Florida’s Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project

ANNUAL REPORT
2020-2021
FLORIDA’S PROBLEM SOLVING/RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION PROJECT

To help facilitate and inform the implementation of a problem-solving and response-to-intervention model in the state, the Florida Department of Education and the University of South Florida partnered to create the Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) Project in 2006.

The vision of the Project is that all Florida educators will utilize an effective and efficient multi-tiered system of supports to ensure the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional growth of all students within one universal education system. This is achieved by providing professional learning, technical assistance, technology loan library services, and other supports to districts throughout the state.

PROJECT STAFF

The PS/RtI Project consists of four units, along with central staff, that work together to support school districts throughout Florida.

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FROM OUR DIRECTOR

The 2020-21 school year saw a return to brick and mortar education for many students while schools continued to support virtual learning. As a Project, we continued to support school, district, and state partners with their multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). We engaged with our partners regarding assessment, instruction, and intervention across the tiers; data-based problem-solving; leveraging technology; and universal education; as well as how to think about and provide these services through both brick and mortar and virtual instruction. We continued to be amazed by and grateful for the response of so many educators and leaders who rose to the challenges of the 2020-21 school year.

We provided training, technical assistance, and support to schools and districts on a variety of MTSS implementation topics (e.g., data-based problem solving, standards-aligned instruction across the tiers, evaluating MTSS implementation, universal design for learning). The majority of districts reported increases in participants’ knowledge (82%) and skills (90%), and improvement in MTSS implementation (89%), data-based problem solving use (88%), and the use of RtI for eligibility determination (79%). The majority of districts (91%) also reported improvements in student outcomes as a result of working with the project.

We appreciate the opportunity to continue to collaborate with our school, district, and state partners during the 2021-22 school year. Thank you to Florida educators for everything they do to promote student success!

Dr. José Castillo
PS/RtI Project Director
ABOUT THIS REPORT

When implementing evidence-based practices, implementation science indicates that educators should work through four stages to promote implementation with fidelity: Exploration, Installation, Initial Implementation, and Full Implementation. Throughout these stages, teams leverage implementation drivers, shown in the image below.

[Diagram showing implementation drivers: Competency Drivers, Organization Drivers, Leadership]


Implementation science indicates that educators often partner with experts who provide training and technical assistance to promote implementation. The PS/RtI project supports schools and districts leveraging of competency (e.g., professional learning), organizational (e.g., data systems), and leadership (e.g., district teams responsible for MTSS) drivers. Given the project’s emphasis on professional learning (training, coaching) to build capacity, the information in this report is organized around the Project’s Theory of Change, adapted from Learning Forward.

1. Professional Learning
2. Changes in educator knowledge & skills
3. Changes in educator practice
4. Changes in student results

The Project aims to provide high quality professional learning, technical assistance, technology loan library services, and other supports which should impact participants’ knowledge, skills, and beliefs about MTSS. Longer-term, this should lead to changes in practices and ultimately, changes in student outcomes. Data specific to implementation drivers are marked with ▲.

This report explores the extent to which the Project delivered quality professional learning opportunities and other supports, and how these resulted in changes for educators, district and school systems, and students. Data used include training surveys, technical assistance surveys, needs assessments, implementation surveys, and district-provided outcome data.
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KEY FINDINGS

1. Standards-based Professional Learning
To support competency drivers, PS/RtI provided professional learning supports via statewide monthly webinars, face-to-face and virtual trainings, online modules, RtI-E online community of practice, technical assistance, strategic planning assistance, and a technology loan library. Educators that engaged with the supports would highly recommend them to others and indicated that these supports met their objectives.

2. Changes in Educator Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions
These supports did impact educator knowledge and skills, as indicated by high self-report ratings and pre/post rating comparisons. Each pre/post objective showed an increase after completion of the module. For the RtI-E series, post measures demonstrated high participant understanding of key RtI-E concepts.

3. Changes in Educator Practice
Implementation within each domain of MTSS is moderately high, with 48% to 75% of districts reporting that their schools Often or Always follow key MTSS practices. These scores are slightly lower than the 2019-2020 year, although qualitative comments provided by district leaders reflect how things like leadership changes or the unique circumstances of the 2020-2021 year influenced their lower ratings.

4. Changes in Student Results
Self-report ratings show that most educators think the supports provided by PS/RtI will positively impact student outcomes. Districts that provided data showed real impacts on student outcomes, such as reductions in suspensions for students with disabilities and increases of teacher academic engaged time. Lag data are also presented for the key indicators of FSA and CCEIS-EBD that will be updated when 2020-21 school year data become available.
There are nine key questions that the Project assesses each year. Five of these questions are included on every evaluation survey, and focus on the extent to which the support has increased knowledge, met its objective, and will impact student outcomes, as well as the extent to which educators will use what they have learned and recommend this support to others. The other four questions are included on the technical assistance survey, which was sent out twice in the 2020-2021 year. These questions deal with the extent to which supports helped improve their schools’ implementation of MTSS, use of problem solving to make data-based decisions, and ability to integrate response to intervention for SLD eligibility determination, as well as the extent to which the provided supports have increased their skills.

All of these questions are on a 1-6 scale, with responses of 4-6 counting as positive. As shown in the graphs above, positive responses in each key area have never been lower than 71%, with responses for this year ranging from 79% to 91% across the key questions.
This section of the Project’s Theory of Change focuses on enhancing school and district competency drivers by providing high quality, standards-based professional learning and supports to Florida educators. This section includes the following sub-sections:

- Reach
- Products, Trainings, & Service Delivery
- Supporting FDOE Initiatives
- Session Objectives
- Recommendations
- Professional Learning Design

1. Standards-based professional learning
2. Changes in educator knowledge, skills, and dispositions
3. Changes in educator practice
4. Changes in student results
In 2020-2021, the PS/RtI Project provided supports to districts in a variety of settings, including virtual and face-to-face services. These included statewide monthly webinars, trainings, online modules, the RtI-E online community of practice, and technical assistance to districts. Online resources, such as the Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation (SAM), were also available to support districts to enhance their implementation of MTSS. Schools also had the opportunity for the first time to apply for Florida’s MTSS Recognized Schools process.

Across all of these supports, there was representation from almost every district in Florida, including lab schools, Florida Virtual School, and other state discretionary projects.

**47 Districts**  
*Statewide Monthly Webinars*

**36 Districts**  
*RtI-E Online Community of Practice*

**34 Districts**  
*Online MTSS Modules*

**12 Districts**  
*Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation*

**9 Districts**  
*Florida’s MTSS Recognized Schools Application*

**4,895**  
*Profile visits in 2021*

**81,643**  
*Times tweets have been seen in 2021*

**5,802**  
*Website users in 2020-2021*

**10,675**  
*Website pageviews in 2020-2021*
# PRODUCTS, TRAININGS, & SERVICE DELIVERY

At the beginning of each grant year, the PS/RtI Project develops a Schedule of Deliverables (SOD) that identifies quarterly and annual goals for the amount of deliverables within the areas of Products, Trainings, and Service Delivery. In 2020-2021, the PS/RtI Project met or exceeded the goals for every deliverable. For the purposes of the SOD, these deliverables are reported in units. Units that contain multiple deliverable instances are indicated by an asterisk.

## PRODUCTS

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<td>MTSS Evaluation Reports*</td>
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## TRAININGS

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<td>State &amp; Regional PD, MTSS*</td>
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## SERVICE DELIVERY

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<td>MTSS &amp; RtI District Support*</td>
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<td>TA Focused on RtI-E &amp; Using RtI to Inform SDI*</td>
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<td>Targeted District Support*</td>
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</table>

*For the purposes of the SOD, these deliverables are reported in units. Units often contain multiple deliverable instances. There were a total of 239 individual MTSS Evaluation Reports, 148 MTSS Resources, 53 State and Regional PD sessions for MTSS, 254 MTSS and RTI district supports, 22 technical assistance for RtI-E, and 163 targeted district supports in the 2020-2021 year.*
SUPPORTING FDOE INITIATIVES

In supporting Florida’s districts, PS/RtI supports key Department of Education initiatives and priorities. Examples and descriptions are provided below.

Membership on B.E.S.T. Standards Rollout Groups
Multiple Project staff have actively participated in the rollout of the B.E.S.T. Standards. Two project staff were invited by the FDOE to participate on the State Implementation Team for B.E.S.T. Standards. Two additional staff members were invited to participate on the Literacy and Math Implementation Teams. During 2020-21, these project staff supported scoping reviews to inform evidence-based practice, the development of practice profiles, regional trainings on the standards, and other team activities.

Presenting at Just Read Florida! Summer Literacy Institute
Project staff presented 5 sessions to over 400 educators at the Summer Literacy Institute. The sessions focused on B.E.S.T. Standards for Literacy as the foundation for their MTSS. Key implementation drivers (e.g., professional learning, data-based problem solving) that could be leveraged to support their implementation of the B.E.S.T. Standards within the context of their MTSS were discussed. Additionally, the project provided a 2-day technology expo for participants to interact with instructional technology that could facilitate access and opportunity for students to engage with standards-aligned instruction.

Membership on BESE Workgroups
Several project staff participate on and support the work of BESE workgroups. The PS/RtI Math and Literacy specialists hold co-leadership roles on the BESE Math and ELA workgroups focused on improving the ELA and Math outcomes of students with disabilities. Three additional staff members act as members of the ELA workgroup. Additionally, the project supports the BESE appropriate identification workgroup focused on accurate and timely eligibility determinations for students with disabilities.

Support for Identified Districts
PS/RtI staff have provided intensive supports to districts that are identified by the FDOE for corrective action. These supports included participating in district site-visits with FDOE partners, facilitating planning and problem-solving to address the issues identified, providing training and technical assistance to build district capacity, and providing feedback to district partners on their progress toward addressing the identified issues.
SESSION OBJECTIVES

Every project evaluation includes the question below. Ratings are on a 1-6 scale from Not at all to Greatly, with responses of 4-6 being considered positive for meeting session objectives. Comments from participants exemplifying the ratings are shown to the right of the graph.

To what extent did the support meet its objectives?

"Thank you for diving deep into the MTSS process to help counselors understand the purpose and for reiterating what other School Psychologists have been saying for quite some time. I hope this session was eye opening and will impact how we serve students."

"Thank you for individualizing the training about our needs."

"Thank you for giving me examples of how to create the Hypothesis (ICEL) and what a prediction statement looks like in Problem Analysis Step."

"[I am] better able to identify, develop, and implement Tier 2 supports."

"I appreciate the instructor being open to feedback and gauging the needs of the audience."

"I find that the monthly webinars are not very helpful. The topics sound good but they end up being more general or focus on the elementary, which is not our area of difficulty. I would love to see these presentations ask some of the tough questions and provide some specific examples/solutions."
RECOMMENDATIONS

Every project evaluation includes the question below. Ratings are on a 1-6 scale from Never to Always, with responses of 4-6 being considered positive for recommendations of the supports to others. Comments from participants exemplifying the ratings are shown to the right of the rating scale.

To what extent would you recommend this support to others?

Positive 91%

"This was my favorite module to date. I wish all senior leadership was required to complete. Thank you for this opportunity to participate."

"I can't thank you enough--this is one of the most beneficial learning opportunities I have ever experienced!"

"Getting a school not to mention a school district to transform from the old view of MTSS (How to get to ESE) to the correct view (How to improve student achievement) is not a one and done. I feel that [our PS/RtI Regional Coordinator] has been there for me from the start. She has leaned in when needed and given space afterward to let us find our way. It is like a skilled dance to get all the stakeholders on board. [Our PS/RtI Regional Coordinator] knows this district and the challenges I've been working on. I appreciate her patience and support."

"We LOVE our PS/RtI team and would not have been able to make a difference in our way and scope of work without them!"

"I just want to thank you for offering this online PD for us. It is needed, and valued."

Negative 9%

"I think this training is great for those with less than five years experience. Perhaps there a way to create two tracks depending on your experience."

"I am just not quite how sure how as the School Counselor I would effect Tier 1. I guess I think of that as a curriculum and teacher PD thing. We certainly review data of Tier 1."
In the RtI-E series of modules, design-specific questions aligned to the indicators in the Observation Checklist for High Quality Professional Development were added to ensure that the Project was designing and delivering high quality professional learning experiences. These questions were on a 1-4 scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, with responses of 3-4 being considered agreement with the design statements.

The graph below shows the range of positive ratings for each design question, with the lowest and highest percentages shown. For each of the six design questions, between 93% to 100% of participants agreed with the statements.

% Positive Design Ratings for RtI-E Modules

- Session objectives and learning outcomes were communicated in advance.
- There were opportunities for me to apply knowledge and/or rehearse skills.
- Opportunities were provided for me to reflect on what I learned.
- I plan to participate in follow-up professional development sessions.
- I believe that I can implement the expected practices.
- Examples of content/practices in use were provided.
KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

This section of the Project’s Theory of Change focuses on the extent to which the professional learning and other supports increased the knowledge and skills of educators. This section includes the following sub-sections:

- Increases in Knowledge & Skills
- Pre-Post Increases on Module Objectives
- RtI-E Module Objectives

1. Standards-based professional learning
2. Changes in educator knowledge, skills, and dispositions
3. Changes in educator practice
4. Changes in student results
INCREASES IN KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS

Ratings for the questions below are on a 1-6 scale from Not at all to Greatly, with responses of 4-6 being considered **positive** for increases in knowledge or skills. Comments from participants exemplifying the ratings are shown between the graphs.

To what extent did the support increase your...

**knowledge?**

"[Our PS/RtI Regional Coordinator] has been instrumental in helping me fill in my gaps in knowledge so that I can help our district with implementation. She is also very responsive to my needs, and helps me problem solve our district's needs."

"I always learn a lot at our regional meetings. They are vital to professional development."

"Since I am still learning, it has helped me learn the process more in depth so that I have been able to teach our school based RtI personnel about interventions and progress monitoring, which in turn effects our student outcome."

"This course gives a better understanding of problem solving for students and teachers."

"The workshop was very interesting. It helped to refresh my knowledge about MTSS."

"This is a good course for people who are fairly new to RtI/MTSS. It is a good refresher for the rest of us, but it is not providing us with any information we didn't already know."

"I didn't hear anything new. I just identified practices that I am already using."

**skills?**

Positive 90%

Positive 82%

Negative 18%

Negative 10%
PRE-POST MODULE OBJECTIVES

PS/RtI hosts Project-created MTSS modules online, and 273 educators have completed at least one module. Each module includes a pre/post self-assessment on knowledge and skill objectives. These questions asked participants to rate their understanding of key concepts on a 1-5 scale, ranging from Very Poor to Excellent.

The following graphs show a pre/post comparison on individual objectives for each module. Each objective shows growth between the pre-assessment and post-assessment, with increases ranging from 0.03 to 1.9, out of 5 possible points.

How would you rate your understanding of the following?
PRE-POST MODULE OBJECTIVES

How would you rate your understanding of the following?

Overview of Intervention/Instructional Fidelity

- Importance of fidelity in MTSS
- Decision-making & fidelity
- Legislation on intervention fidelity
- How to find resources for fidelity
- Key concepts for fidelity

Measuring Tier 2 & Tier 3 Intervention Fidelity

- District leadership's role in assessing fidelity
- Three dimensions of intervention fidelity
- Infrastructure needed to assess fidelity
- Methods of assessing intervention fidelity

Supporting Tier 2 & Tier 3 Intervention Fidelity

- Practices to promote fidelity
- Considerations for leaders in supporting fidelity
- Common factors in diminished fidelity
- Using Performance Feedback to improve fidelity
How would you rate your understanding of the following?

**SLD Eligibility**

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<thead>
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<th>Post-assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate intervention procedures</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusionary factors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for special education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy from age/grade level standards</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of improvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education eligibility decision tree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Coaching Series: Interpersonal Communication Skills**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>Post-assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define &amp; identify effective collaboration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ecological approach to problem-solving</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key interpersonal communication skills</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal communication skill in context</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
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RTI-E MODULE OBJECTIVES

In additional to MTSS modules, the Project also has modules specific to the RtI-E series. 98 people have completed at least one module. Each module includes a post self-assessment on the knowledge and skill objectives. These questions asked participants to rate their understanding of key concepts on a 1-5 scale, ranging from Very Poor to Excellent.

The graph below shows the range of scores for each RtI-E module, with the lowest and highest ratings shown. Objective ratings ranged from 3.84 to 5.00 with an average rating of 4.27, demonstrating a high level of self-reported understanding of key RtI-E components.
PRACTICES & IMPLEMENTATION

This section of the Project’s Theory of Change focuses on the extent to which Florida educators implemented their new knowledge and skills. This section includes the following sub-sections:

- Use of New Learnings
- MTSS Implementation
- Key Implementation Areas
- Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation
- District Spotlights

1. Standards-based professional learning
2. Changes in educator knowledge, skills, and dispositions
3. Changes in educator practice
4. Changes in student results
USE OF NEW LEARNINGS

Every project evaluation includes the question below. Ratings are on a 1-6 scale from Never to Always, with responses of 4-6 being considered positive for use of new knowledge or skills. Comments from participants exemplifying the ratings are shown to the right of the rating scale.

To what extent will you use what you learned from this support?

"We are already implementing most of what has been shared concerning infrastructure and problem solving. We are always looking to improve though. The materials as a whole this year are greatly benefiting our ESE support staff and those that directly deal with eligibility and can join RTI-E virtually. Thank you!"

"[ABC] County has changed practices and procedures with the help and mentoring from the project with the goal in improving student outcomes."

"We are consistently refining our practices to align with knowledge from the PS/RtI project."

"We are using the knowledge and skills to create a districtwide MTSS guide. [Our PS/RtI Regional Coordinator] has been a wonderful resource and support during this process."

"Support from [our PS/RtI Regional Coordinator] has allowed us to create a dedicated district level MTSS leadership team. This has significantly increased communication across departments and therefore MTSS implementation."

"The supports provided have allowed our team to grow and change, as needed, to create processes and procedures that work for our district. [Our PS/RtI Regional Coordinator and literacy specialist] are second to none when it comes to their support for our process!"

"The project has developed excellent materials, particularly related to RtI E. That said, our district has been under such significant leadership shifts that it has been very difficult infusing these great materials into our practices. We continue to problem solve for best ways to make this happen. The lack of progress we are making is not a reflection whatsoever on the project, but on our frequent need to navigate new landscapes within the district. We remain optimistic that this can and will occur."
MTSS IMPLEMENTATION

PS/RtI asks district contacts to complete a needs assessment survey once a year in the spring. In this survey, district contacts were asked to rate how often schools in their district engage in key practices aligned to each of the 6 MTSS domains. Responses were on a 1-5 scale, with 1-2 being considered Never or Rarely, 3 being Sometimes, and 4-5 being Often or Always.

46 districts responded to the needs assessment this year. Between 48% to 75% of these districts reported that their schools often or always engage in work to implement each of the domains.

To what extent...

- Do schools across your district use data-based problem solving to improve student outcomes?
- Do schools utilize data systems to inform instruction and intervention decisions within their MTSS?
- Do schools across your district implement assessment and instruction/intervention practices within their MTSS to improve student outcomes?
- Do school leadership teams across your district actively lead efforts to implement MTSS in order to improve student outcomes?
- Do school leadership teams across your district actively facilitate communication and collaboration among educators & families regarding MTSS and its impact on student outcomes?
- Do school leadership teams across your district actively build capacity and infrastructure to facilitate MTSS implementation?
MTSS IMPLEMENTATION

PS/RtI asks district contacts to complete a needs assessment survey once a year in the spring. In this survey, district contacts were asked to rate how often schools in their district engage in key practices aligned to each of the 6 MTSS domains. Responses were on a 1-5 scale, with 1-2 being considered Never or Rarely, 3 being Sometimes, and 4-5 being Often or Always.

The graph below shows the percentage of Often or Always ratings over time. For 2020-2021, ratings remained above 2018-2019 rates, but fell below 2019-2020. Ratings ranged from 48% to 75%.

To what extent...

- do schools across your district use data-based problem solving to improve student outcomes?
- do schools across your district implement assessment and instruction/intervention practices within their MTSS to improve student outcomes?
- do schools utilize data systems to inform instruction and intervention decisions within their MTSS?
- do school leadership teams across your district actively lead efforts to implement MTSS in order to improve student outcomes?
- do school leadership teams across your district actively build capacity and infrastructure to facilitate MTSS implementation?
- do school leadership teams across your district actively facilitate communication and collaboration among educators & families regarding MTSS and its impact on student outcomes?
PS/RtI asks district contacts to complete a needs assessment survey once a year in the spring. In this survey, district contacts were asked to rate how often schools in their district engage in key practices aligned to each of the 6 MTSS domains.

As shown on the previous page, scores dropped between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. In the open-ended comments, districts contacts provided some reasons for the drop in scores this year. These reasons included leadership changes and challenges unique to the 2020-2021 year.

**District Leadership Changes**

_Some contacts expressed that their districts were undergoing leadership changes at the district level that were causing their MTSS implementation to be stalled. Example comments are shown below._

"The lack of change regarding deeper implementation of MTSS is not a reflection on supports provided by the project, but significant district changes. This hopefully will be addressed in the future with the focus on MTSS in the district plan. Very unfortunately, the district was at a higher level of implementation in the past regarding MTSS and regressed largely due to so many changes in leadership."

"The project has developed excellent materials, particularly related to RtI E. That said, our district has been under such significant leadership shifts that it has been very difficult infusing these great materials into our practices. We continue to problem solve for best ways to make this happen. The lack of progress we are making is not a reflection whatsoever on the project, but on our frequent need to navigate new landscapes within the district. We remain optimistic that this can and will occur."

**Challenges in the 2020-2021 School Year**

_Others expressed that their districts were not accessing supports like they would normally want to from the project because of the challenges associated with the 2020-2021 school year. These challenges impacted their implementation of MTSS._

"The PS/RtI MTSS Project is always ready and able to help and support our district. With the challenges presented by COVID this year, [our district] has not been able to pursue the implementation of the RtI-E to the extent we were hoping. We have this planned to begin in July and know that the project will be ready and able to help support us."

"Schools/districts are trying to keep their heads above water during this covid pandemic. This is an addition to still feeling the impacts of Hurricane Michelle. Providing training to staff has proven to be very difficult as we struggle with covering classes on a daily basis."

"We didn't utilize the supports as much as we need to this year. This is more of a reflection of our work and not yours."

"We are just beginning our work on the RtI-e modules and while we have communicated with the PS/RtI Project to some extent, we have not gotten to the point of TA with our PD. I hope it doesn't misrepresent the amount of gratitude we have for the PS/RtI project and the great work they have done in our county."
PS/RtI asks district contacts to complete a technical assistance survey twice a year to reflect on how the services and supports provided have impacted their ways of work. In this survey, district contacts were specifically asked to rate the extent to which they have seen improvement in several core areas.

Responses were on a 1-6 scale, with 1-3 being considered **little to no improvement**, 4-6 being considered **moderate to high improvement**, and N/A being that this area is **not applicable** to the respondent. Most districts (70% to 89%) reported **moderate or high** levels of improvement in each of the areas.

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**To what extent did the supports provided help to improve your schools’...**

- **implementation** of MTSS?
- **use of the problem-solving process** to make **data-based decisions**?
- **use of RtI** to make effective and **efficient SLD eligibility** determinations?
The Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation (SAM) is a tool that schools can use to monitor their implementation of MTSS. In 2020-2021, a total of 466 schools across 12 districts utilized the SAM and provided their ratings to the project. Ratings were on a 0-3 scale, Not Implementing, Emerging, Operationalizing, and Optimizing. The majority of schools (85% to 93%) rated themselves as Operationalizing or Optimizing in each domain. All domain averages fell within the Operationalizing to Optimizing levels, with mean scores ranging from 2.21 to 2.46.
The Self-Assessment of MTSS (SAM) is a tool that schools can use to monitor their implementation of MTSS. In 2020-2021, a total of 466 schools across 12 districts utilized the SAM and provided their data to the project. Ratings were on a 0-3 scale, Not Implementing, Emerging, Operationalizing, and Optimizing.

The same trends found in the domain averages for all schools is found at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Elementary schools show a consistently higher SAM rating than middle and high schools.

**SAM Domain Averages, by School Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Tiered Instruction/Intervention Model</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Data-Based Problem Solving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data-Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity &amp; Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication &amp; Collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3

Leadership
3 Tiered Instruction/Intervention Model
Data-Based Problem Solving
Data-Evaluation
Capacity & Infrastructure
Communication & Collaboration
Overall
The Self-Assessment of MTSS (SAM) is a tool that schools can use to monitor their implementation of MTSS. In 2020-2021, a total of 466 schools across 12 districts utilized the SAM and provided their data to the project. Ratings were on a 0-3 scale, Not Implementing, Emerging, Operationalizing, and Optimizing.

There are three districts that have utilized the SAM throughout their schools in at least two of the last three years. Their domain averages for the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 years are in the following graphs.
SELF-ASSESSMENT OF MTSS IMPLEMENTATION

District Y SAM Domain Averages

Leadership
3 Tiered Instruction/Intervention Model
Data-Based Problem Solving
Data-Evaluation
Capacity & Infrastructure
Communication & Collaboration

District Z SAM Domain Averages

Leadership
3 Tiered Instruction/Intervention Model
Data-Based Problem Solving
Data-Evaluation
Capacity & Infrastructure
Communication & Collaboration
DISTRICT SPOTLIGHTS

The PS/RtI project asks district contacts to complete a technical assistance survey twice a year to reflect on how the services and supports provided have impacted their ways of work. This year, the end of year survey included a request for districts to provide evidence of implementation that was directly impacted by the supports from PS/RtI. Examples of how districts have implemented new policies, practices, and procedures for MTSS as a result of PS/RtI supports are provided below.

**District 1 Creation of District Leadership Team**

*At this district, the PS/RtI Regional Coordinator supported the MTSS contact with developing a district leadership team for MTSS. District comments are below.*

“[Our PS/RtI Regional Coordinator] initially provided guidance to me as the MTSS district contact. Guidance included who should be included and initial steps to take. She then attended our initial meetings and assisted us with completing the SAM as a district. This helped inform our next steps. She has been a support whenever needed. The assistance in creating a district level team has been instrumental in changing our work.”

**District 2 Creation of District MTSS Guidebook**

*At this district, the PS/RtI Regional Coordinator supported the MTSS contacts with developing a district MTSS Guidebook. As evidence, the district provided PS/RtI with a draft version of the guide. District comments are below.*

“[Our PS/RtI Regional Coordinator’s] input has helped up develop a very user-friendly manual for admin and teachers. Case studies will be added to the guide this month. Originals of the forms will be provided to teachers through a common folder. Training of admin and teachers will begin in July and continue throughout the next school year.”

**District 3 Implementation of Problem Solving for Middle Grades ELA**

*At this district, the PS/RtI Regional Coordinator provided supports around the critical elements of MTSS, as well as supports specific to problem solving to ensure students are provided tiered instruction that is accurately matched to their needs. The district provided PS/RtI with middle school action plans that have been created to address this. District comments are below.*

“[Our PS/RtI Regional Coordinator’s] support to [District 3] has resulted in the continuous development and enhancement of solid MTSS/RtI infrastructure, processes and guidance even during the most turbulent times. She has demonstrated expert knowledge of adult learning principles, systems coaching, strategic planning and MTSS/RtI as she has supported our MTSS/RtI initiative. [Her] support informed the development of our District-wide MTSS/RtI Dashboard, MTSS/RtI Looks Fors, and MTSS/RtI Actions Plans that align with our strategic plan. [District 3] has benefited from her support and leadership. Additionally, we have accomplished strategic plan and department metrics. [She] adds value to our District.”
DISTRICT SPOTLIGHTS

The PS/RtI project asks district contacts to complete a technical assistance survey twice a year to reflect on how the services and supports provided have impacted their ways of work. This year, the end of year survey included a request for districts to provide evidence of implementation that was directly impacted by the supports from PS/RtI. Examples of how districts have implemented new policies, practices, and procedures for MTSS as a result of PS/RtI supports are provided below.

**District 4 Creation of Problem Solving for Student Support Form**

*At this district, the PS/RtI Regional Coordinator supported the MTSS contact with implementing data-based problem solving. As evidence, the district provided PS/RtI with a new form that integrates the problem solving process into a form that is used when determine student supports. District comments are below.*

“The support that PS/RtI has provided the district has been amazing. [Our PS/RtI Regional Coordinator] is always available to help and to provide any support and guidance. Having this support has been priceless, as I have improved the MTSS system in our school to provide students with the support and interventions they need. The process and procedures were very helpful to the teacher and the team as we had a clear idea of what to do in order to meet the students needs.”

**District 5 Creation of District MTSS Implementation Guide**

*At this district, the PS/RtI Regional Coordinator provided support around Tier 2 problem solving and developing an MTSS guidebook. As evidence, the district provided PS/RtI with a copy of their new implementation guide for MTSS. District comments are below.*

“We will be training our administrative teams and instructional leadership teams on the new framework and the structure of ILT and TCT (Tier 1 and Tier 2). We are also in the process of putting all documentation on an electronic system to further school ability to track intervention progress to respond in a more timely manner. We will be utilizing supports more moving forward, especially being able to provide the self-paced modules to schools.”

**District 6 Adoption of PS/RtI Modules into District PD System**

*At this district, the PS/RtI Regional Coordinator provided instruction and intervention support to the instructional leadership team, along with support for the SAM and elementary walkthroughs. Through this support, the district decided to adopt PS/RtI created MTSS modules into their own district professional development system so they could be accessed more broadly by their staff. District comments are below.*

“I am still so excited that we as a district now offer NEW high quality self-paced online MTSS PD for ALL (e.g., admin. and teachers), thanks in part to FLPS/RtI, that reaches staff well beyond the usual districtwide trainings (DWTs) we currently facilitate for our MTSS coaches. This also positively impacts our "MTSS facilitators," who are unable to attend our DWTs due to them attending training elsewhere (e.g., school counselors, school psychologists, etc.).”
STUDENT OUTCOMES

Ensuring the academic, behavior, and social-emotional growth of all students in Florida is the ultimate goal of the PS/RtI Project. This section of the Project’s Theory of Change focuses on the extent to which student outcomes were impacted by changes in practice. This section includes the following sub-sections:

- Impact on Student Outcomes
- Key Indicators- FSA
- Key Indicators- CCEIS-EBD
- Key Indicators- Graduation Rate
- Key Indicators- Dropout Rate
- District Spotlights

1. Standards-based professional learning
2. Changes in educator knowledge, skills, and dispositions
3. Changes in educator practice
4. Changes in student results
IMPACT ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

Every project evaluation includes the question below. Ratings are on a 1-6 scale from Not at all to Greatly, with responses of 4-6 being considered positive for impacting student outcomes. Comments exemplifying the ratings are shown to the right of the graph.

To what extent will this support impact student outcomes?

"When working with schools and teachers, I can use what was learned from the training to assist them, which in turn, impacts student outcomes. The classroom video was great, in the sense that it reminds teachers how simple DI can be with the right planning and preparation. I will also be working with individual schools on their systems of MTSS, working to improve and smooth out the process."

"I will use this information to data chat with teachers and plan for instructional shifts."

"The district has improved overall understanding of the needs of the demographic population of the students to better select intervention programs and curriculum to improve their outcomes."

"The problem solving worksheet will help us to drill down to specific students' needs."

"Option 3 was chosen for the item "contributed to changes in student outcomes" because this year was a difficult year to measure due to the challenges that COVID has presented, such as student attendance in person and/or overall."
In 2020-2021, the Project collaborated with the Bureau of Exceptional Student Education and other discretionary projects to provide ELA and Math supports for students with disabilities to some districts. The Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) were not given in the 2019-2020 year due to COVID-19 and the current year 2020-2021 data are not yet available for students with disabilities, but three years of baseline data on the percentage of students with disabilities at or above a level 3 on FSA ELA (Grade 3) and FSA Math (Grades 6-8) for each supported district are provided below. Data will be updated when available.

**GRADE 3 FSA ELA**

**% OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT LEVEL 3 OR ABOVE**

PK-3 ELA became one of PS/RtI’s prioritized focus areas in the 2018-2019 school year. Between the Spring 2017 and Spring 2019 exams, districts supported by PS/RtI saw an average increase of 1.82% in the pass rate of students with disabilities on the Grade 3 FSA ELA. That rate rose to 2.21% for districts that were continuously supported by the project.

**GRADES 6-8 FSA MATH**

**% OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT LEVEL 3 OR ABOVE**

Middle grades math became one of PS/RtI’s prioritized focus areas in the 2018-2019 school year. Between the Spring 2017 and Spring 2019 exams, districts supported by PS/RtI saw an average increase of 2.52% in the pass rate of students with disabilities on the Grades 6-8 FSA Math. That rate rose to 3.41% for districts that were continuously supported by the project.
KEY INDICATORS - CCEIS-EBD

In 2019-2020, CCEIS-EBD became one of PS/RtI’s prioritized focus areas. In particular, the Bureau for Exceptional Student Education asked the Project to support three districts that overidentified Black students for emotional/behavioral disorders.

Data from the most recent LEA profile in 2020, which include lag data from school years 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020, are shown below. Data will be updated when available.
KEY INDICATORS - GRAD RATE

PS/RtI supports effective instruction and intervention through a multi-tiered system of supports, which when optimized, would support increased graduation rates (SPP 1). Data from the most recent LEA profile in 2020, which include lag data from school years 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019, are shown below. Data will be updated when available.

Between the 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 school years, districts supported by PS/RtI saw an average increase of 17% in the percentage of students with disabilities graduating. That rate rose to 19% for districts that received supports from PS/RtI through monitoring visits.
**KEY INDICATORS - DROPOUT RATE**

PS/RtI supports effective instruction and intervention through a multi-tiered system of supports, which when optimized, would support decreased dropout rates (SPP 2). Data from the most recent LEA profile in 2020, which include lag data from school years 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019, are shown below. Data will be updated when available.

Between the 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 school years, districts supported by PS/RtI saw an average decrease of **6%** in the percentage of students with disabilities dropping out. That rate stayed at **6%** for districts that received supports from PS/RtI through monitoring visits.

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**Graphs:**

- **All Supported Districts**
  - Year 16-17: 10%
  - Year 17-18: 8%
  - Year 18-19: 6%

- **Monitored Districts**
  - Year 16-17: 12%
  - Year 17-18: 10%
  - Year 18-19: 8%
The PS/RtI project asks district contacts to complete a technical assistance survey twice a year to reflect on how the services and supports provided have impacted their ways of work. This year, the end of year survey included a request for districts to provide evidence of change in student outcomes that was directly impacted by the supports from PS/RtI. Examples of changes to student outcomes as a result of PS/RtI supports are provided below.

**District 13 OSS & ISS for Students with Disabilities, 19-20 to 20-21**

At this district, the PS/RtI Regional Coordinator was part of a behavior committee and helped develop a CCEIS plan. Suspension data for students with disabilities from four pilot schools is shown below. Each school saw decreases in out of school suspensions, and three out of four saw decreases in in school suspensions.
DISTRICT SPOTLIGHTS

The PS/RtI project asks district contacts to complete a technical assistance survey twice a year to reflect on how the services and supports provided have impacted their ways of work. This year, the end of year survey included a request for districts to provide evidence of change in student outcomes that was directly impacted by the supports from PS/RtI. Examples of changes to student outcomes as a result of PS/RtI supports are provided below.

**District 14 Academic Engaged Time**

At this district, the PS/RtI Regional Coordinator and Literacy Specialist have supported action planning for PK-3 ELA, with a specific focus on grades K-1. Supports have included problem solving with teams, conducting surveys as part of problem analysis, and developing an action plan for improving student outcomes in K-1 ELA. Supports focused on academic engaged time (AET) as this came out as a potential barrier to student success. As evidence of these supports, the district provided PS/RtI with percentages from observations on pilot teacher for the amount of time spent academically engaged. 8 out of 10 teachers increased their AET, with Teacher C and I staying at the same ratings. Increases ranged from 13% to 37%, with an average change of 21%.

![Changes in % Academically Engaged Time](chart.png)
District Spotlights

The PS/RtI Project asks district contacts to complete a technical assistance survey twice a year to reflect on how the services and supports provided have impacted their ways of work. This year, the end of year survey included a request for districts to provide evidence of change in student outcomes that was directly impacted by the supports from PS/RtI. Examples of changes to student outcomes as a result of PS/RtI supports are provided below.

**District 15 Office Discipline Referral Rate, 18-19, 19-20, & 20-21**

At this district, the PS/RtI Regional Coordinator provided support around a district-wide behavioral program, the critical components of MTSS, and problem solving. Supports included ongoing technical assistance and monthly team meetings. As evidence of the supports, the district provided district-wide ODR rates for the last 9 weeks of the 18-19, 19-20, and 20-21 school years. The graph below shows a decline in office discipline referrals each year.

![District Office Discipline Referral Rates](image-url)
Starting in 2020-2021, PS/RtI Project launched a new initiative to recognize Florida’s schools that are creating and implementing practices that are positively impacting student outcomes through the building and sustaining of an effective Multi-Tiered System of Supports. During the application process, each school had the opportunity to reflect on their MTSS implementation, identify some promising practices, and talk about positive changes seen to student outcomes as a result of their MTSS work.

**Initial Criteria**
- Complete Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation
- Submit a school profile
- At least 70% of eligible students making ELA learning gains

**9 Districts**
- Have at least 1 school that met initial application criteria

**59 Schools**
- Met initial criteria

**Next Steps**
Once data on learning gains are available, a final list of awarded schools will be created. Schools will be notified by July 31st, 2021.
FUNDING & SUPPORT

PROJECT FUNDED BY:

[Image of Florida Department of Education logo]

Bureau of Exceptional Student Education

EVALUATION SUPPORT

Stephanie Green is the project evaluator for the PS/RtI project. The author would like to thank USF Postdoctoral Fellow Mollie Headley, as well as the PS/RtI data assistants for their work in collecting and analyzing data included in this report.

[Image of University of South Florida logo]

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