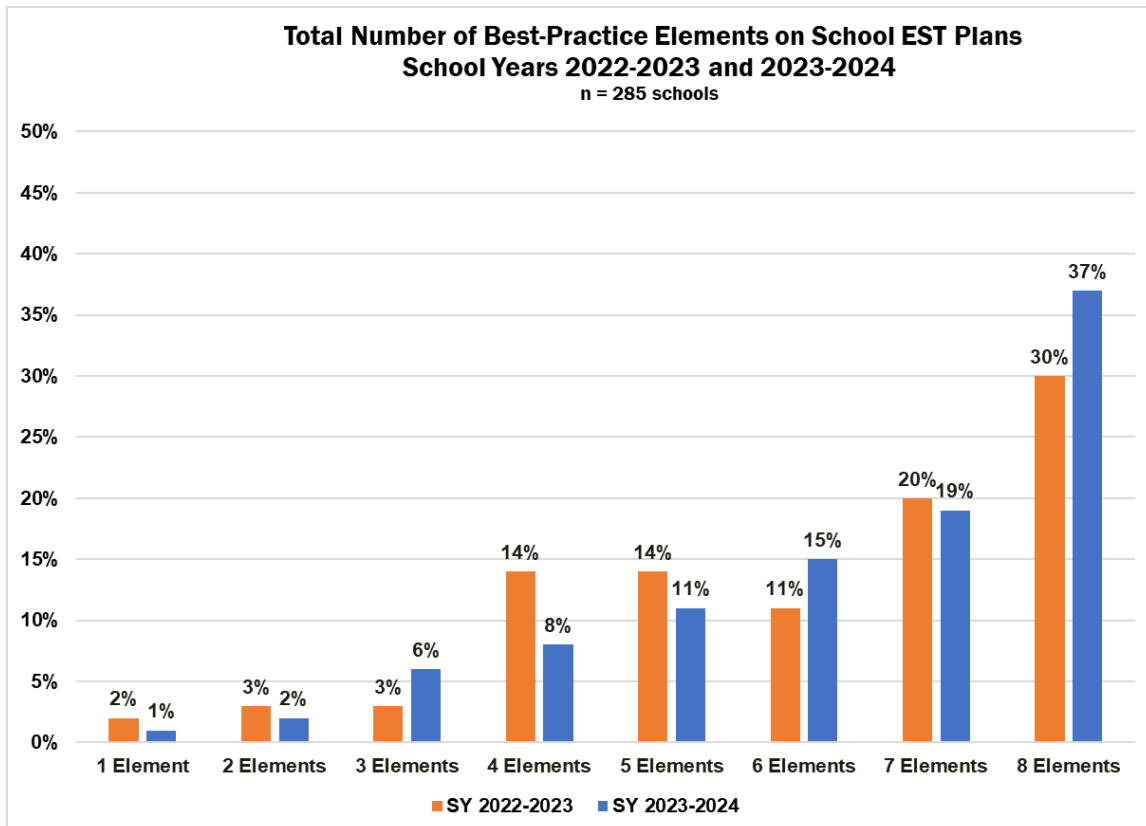
This may indicate that although question 2 suggests that there is frequent “student representation” in EST meetings, their involvement in decisions or plan details happens less frequently than their presence in meetings.

Question 8: Select all of the following elements that are contained within your school's EST plans.

The AOE recommends that EST plans be relatively short-term, data-driven interventions with clear and measurable indicators of success. When Educational Support Teams use intentional and comprehensive plans to inform students' learning needs, this information can also be efficiently and effectively used in general education settings. Leaders who are interested in learning more about the characteristics of productive and efficient EST teams are welcome to review the [Educational Support Team: A Deeper Look](#)⁹ guidance document.



There was a slight increase in the reported use of 7 of the 8 recommended elements for effective EST plans in school year 2023-2024 compared to the prior school year. The only recommended plan element that decreased in reported use was “space to note adaptations or changes made after review of outcome data” (66%) (see appendix, [table 7a](#)).



When analyzing for the number of elements principals report on their EST plans, 71% of principals report at least 6 or more of the 8 recommended effective plan elements on EST plans (see appendix, [table 7b](#)). Developing EST plans with all 8 effective elements helps schools provide supports that are informed by data, systemically aligned, inclusive, and measurable.

Questions 9 - 15: Quantitative EST Plan Data

Question 9: How many active EST plans are still in place from last school year?

Question 10: For how many students was a request for assistance made to the EST for the first time this school year?

Question 11: Of the students in Question 10, who received a request for assistance to EST for the first time this school year, how many received an EST plan?

Question 12. Of the students in question 11, who received an EST plan for the first time this year, how many had a Section 504 plan developed for the first time this year?

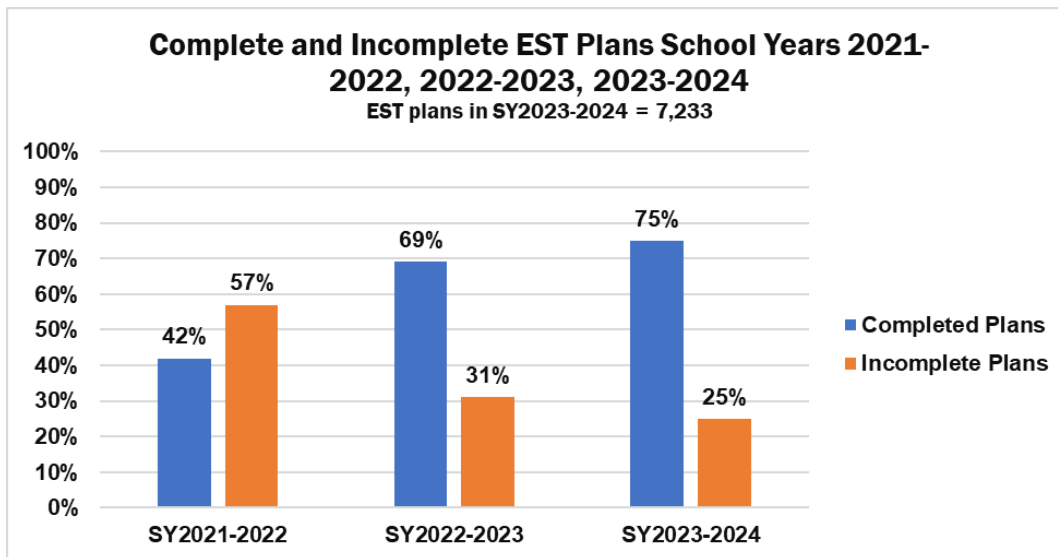
Question 13. Of the students in question 11, who received an EST plan for the first time this year, how many were recommended for a special education evaluation for the first time this school year?

Question 14. Of the students in question 13, who were recommended for special education evaluation, how many had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed for the first time this school year?

Question 15: Out of all current EST plans, how many were completed this school year? ("All" means adding total from question number 9 and 11.)

Unlike plans that offer students individualized long-term support (such as an individualized education program or a Section 504 plan), EST plans are intended to address short-term, specific academic or social emotional skill(s). Data relating to the outcomes of a student's EST plan should be regularly reviewed to determine the continuation of, change in, or successful completion of its goals.

For more information, the [Educational Support Team \(EST\) Practice Profile](#)¹¹ provides additional guidance to leaders seeking to continuously improve their EST processes collaboratively and systemically.



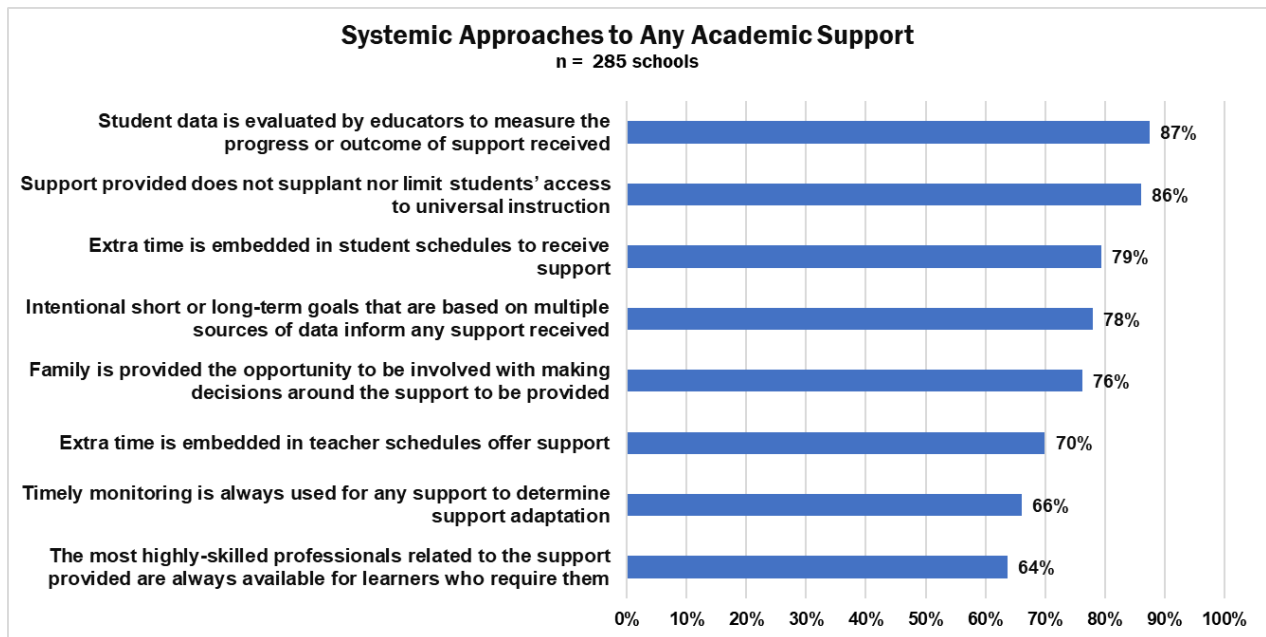
The number of EST plans reportedly completed by the end of the school year has continued to increase, with 75% of all plans being indicated as having been considered “completed” in SY2023-2024. This may imply that many VT schools provide targeted, short-term EST plans for students (see appendix, [table 8](#)).

Questions 16 - 18: Equitable Access to Interventions and Supports

Question 16: Select all options available to enhance ANY type of academic support to ALL students in your school

Research suggests academic achievement is linked to students’ ability to feel safe and take risks and that developing a culture of relational trust is necessary for this to occur. Reflecting on and improving students’ sense of physical, emotional, and psychological safety and autonomy in decision making promotes healthy relationships that allow for students to thrive ([Build Equity, Join Justice – A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), p. 89).⁶

Aligning and coordinating instruction and interventions across all settings enhances the ability to improve academic achievement equitably. A coordinated curriculum allows for evidence-based, personalized instruction and support that considers students’ unique backgrounds and goals. With aligned efforts, decisions are more likely to be made by relevant experts, be data-driven and reliable, closely monitored, and designed to supplement core instruction rather than replace it.



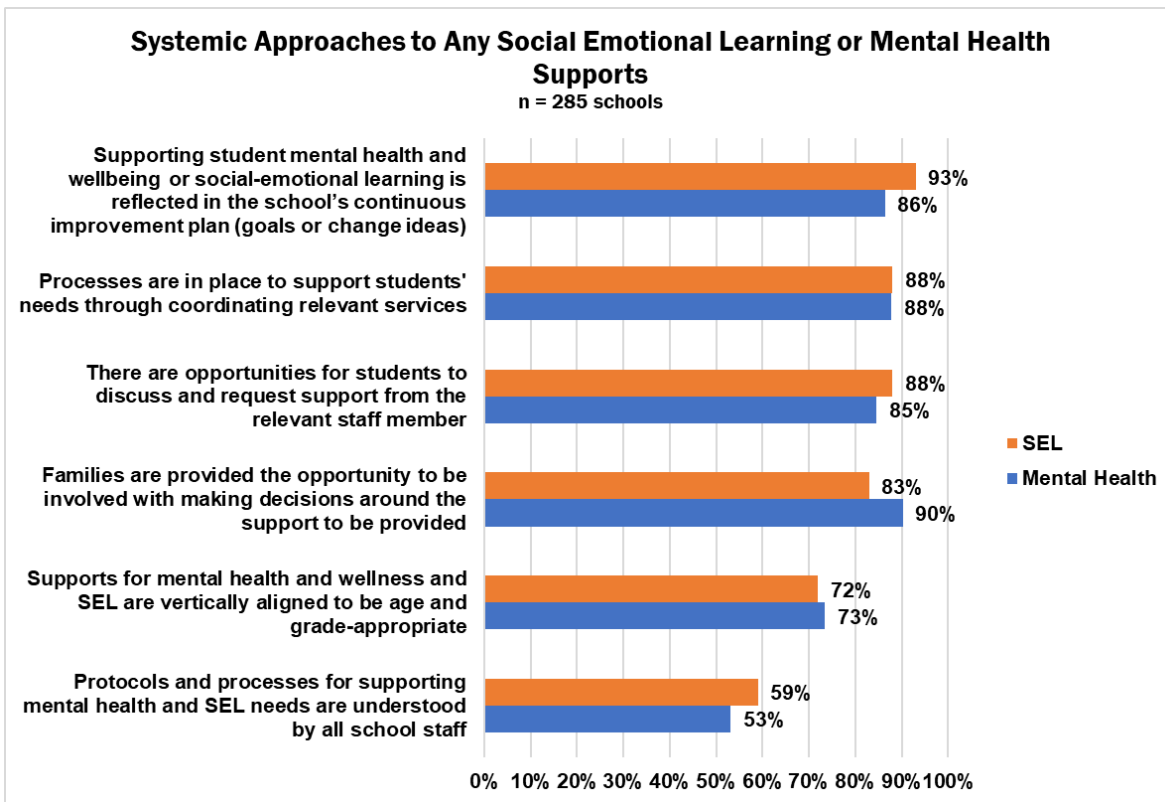
More than half of the principals' report using all recommended best practices to enhance the effectiveness of any academic support provided to students. It also indicates that although there is a high level of the reported use of student progress monitoring (87%) and providing students with extra time in their schedules to receive supplemental instruction (79%), conversely, the timely monitoring of these supports (66%) and pairing supports with the most highly skilled professionals (64%) happen less frequently as a way to improve academic supports in VT schools (see appendix, [table 9](#)).

Question 17: Select all systems-level approaches that are in place to provide high-quality mental health (MH) supports to all students who may need them in your school.

Question 18: Select all systems-level approaches that are in place to provide high-quality social-emotional learning (SEL) support to all students who may need them in your school.

Providing inclusive interventions to support students' social and behavioral functioning and mental health and well-being improves academic performance. Developing systemic approaches that can leverage collaboration involves developing systems that efficiently call on the expertise of various experts, families, students, community members, and other student advocates. Doing this promotes a culture of respect and a caring community able to support all needs of all students ([District Management Group: Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports](#), p. 6).⁵

Leaders can read more about the implementation methods and intended impact of best-practice strategies for enhancing social-emotional and mental-health on pages 19 - 30 of the [VTmtss Field Guide](#)¹⁰.



This indicator was divided into two questions to compare differences in approaches to enhancing social-emotional support and mental health support. For mental health support, the highest reported practice was “*families being involved in decision-making processes*” (90%), yet 7% fewer principals (83%) reported this practice for social-emotional support. The approach most frequently reported for SEL was “*involving details in a continuous improvement plan,*” whereas 7% fewer principals chose that option for systemically enhancing mental health supports (see appendix, [table 10](#)).

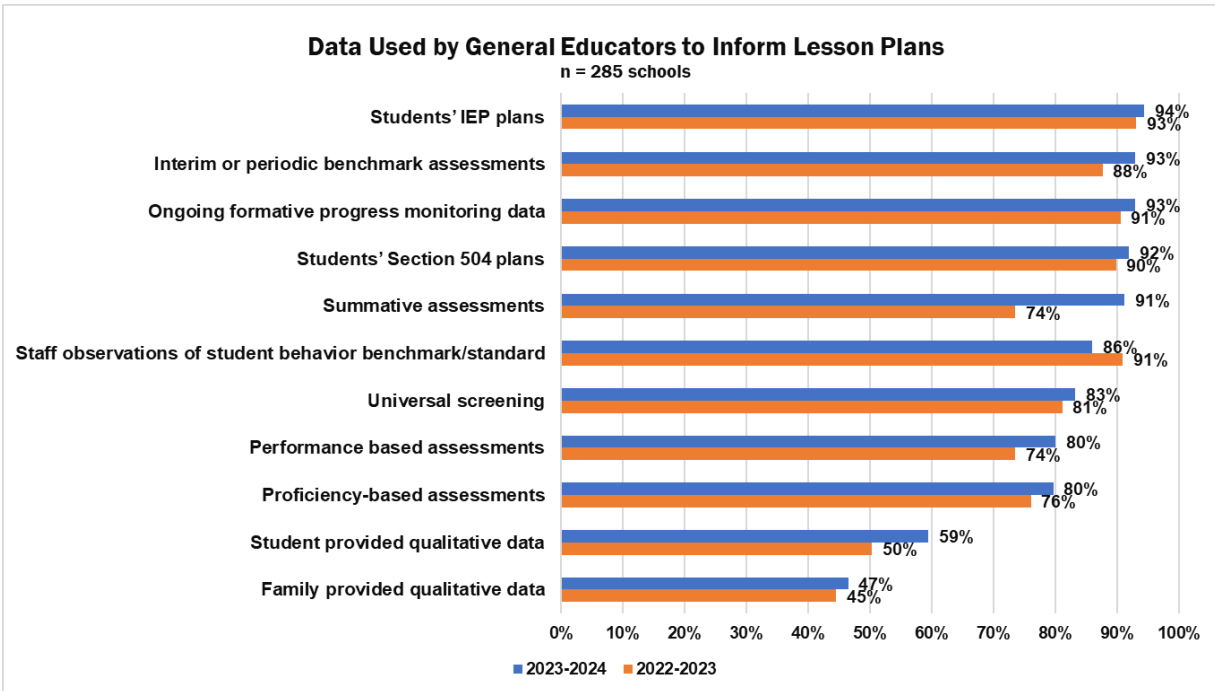
Although these differences are low, this indicates a variation in systemic approaches used to enhance SEL supports compared to mental health supports.

Question 19: Select any data sources general educators in your school review to inform their lesson planning.

Multiple, varied, and recurring data sources enhance instructional planning and inform system improvement by capturing approaches to differentiated instruction, students' ongoing progress, and their individual needs ([VTmtss Field Guide](#), p. 42)¹⁰. It is particularly beneficial to ensure families and students are considered primary stakeholders in decisions that impact student outcomes because this can result in better achievement, a culture of trust, positive behavioral interactions between students and staff, and increased social capital for students ([Family Engagement Toolkit and Self-Assessment](#), p. 4)¹⁴.

Informing educators of the different purposes of using various data sources to inform instruction can influence their ability and interest to do so. Pages 43-49 of the [VTmtss](#)

[Field Guide](#)¹⁰ explain the rationale for using comprehensive data, and the [Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems in School District Systems: Act 173 Technical Guidance](#)¹⁵ aligns the elements of a Local Comprehensive Assessment System (LCAS) with the VTmtss Framework components to support system improvement efforts.



There was a slight increase in the reported use of most of the data source options general educators may use to inform lessons. The two types of data that saw the highest increases were summative assessments, increasing by 17%, and student-provided qualitative data, increasing by 9%. While an increase in student-provided data is promising, more inquiry is needed to understand such a large increase in summative rather than formative assessments were reported (see appendix, [table 11](#)).

Questions 20 - 25: Climate, Social Emotional Learning, and Mental Health Supports

Question 20: Does your school administer a universal social-emotional learning screener?

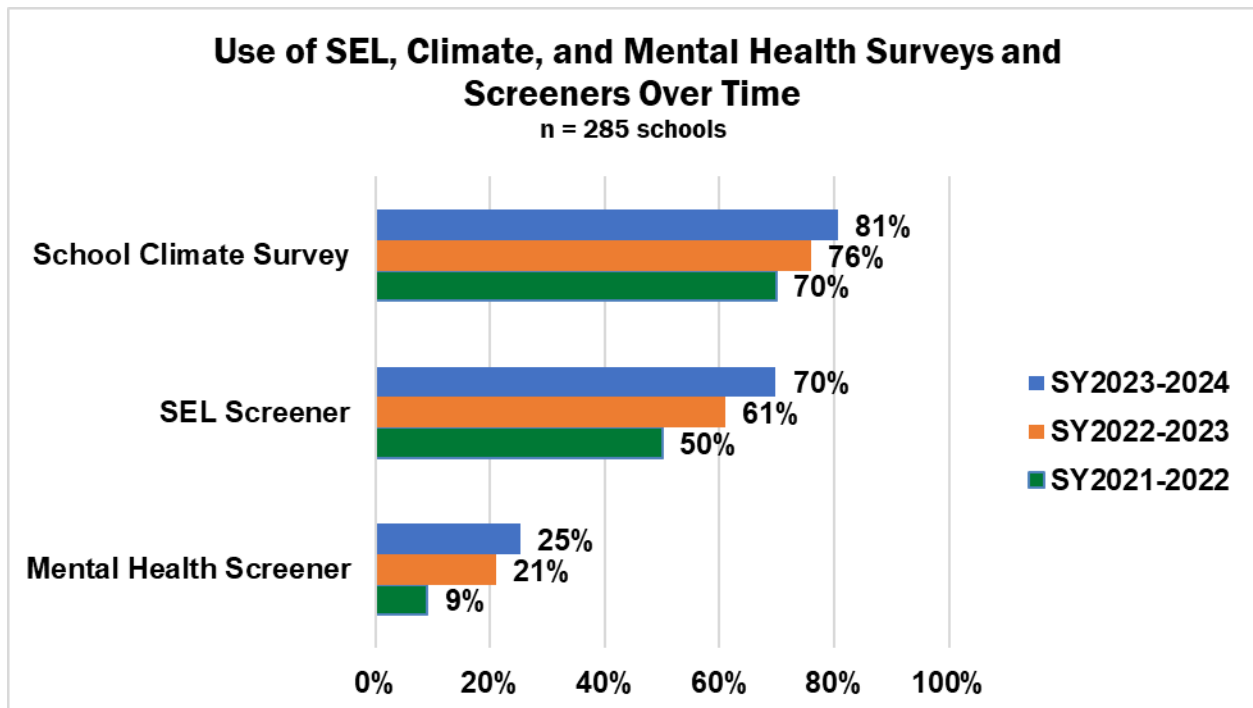
Question 21: Does your school administer a universal mental health screener?

Question 22: Does your school administer a universal school climate survey?

Supplemental Question: Are these universal data sources distributed at the school or supervisory union/district level?

Including mental health, climate, and social-emotional data in a school or district's comprehensive and balanced assessment system provides important information on the perceptions around student relationships and experienced sense of safety, well-being, and belonging. Thus, screening students can inform decisions around universal instruction, personalized learning needs, identification of students who are struggling, while capturing patterns or questions about individuals and groups of students ([VTmtss Field Guide](#), p.43)¹⁰. Additionally, universal screening can inform educators on how various populations of students may be experiencing school differently within a school system to better understand the need for differentiated approaches to supports ([Build Equity, Join Justice – A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), p. 100)⁶.

Collecting standardized data that can be compared among schools within a district allows for equitable decision-making. Leaders can use the [Universal Screening for Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs and Strengths in Vermont Schools](#)¹⁶ resource to learn more about the purpose of universal screening and what to consider before implementing one.



Throughout the past three school years schools, the reported distribution of universal school climate surveys, SEL screeners, and/or mental health screeners has increased over time, with school climate surveys being the most frequently distributed of the three options (see appendix, [table 12](#)). This could indicate that schools are increasingly recognizing the value of collecting broad and comprehensive data to inform both student needs, as well as improvement needs for the entire school system.

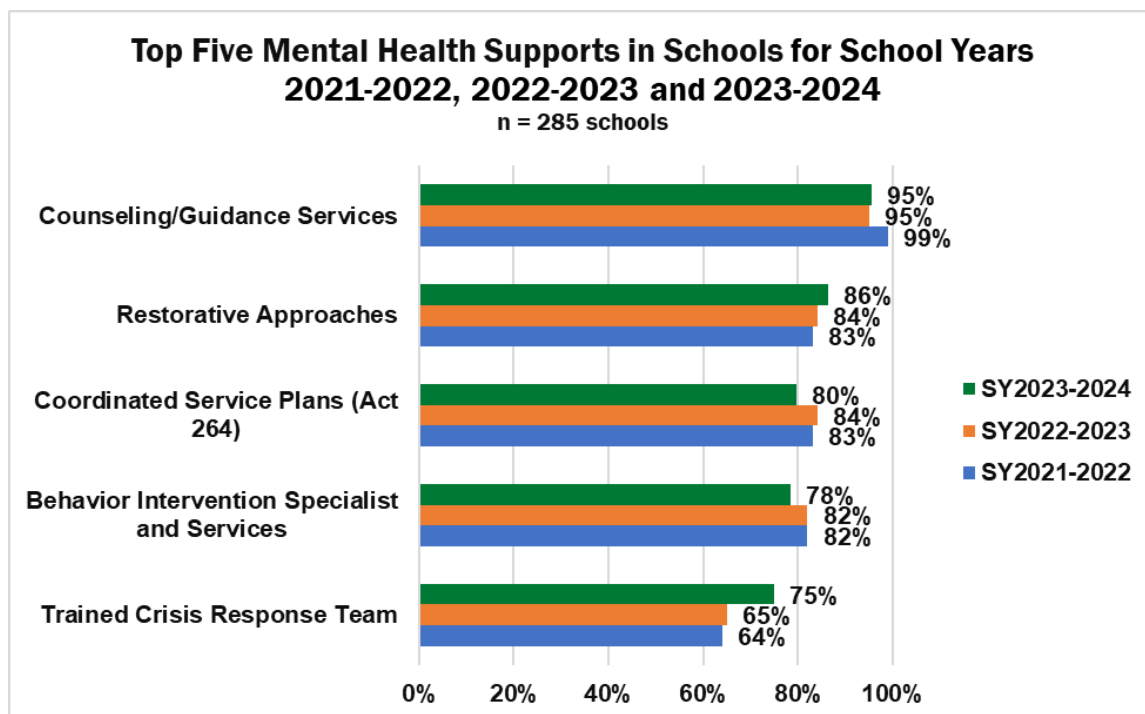
Question 23: Which of the following Mental Health and Social Services and Supports are part of your school's multi-tiered system of support?

Question 24: Does your school have a memorandum of understanding with your local designated mental health agency or other local health and mental agency providers?

Question 25: Select all funding sources you used this school year for mental health and social services.

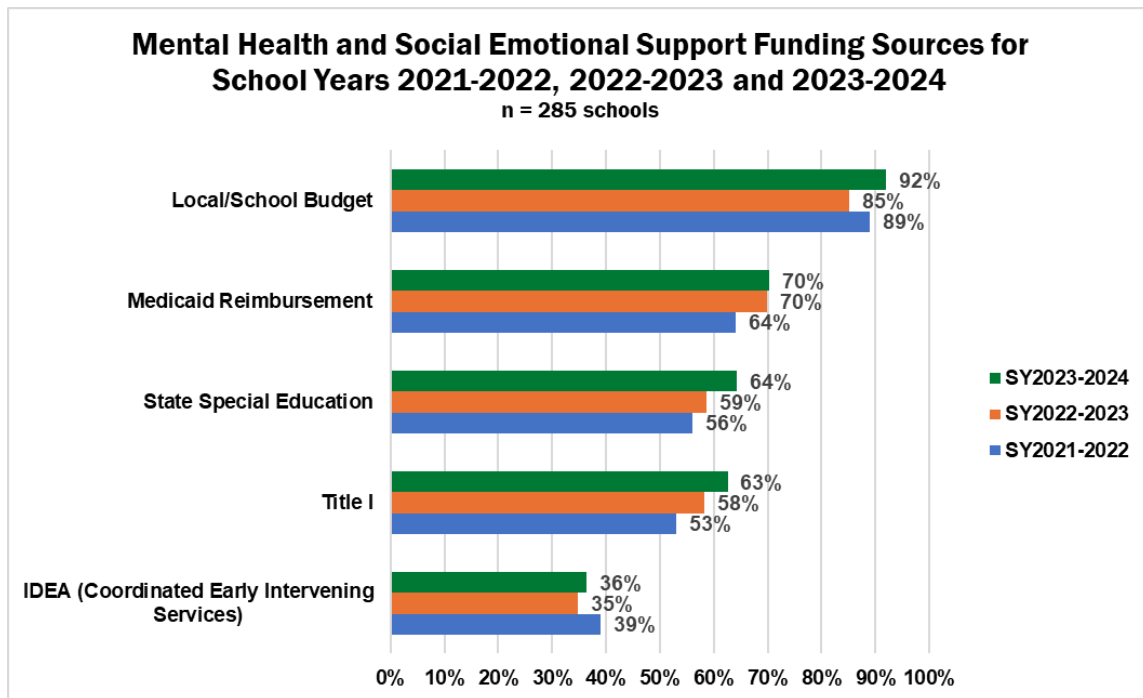
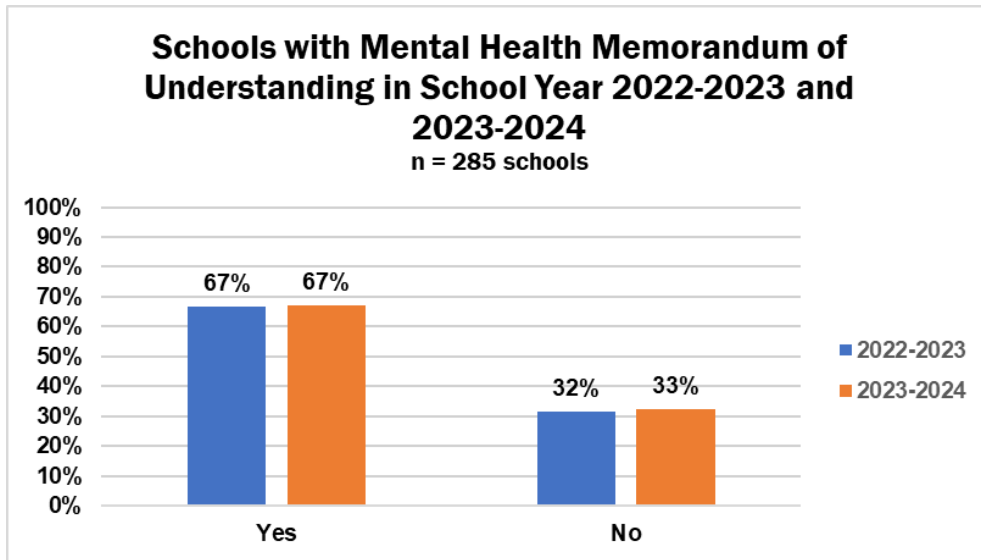
Schools can augment their work by creating partnerships with designated agencies and community members to support students and families. Community service providers, medical and mental health support agencies, post-secondary institutions, professional organizations, and businesses are often eager to offer specific support or resources. Programs or frameworks that promote positive classrooms and school cultures through teaching proficiencies and competencies in areas of social-emotional well-being can both proactively prevent disruptive behavior and improve academic outcomes for students ([VTmtss Field Guide](#), p. 27)¹⁰. Integrating approaches to teaching and learning through establishing cultures of respect, safety, and cultural responsiveness that embrace the diverse nature of humanity helps students learn how to overcome challenges both as individuals and as a collective community ([Build Equity, Join Justice – A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), p. 91)⁶.

Leaders interested in improving models of restorative approaches in their schools or considering implementing Restorative Approaches (RA) should consult the [VT Restorative Approaches Collaborative](#)¹⁷ website for virtual resources and a directory of local experts. The [SEL VT](#)¹⁸, [PBIS Vermont](#)¹⁹, and [CASEL](#)²⁰ offer resources and training to support improving and expanding SEL practices.



The top five reported mental health supports available in Vermont schools have remained consistent for the most part with slight changes occurring throughout the last three school years. Of the top five supports offered, the fifth most widely available mental health support in schools, “trained crisis response team” has increased by 10% from SY2022-2023 to SY2023-2024, a relatively large increase compared to the other top supports (see appendix, [table 13a](#)).

The only other support type to see a consistent increase in reported use was restorative approaches. The other top five supports decreased slightly between years. This data indicates there are a variety of mental health supports available throughout Vermont, with certain supports increasing in implemented use more than others over time.



There has been no change in the amount of schools reporting they have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with a locally designated mental health agency between school years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, with 67% of schools reporting that they did have an MOU for both years (see appendix, [table 13b](#)). There have been some changes in the reported use of funding sources for mental health supports over time, with Title 1 funding increasing by 10% over three years, and state special education increasing by 8% of reporting schools (see appendix, [table 13c](#)).

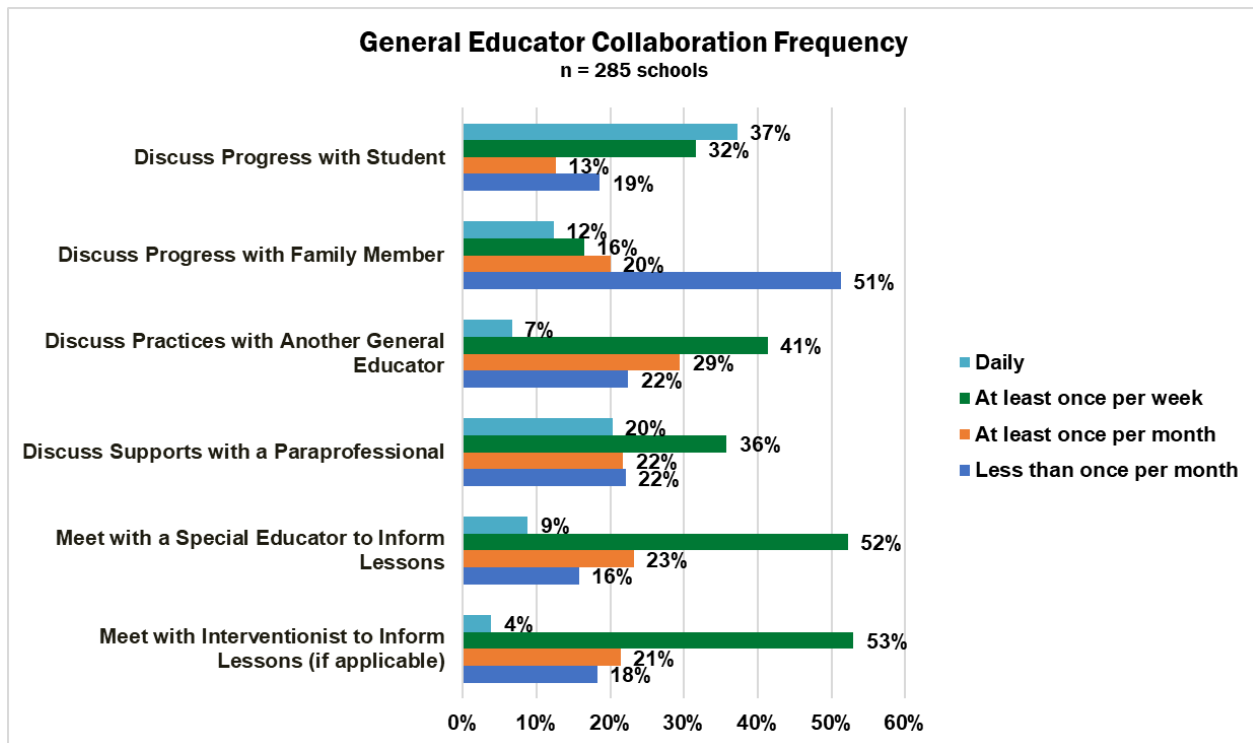
Questions 26 – 31: Increasing Capacity for the Collaborative Development of Collective Expertise

Question 26. How frequently do general educators in your school have time intentionally embedded in their schedule to do the following?

- a. Meet with an intervention specialist to inform their lesson plans.**
- b. Meet with a special educator to inform lesson planning**
- c. Discuss the details of a paraprofessional’s responsibility or role in supporting students.**
- d. Share best practices with another grade level or content area general educator.**
- e. Discuss the progress of a student with a family member.**
- f. Discuss the progress of a student with that student.**

Academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes for students improve when diverse participants collaborate effectively on curriculum and instruction. Effective collaboration provides teachers with more resources, greater job satisfaction, and more positive interactions with students, boosting student achievement and personal growth ([VTmtss Field Guide](#), p. 15)¹⁰.

Teaching is driven by individual core values and skills, and benefits from having healthy partnerships where teachers can collaborate on units, lessons, and progress monitoring. Doing so fosters a collective identity based on communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making, ultimately strengthening a supportive school culture for all students ([Build Equity, Join Justice: A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), p. 100)⁶.



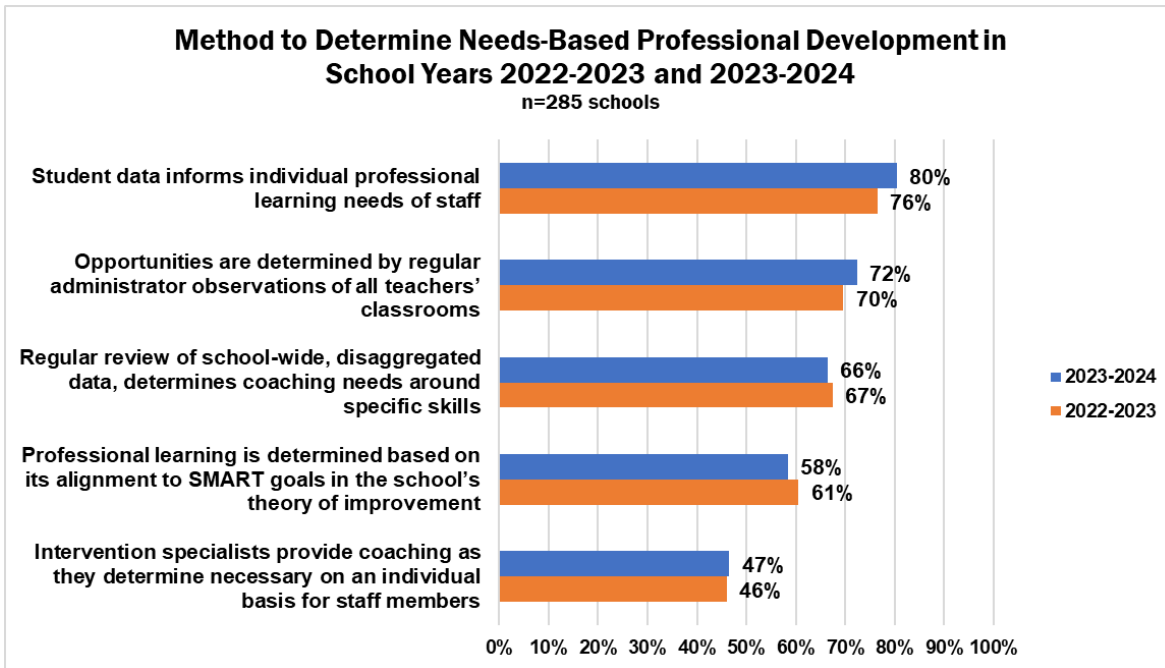
In comparison to other individuals in a school community, this data indicates that families are least frequently engaged by general educators to inform lessons. For the options of “*at least once per month*” or “*less often*,” 71% of schools report that this is the frequency in which their educators meet with families or guardians to discuss progress of a student to inform their lesson plans. Conversely, collaboration between general educators and students is reported by 69% of schools to occur at least once a week. Although more than half of principals report that general educators meet with paraprofessionals, special educators, and interventionists at least once per week, less than half reported this level of collaboration with another teacher (see appendix, [table 14](#)). This indicates that Vermont teachers may be collaborating with families and other teachers less frequently than they are with other school roles.

Questions 27-28: Needs-Based Professional Learning

Question 27. How is needs-based professional learning determined at your school?

As defined in [VT Education Quality Standards \(EQS\)](#)²¹ “needs-based professional learning” means staff learning based upon needs identified through an examination of student performance and organizational and instructional data in alignment with the school’s Continuous Improvement Plan or with programmatic supports resulting from monitoring findings. Educators working together to plan and teach within a student-focused partnership contribute to sustained and equitable approaches to instruction, by strengthening professional bonds and tying them to a schoolwide goal of student empowerment and wellbeing ([Build Equity, Join Justice – A Paradigm for School](#)

[Belonging](#), p. 100)⁶. For more information visit the [Needs-Based Professional Development in School Systems: Act 173 Technical Guidance](#)²².

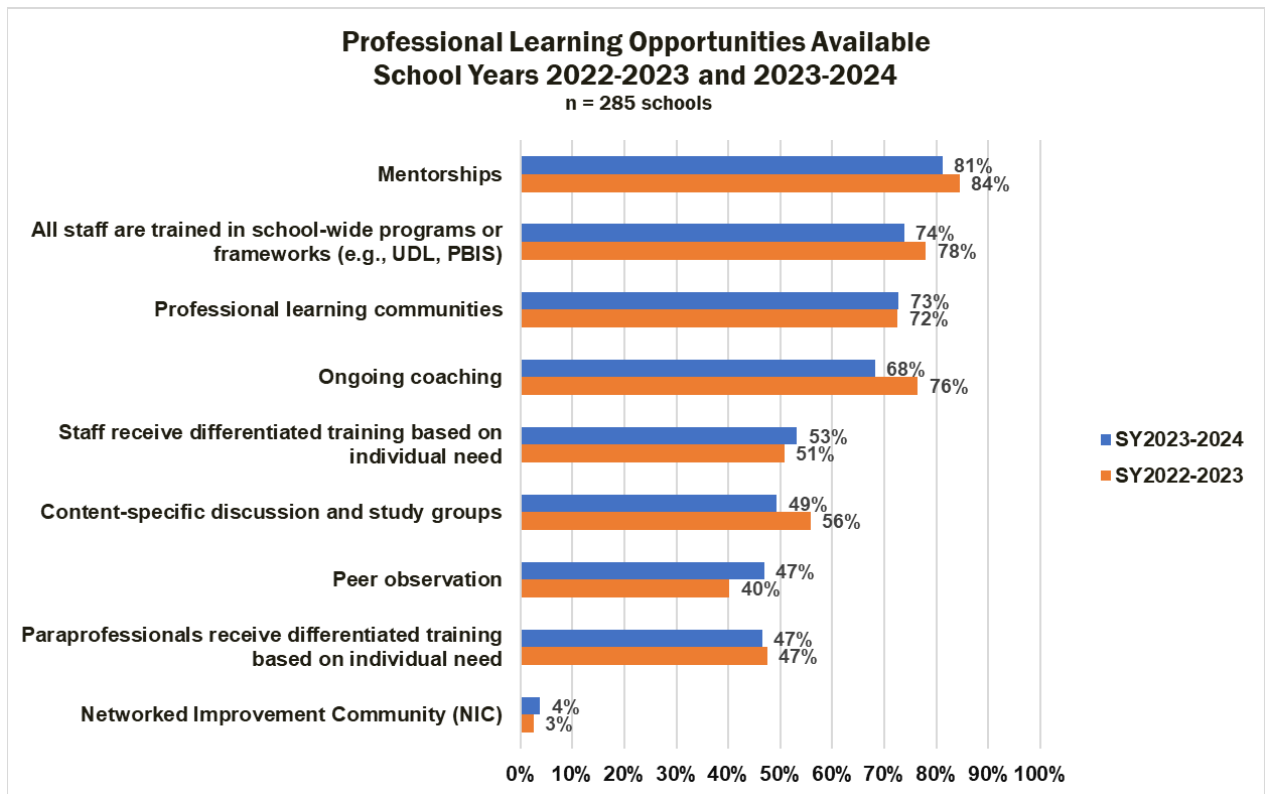


The method for determining professional learning needs reported by most principals was using student data (80%). Although many principals report regular observations of teachers, reviewing school-wide data, and determining professional learning needs-based on alignment with improvement plans, many did not report using these elements to determine professional learning. Fewer than 50% reported intervention specialists providing coaching determined on an individual basis (see appendix, [table 15](#)).

This [Act 173 Needs-based Professional Development: Making Connections with VTmtss](#)²³ tool can help leaders identify areas of their school system that may be in need of improvement in relation to best practices involving embedding needs-based professional development.

Question 28. Which of the following needs-based professional learning opportunities are available in your school? Select all that apply.

Research shows that school-embedded, targeted learning opportunities enhance educators' abilities to improve their skills. Building a culture of expertise requires establishing infrastructure and opportunities for continuous learning within the school system. By incorporating regular learning opportunities where diverse internal and external experts, leaders can effectively address staff learning needs.



Most of the nine “needs based professional learning opportunity” Survey options saw slight decreases in the amount of principals reporting their availability in SY2023-2024 compared to SY2022-2023. The “ongoing coaching” option decreased by 8% of schools reporting that the availability of that type of embedded professional learning. The opportunity reported available by most principals was “mentorships” although that slightly decreased as well. The options that slightly increased in reported availability were professional learning communities, individualized differentiated training, peer observation, and participation in network improvement communities (see appendix, [table 16](#)).

Question 29A: How many total paraprofessionals are currently employed as full-time at your school?

Question 29B: How many of those paraprofessionals are primarily assigned to the following role(s)?

a. Support of an assigned student (as indicated in the student's Individualized Education Program)

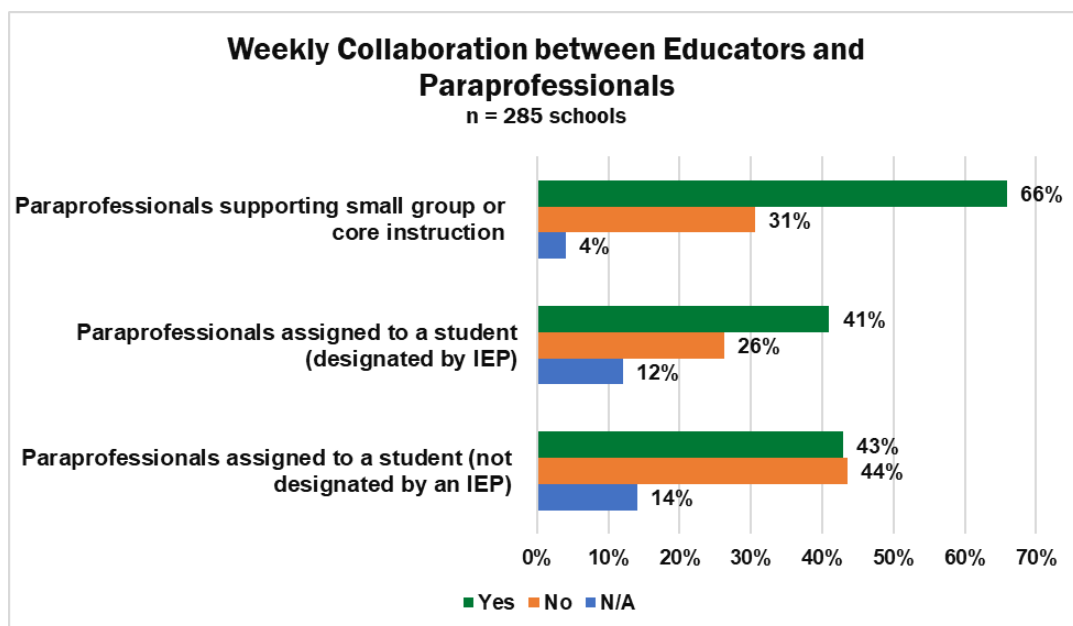
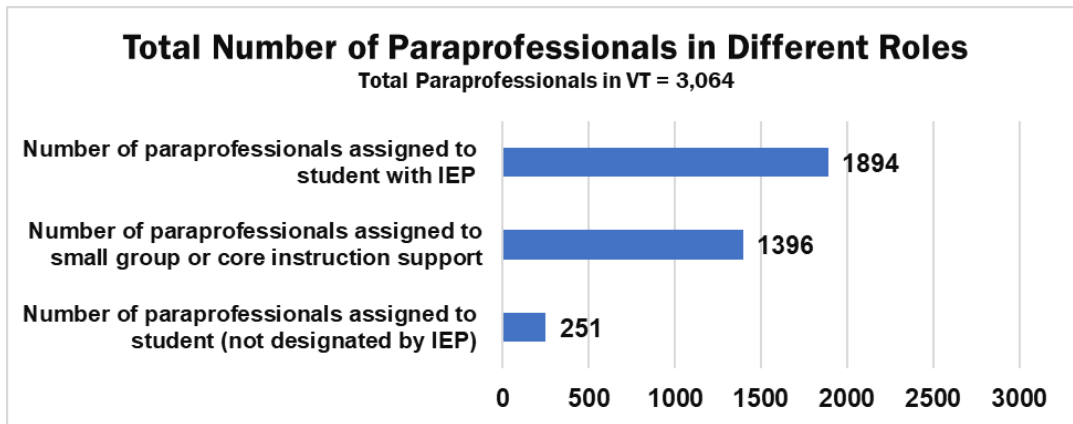
b. Support of an assigned student (Not designated by an IEP)

c. Support core instruction within a whole class or small group support setting

Question 29C: Do the paraprofessionals in this role meet with a general educator weekly to discuss embedded supports?

Research shows that students are more successful when authentically engaged in core learning activities with their peers and general educators. Reconsidering paraprofessional roles, or the amount of time available for paraprofessionals to collaborate with teachers, are steps toward increasing the amount of time any student can spend within universal school settings.

Systems-wide coordination of general and special education efforts allows all staff to engage in a systemic approach, thus enhancing collaborative best practices ([District Management Group: Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports](#), p. 45-47)⁵. Coordination enhances service delivery models with collaborative teaching in a fully integrated framework that matches resources to student needs, rather than an eligibility label, through developing communities of practice among all members of a school community, such as paraprofessionals, rather than individualized responsibilities or roles ([Build Equity, Join Justice – A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), p. 71)⁶.



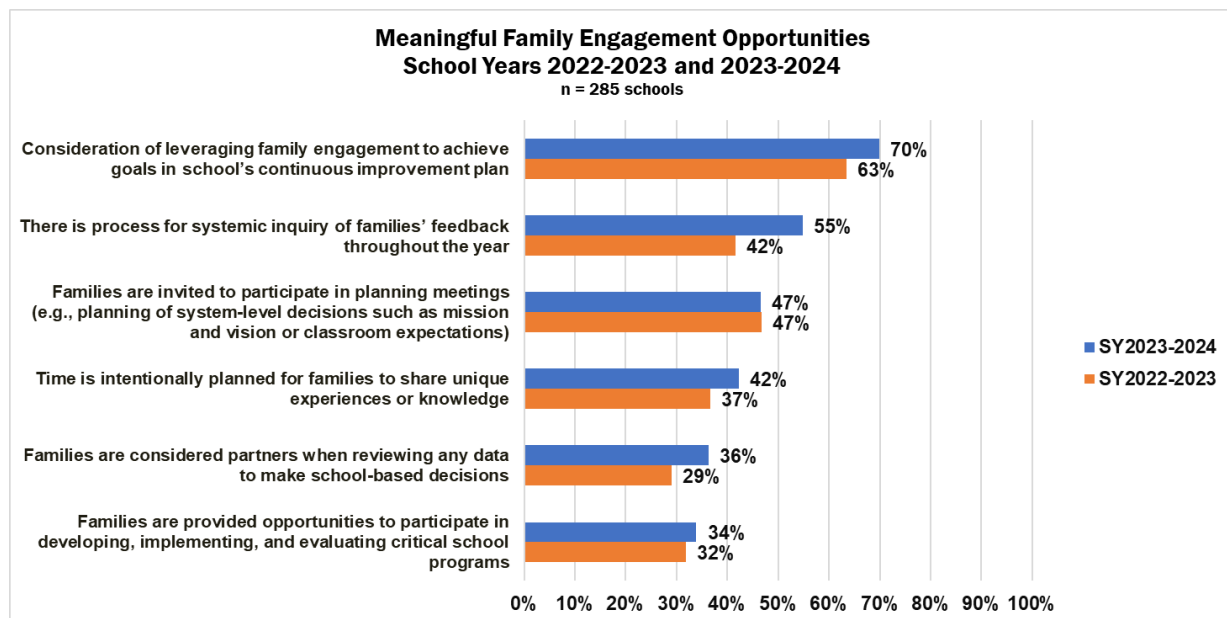
Most paraprofessionals in Vermont are assigned to support students with individualized education plans (IEP) (1894) and slightly less than half are supporting small groups or core instruction (1396). Far fewer are reportedly assigned to students for reasons not designated by an IEP. The numbers in the first chart do not add up to the total number of paraprofessionals in the State possibly due to differences in roles and assignments.

Collaboration between general educators and paraprofessionals is occurring in 41% to 66% of schools across all paraprofessional roles in Vermont. This indicates that approximately half of the principals report consistent collaboration between teachers and paraprofessionals at their school (see appendix, tables [17a](#) and [17b](#)).

Question 30: Which opportunities has your school made available throughout the year for meaningfully engaging families in decisions regarding the school?

Research shows that meaningful family engagement, regardless of income or background, are more likely to attend school regularly, improve academically, advance to the next grade level, enhance social skills and positive behaviors, and graduate from secondary and post-secondary education. When families are decision-making partners with educators, they can better advocate for their children and provide valuable insights into students' needs and personal contexts ([Engaging Families to Transform Education](#) by the Carnegie Corporation of NY, 2018)²⁴.

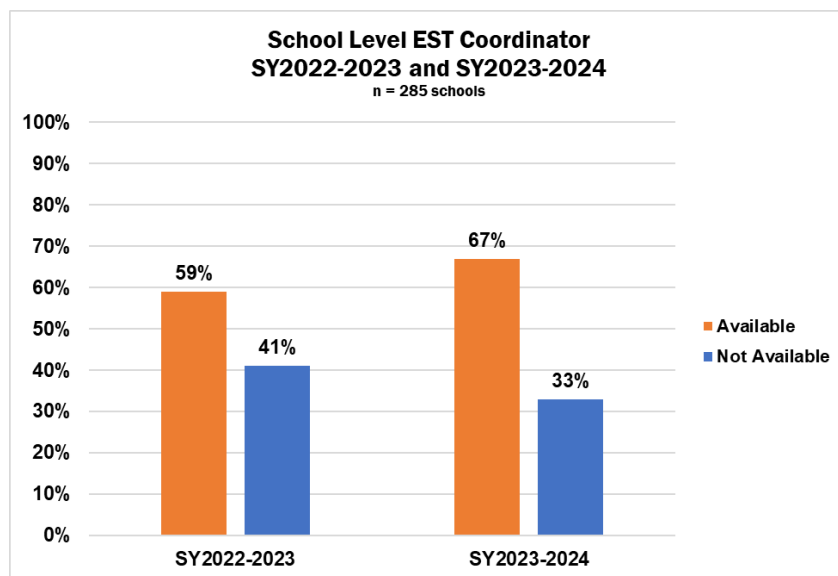
Shared power and responsibility mean families, school staff, and community members collaborate in school planning, leadership, and decision-making. Successful and sustained family engagement is supported by activities that emphasize learning, development, participation, communication, collaboration, and family empowerment ([VT Family Engagement Toolkit and Self-Assessment](#), p. 87)¹⁴.



There was an increase in every meaningful family engagement practice related to this question from the prior school year. This could indicate more attention being paid to meaningfully engaging families in Vermont schools than in prior years. Specifically, having a “process for systemic feedback from families” increased by 13% of the percentage of principals reporting this practice and both leveraging families to achieve improvement goals,” and considering families as partners through collaboratively reviewing data increased by 7% (see appendix, [table 18](#)).

Question 31: Our school has at least one staff member represented on a district-level educational support team.

The AOE recommends there is at least one district-level educational support team member represented at school-level EST meetings.



There was an increase of 8% in the principals reporting the use of an EST coordinator between SY2022-2023 and SY2023-2024. This could indicate that schools are emphasizing coordinating systemic efforts around EST plans (see appendix, [table 19](#)).

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- ² Vermont Act 117, Vt Stat. 16 V.S.A. § 2904. (Added 1999, No. 117 (Adj. Sess.), § 3; amended 2005, No. 54, § 14; 2009, No. 44, § 40, eff. May 21, 2009; 2013, No. 92 (Adj. Sess.), § 193, eff. Feb. 14, 2014.). <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/16/099/02904>
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- ⁵ Vermont Agency of Education and District Management Group. (2017, November). *Expanding and strengthening best-practice supports for students who struggle preliminary highlights for discussion* (p. 50). [Legislative Report]. <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/legislative-report-expanding-and-strengthening-best-practice-supports-students-who-struggle>
- ⁶ McCart, A., Kelly, W. and Sailor, W. (2023). *Build equity, Join justice: A paradigm for school belonging*. W.W. Norton and Company. Wwnorton.com. <https://wwnorton.com/books/9781324030270>
- ⁷ Vermont Agency of Education. (2022, June). *Educational support team plan forms*. <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-educational-support-team-plan-forms>
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- ⁹ Vermont Agency of Education. (2020, October). *Educational support team - A deeper look*. <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-educational-support-team-a-deeper-look>
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- ¹¹ State of Vermont Agency of Education. (2022, September). *Educational support team (EST) practice profile*. <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-educational-support-team-practice-profile>
- ¹² State of Vermont Agency of Education. (2022, June). *Educational support team (EST): Making connections with VTmtss tool*. <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-est-making-connections-with-vtmtss>
- ¹³ State of Vermont Agency of Education. (2021, February). *Essential components for ensuring local comprehensive assessment systems are culturally relevant and equitable*. <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-essential-components-for-ensuring-lcas-are-culturally-relevant-and-equitable>
- ¹⁴ Vermont Agency of Education. (2019, December). *Family engagement toolkit and self-assessment*. <https://education.vermont.gov/document/vermont-family-engagement-toolkit-and-self-assessment>

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- ¹⁵ State of Vermont Agency of Education. (2019, December). *Local comprehensive assessment systems in school district systems: Act 173 technical guidance*. <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/local-comprehensive-assessment-systems-in-school-district-systems-act-173-technical-guidance>
- ¹⁶ State of Vermont Agency of Education. (2023, September). *Universal screening for social, emotional, and behavioral needs and strengths in Vermont schools*. <https://education.vermont.gov/document/universal-screening-social-emotional-and-behavioral-needs-and-strengths-vermont-schools>
- ¹⁷ Vermont Restorative Approaches Collaborative. (n.d.). *Welcome!*. <https://vtrac.org/>
- ¹⁸ Agency of Education. (2021). SELVT. <https://sel.education.vermont.gov/>
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- ²⁴ Carnegie Corporation of New York. (2018). *Joining together to create a bold vision for next generation family engagement: Engaging families to transform education*. https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/f8/78/f8784565-4bd6-4aa3-bd80-2b98fd43380e/parent-engagement-2018.pdf

Appendix

Question 1: Select all staff members that are involved with the creation of the master schedule before the beginning of the school year.

Table 1a

Number of Staff Members Principals Collaborate with on Schedule	Percentage of Schools
Only School Principal	5%
School Principal and 1 individual	14%
School principal and 2 or more individuals	80%

Table 1b

Role	Percentage of Schools
School principal	99%
Classroom teacher	80%
Content specialist	64%
Special education administrator(s)	48%
Other	46%

Question 2: Select all individuals are consistently included in your school's EST meetings.

Table 2

Role	Percentage of Schools
Administrator	98%
Student	94%
Teachers (appropriate PreK-12 grade level related to student needs)	94%
Staff with academic expertise	88%

Role	Percentage of Schools
School counselor	83%
Staff with behavioral expertise	69%
Special educator	66%
Family member or guardian	64%
School psychologist	24%
District-level representative	18%
Social worker	17%
Other non-school supports/advocates	10%

Question 3: Is any EST meeting embedded within your school's master schedule?

Question 4: How frequently does your EST meet throughout the year?

Table 3a

EST Meetings Embedded in Master Schedule	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
No	34%	31%
Yes	67%	69%

Table 3b

EST Meeting Frequency	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
Less than once per month	11%	10%
Once per month	31%	28%
Twice per month or more	69%	71%

Question 5: Select the systemic approaches always used in your school to enhance any academic intervention plans developed for a student by your school's EST.

Question 6: Select the systemic approaches always used in your school to enhance any Social Emotional Learning (SEL) support or behavioral intervention plan developed for a student by your school's EST.

Table 4

Systemic and Comprehensive Approach	Academic Approaches	Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Approaches
General ed instructor(s) meets with member(s) of the team assigning the intervention plan to discuss the details of the intervention	92%	90%
Families are made aware of the details and provided relevant resources within the plan	86%	87%
Documentation is provided to all the student's instructors detailing specific information regarding the intervention plan	82%	77%
General educators are prepared to assume responsibility for the continued implementation of support or accommodations at the completion of an intervention plan	77%	75%
Relevant instructor(s) are provided a documented timeline around expectations for tracking and reporting on intervention data	71%	67%
Students are made aware of the details and provided relevant resources within the plan	48%	67%

Question 6: Disaggregation of Option "Students are made aware of the details and provided relevant resources within the plan"

Table 5

School Grade Bands	SEL EST Plans	Academic EST Plans
Middle/High School	80%	67%
Elementary/Middle School	63%	43%
Pre-K/Elementary	61%	39%
Other	61%	42%

Question 7: Which of the following data sources does your EST often review during EST meetings?

Table 6

Data Sources EST Often Review During EST Meetings	SY2023-2024
Progress Monitoring Data (e.g., periodic benchmark assessments, formative assessments)	95%
Diagnostic data (e.g., Student's IEP plan, behavior-related data, attendance data)	94%
Screener Data (e.g., SEL or academic screener data)	90%
Outcome Data (e.g., Summative assessments compared to benchmark/standard, proficiency-based assessments)	81%
Family Qualitative (e.g., family input (verbal or written), observational)	68%
Student Qualitative (e.g., student input (verbal or written), observational)	47%

Question 8: Select all of the following elements that are contained within your school's EST plans.

Table 7a

EST Plan Elements	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
Concerns are clearly defined and detailed in the plan	95%	95%
Plans clearly define roles: i.e., what will occur, by whom, where, and when	81%	84%
Concern is measurable and informed by data - noted on the plan	72%	83%
Current level of performance always noted on the plan	80%	83%
Plan to promote change is measurable and will be measured by data – noted on the plan	72%	80%
Dates are noted to ensure short-term, frequent review of student progress occurs	72%	73%
Includes information on how to enhance general education setting for student	63%	71%

EST Plan Elements	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
Space to note adaptations or changes made after review of outcomes data is provided on the EST plan template	71%	66%

Table 7b

Number of Elements on EST Plan Template	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
8 Elements	30%	37%
7 Elements	20%	19%
6 Elements	11%	15%
5 Elements	14%	11%
4 Elements	14%	8%
3 Elements	3%	6%
2 Elements	3%	2%
1 Element	2%	1%

Question 9: How many active EST plans are still in place from last school year?

Question 10: For how many students was a request for assistance made to the EST for the first time this school year?

Question 11: Of the students in Question 10, who received a request for assistance to EST for the first time this school year, how many received an EST plan?

Question 12. Of the students in question 11, who received an EST plan for the first time this year, how many had a Section 504 plan developed for the first time this year?

Question 13. Of the students in question 11, who received an EST plan for the first time this year, how many were recommended for a special education evaluation for the first time this school year?

Question 14. Of the students in question 13, who were recommended for special education evaluation, how many had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed for the first time this school year?

Question 15: Out of all current EST plans, how many were completed this school year? (“All” means adding total from question number 9 and 11.)

Table 8

EST Plan Status by End of School Year	SY2021-2022	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
Complete	42%	69%	75%
Incomplete	57%	31%	25%

Question 16: Select all options available to enhance ANY type of academic support to ALL students in your school

Table 9

Systemic Approaches to Universal Academic Supports	Percentage of Schools
Student data is evaluated by educators to measure the progress or outcome of support received	87%
Support provided does not supplant nor limit students’ access to universal instruction	86%
Extra time is embedded in student schedules to receive support	79%
Intentional short or long-term goals that are based on multiple sources of data inform any support received	78%
Family is provided the opportunity to be involved with making decisions around the support to be provided	76%
Extra time is embedded in teacher schedules offer support	70%
Timely monitoring is always used for any support to determine support adaptation	66%
The most highly-skilled professionals related to the support provided are always available for learners who require them	64%

Question 17: Select all systems-level approaches that are in place to provide high-quality mental health (MH) supports to all students who may need them in your school.

Question 18: Select all systems-level approaches that are in place to provide high-quality social-emotional learning (SEL) support to all students who may need them in your school.

Table 10

Systemic Approaches to Provide High Quality Mental Health and Social Emotional Learning Supports	Mental Health	SEL
Supporting student mental health and wellbeing or social-emotional learning is reflected in the school's continuous improvement plan (goals or change ideas)	86%	93%
There are opportunities for students to discuss and request support from the relevant staff member	85%	88%
Processes are in place to support students' needs through coordinating relevant services	88%	88%
Families are provided the opportunity to be involved with making decisions around the support to be provided	90%	83%
Supports for mental health and wellness and SEL are vertically aligned to be age and grade-appropriate	73%	72%
Protocols and processes for supporting mental health and SEL needs are understood by all school staff	53%	59%

Question 19: Select any data sources general educators in your school review to inform their lesson planning.

Table 11

Data Used to Inform Lessons Plans	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
Students' IEP plans	93%	94%
Interim or periodic benchmark assessments	88%	93%
Ongoing formative progress monitoring data	91%	93%
Students' Section 504 plans	90%	92%
Summative assessments	74%	91%
Staff observations of student behavior benchmark/standard	91%	86%

Data Used to Inform Lessons Plans	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
Universal screening	81%	83%
Performance based assessments	74%	80%
Proficiency-based assessments	76%	80%
Student provided qualitative data	50%	59%
Family provided qualitative data	45%	47%

Question 20: Does your school administer a universal social-emotional screener?

Question 21: Does your school administer a universal mental health screener?

Question 22: Does your school administer a School Climate Survey?

Table 12

Universal Distribution of Screeners and Surveys	SY2021-2022	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
School Climate Survey	70%	76%	81%
SEL Screener	50%	61%	70%
Mental Health Screener	9%	21%	25%

Question 23: Which of the following Mental Health and Social Services and Supports are part of your school's multi-tiered system of support?

Question 24: Does your school have a memorandum of understanding with your local designated mental health agency or other local health and mental agency providers?

Question 25: Select all funding sources you used this school year for mental health and social services.

Table 13a

Type of Support	SY2021-2022	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
Trained Crisis Response Team	64%	65%	75%
Behavior Intervention Specialist and Services	82%	82%	78%

Type of Support	SY2021-2022	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
Coordinated Service Plans (Act 264)	83%	84%	80%
Restorative Approaches	83%	84%	86%
Counseling/Guidance Services	99%	95%	95%

Table 13b

Schools with Mental Health Memorandum of Understanding	2022-2023	2023-2024
Yes	67%	67%
No	32%	33%

Table 13c

Mental Health Funding Source	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
IDEA (Coordinated Early Intervening Services)	39%	35%	36%
Title I	53%	58%	63%
State Special Education	56%	59%	64%
Medicaid Reimbursement	64%	70%	70%
Local/School Budget	89%	85%	92%

Question 26: How frequently do general educators in your school have time intentionally embedded in their schedule to do the following?

Table 14

Frequency	Meet with Interventionist to Inform Lessons (if applicable)	Meet with a Special Educator to Inform Lessons	Discuss Supports with a Para-professional	Discuss Practices with Another General Educator	Discuss Progress with Family Member	Discuss Progress with Student
Less than once per month	18%	16%	22%	22%	51%	19%

Frequency	Meet with Interventionist to Inform Lessons (if applicable)	Meet with a Special Educator to Inform Lessons	Discuss Supports with a Para-professional	Discuss Practices with Another General Educator	Discuss Progress with Family Member	Discuss Progress with Student
At least once per month	21%	23%	22%	29%	20%	13%
At least once per week	53%	52%	36%	41%	16%	32%
Daily	4%	9%	20%	7%	12%	37%

Question 27: How is needs-based professional learning determined at your school?

Table 15

Methods to Determine Needs-Based Professional Learning	2022-2023	2023-2024
Intervention specialists provide coaching as they determine necessary on an individual basis for staff members	46%	47%
Professional learning is determined based on its alignment to SMART goals in the school's theory of improvement	61%	58%
Regular review of school-wide, disaggregated data, determines coaching needs around specific skills	67%	66%
Opportunities are determined by regular administrator observations of all teachers' classrooms	70%	72%
Student data informs individual professional learning needs of staff	76%	80%

Question 28: Which of the following needs-based professional learning opportunities are available in your school?

Table 16

Types of Embedded Professional Learning Opportunities	2022-2023	2023-2024
Networked Improvement Community (NIC)	3%	4%
Paraprofessionals receive differentiated training based on individual need	47%	47%
Peer observation	40%	47%
Content-specific discussion and study groups	56%	49%
Staff receive differentiated training based on individual need	51%	53%
Ongoing coaching	76%	68%
Professional learning communities	72%	73%
All staff are trained in school-wide programs or frameworks (e.g., UDL, PBIS)	78%	74%
Mentorships	84%	81%

Question 29: How many total paraprofessionals are currently employed as full-time at your school?

Question 29a: How many of these paraprofessionals primarily support of an assigned student (as indicated in student's Individualized Education Program)

Question 29b: How many of these paraprofessionals primarily support of an assigned student (Not designated by an IEP)

Question 29c: How many of these paraprofessionals primarily support core instruction within a whole class or small group support setting

Table 17a

Types of Roles Assigned to Paraprofessionals	Number of paraprofessionals
Number of paraprofessionals assigned to student (not designated by IEP)	251
Number of paraprofessionals assigned to small group or core instruction support	1396
Number of paraprofessionals assigned to student with IEP	1894

Table 17b

Percentage of Schools Reporting Different Roles That Are Assigned to Their School's Paraprofessionals	N/A	No	Yes
Paraprofessionals assigned to a student (not designated by an IEP)	14%	44%	43%
Paraprofessionals assigned to a student (designated by IEP)	12%	26%	41%
Paraprofessionals supporting small group or core instruction	4%	31%	66%

Question 30. Select any opportunities your school made available throughout the year for meaningfully engaging families in decisions regarding the school.

Table 18

Meaningful Family Engagement Opportunities	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
Consideration of leveraging family engagement to achieve goals in school's continuous improvement plan	63%	70%
There is process for systemic inquiry of families' feedback throughout the year	42%	55%
Families are invited to participate in planning meetings (e.g., planning of system-level decisions such as mission and vision or classroom expectations)	47%	47%
Time is intentionally planned for families to share unique experiences or knowledge	37%	42%
Families are considered partners when reviewing any data to make school-based decisions	29%	36%
Families are provided opportunities to participate in developing, implementing, and evaluating critical school programs	32%	34%

Question 31: Our school has at least one staff member represented on a district-level educational support team.

Table 19

Availability of EST Coordinator	SY2022-2023	SY2023-2024
Percent of Schools with EST Coordinator	59%	67%