

ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022

FLORIDA'S PROBLEM SOLVING/ RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION PROJECT

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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.

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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MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

During the 2021-22 school year, 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. We continued to be amazed by and grateful for the hard work and dedication of so many educators in Florida.

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 (90%) and skills (95%), and improvement of services for students with disabilities (97%), and the use of RtI for eligibility determination (97%). The majority of districts (93%) 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 2022-23 school year. Thank you to Florida educators for everything they do to promote student success!



Dr. José Castillo
PS/RtI Project Director

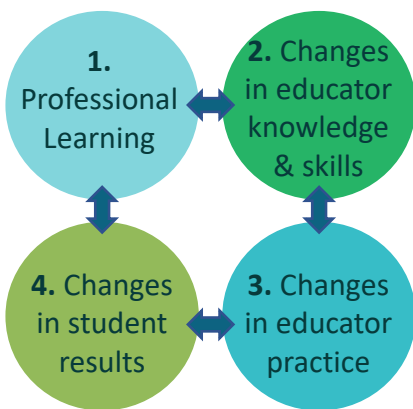
ABOUT THIS REPORT

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.



National Implementation Research Network. (n.d.). *Active Implementation Hub*.
<https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/module-1/implementation-drivers>

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 Project's work is grounded in the following Theory of Change, adapted from Learning Forward.



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.

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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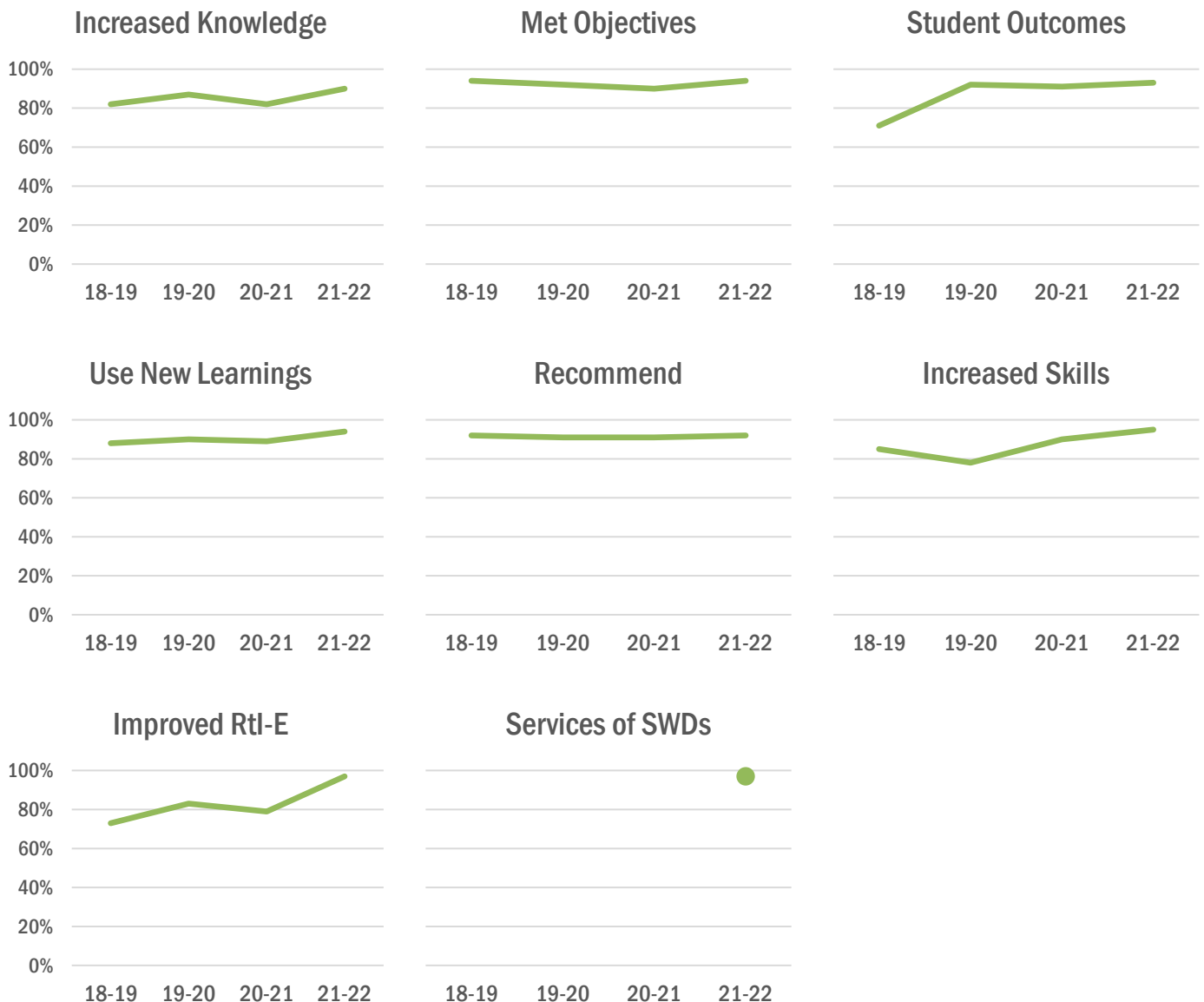
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KEY FINDINGS

In 2021-2022, the PS/RtI project either matched or exceeded the highest recorded positive ratings in the key areas below. Every area saw improvement from the previous year.

The first five 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 three questions are included on the bi-annual technical assistance survey. These questions deal with the extent to which the provided supports have **increased their skills**, and the extent to which supports helped their ability to **integrate response to intervention for SLD eligibility determination** and improve their schools' **services for students with disabilities** (new to 21-22). All of these questions are on a 1-6 scale, with responses of 4-6 counting as **positive**.



PS/RtI PRIORITIES

In previous years, Project work was organized through a schedule of deliverables, consisting of products, trainings, and service delivery (PTS). In 2021-2022, the PTS was no longer the driving force of the work. Instead, key priorities were developed jointly by the Project and the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services. A summary of the key priorities are below.



DISTRICT SUPPORTS

Strategic planning, problem solving, and support for partner districts. This includes districts that request a partnership with the PS/RtI project, as well as districts that work with the Project through Florida Department of Education monitoring activities



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & EVALUATION

Designing and delivering professional learning opportunities (online or face-to-face), and creating reports, tools, and other resources

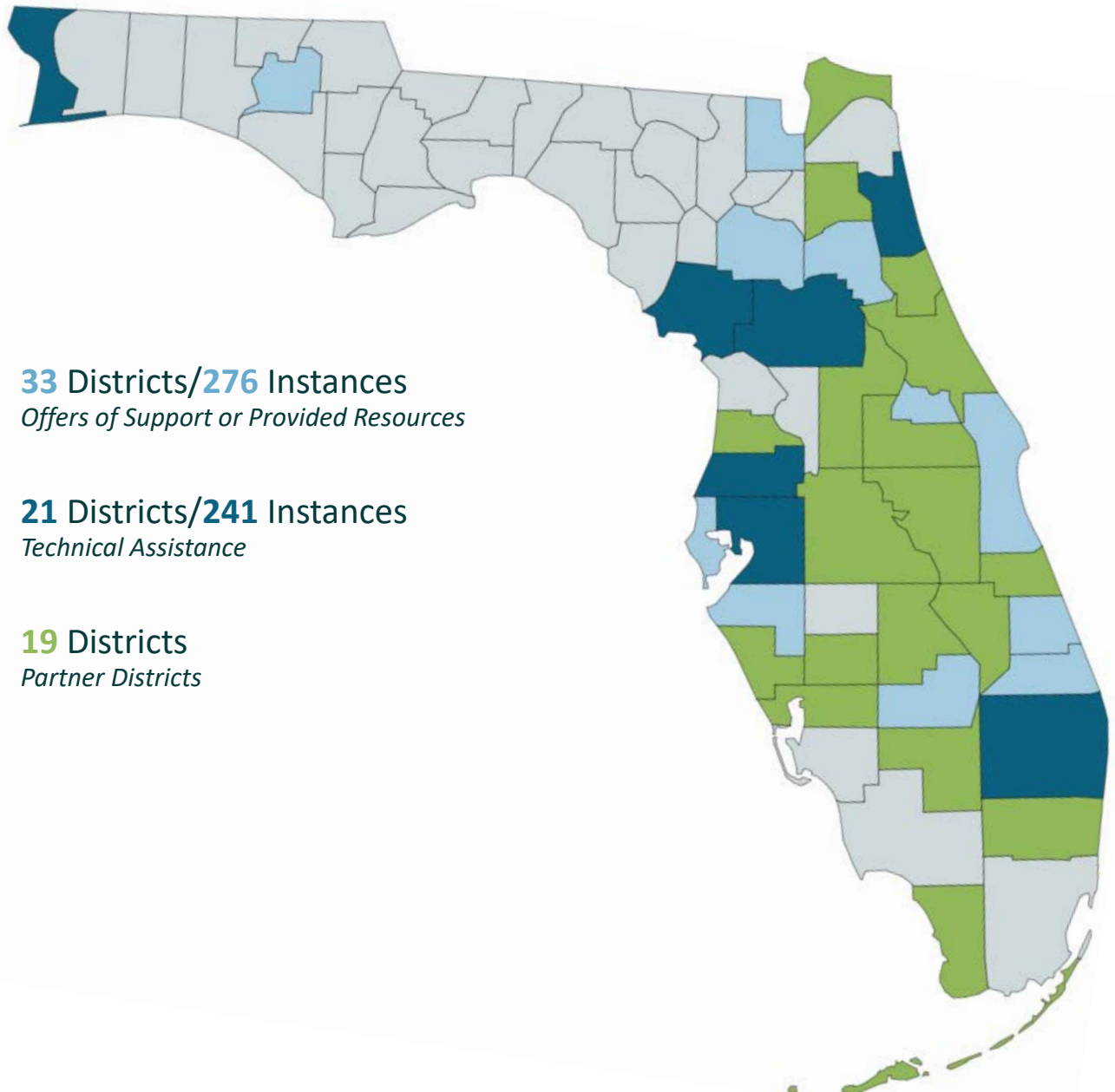


STATEWIDE SUPPORTS

Involvement with B.E.S.T. implementation, BEESS strategic planning workgroups, support of statewide institutes (e.g., SESEI, SLI), and collaboration with other discretionary projects

DISTRICT SUPPORTS

The PS/Rtl Project provides support to Florida districts to positively increase educators' knowledge, skills, MTSS implementation, and student outcomes. This priority focuses on the work of the Project's Regional Coordinators and Academic Specialists to directly support districts with problem solving and implementation of MTSS initiatives unique to the individual situation of each district. As shown below, **40 districts and LEAs** were provided some level of support by the PS/Rtl project in 2021-2022. Districts in **light blue** were offered services or given resources, those in **dark blue** were provided more in-depth technical assistance, and those in **green** were partner districts and received the most support.

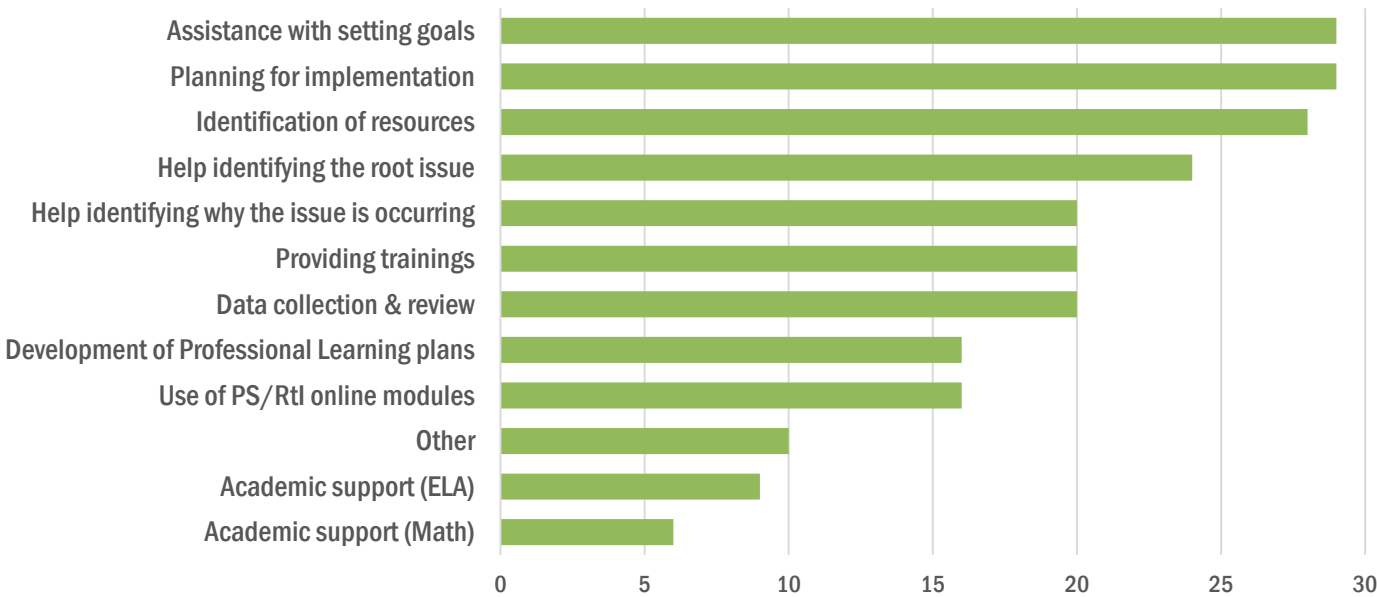


TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

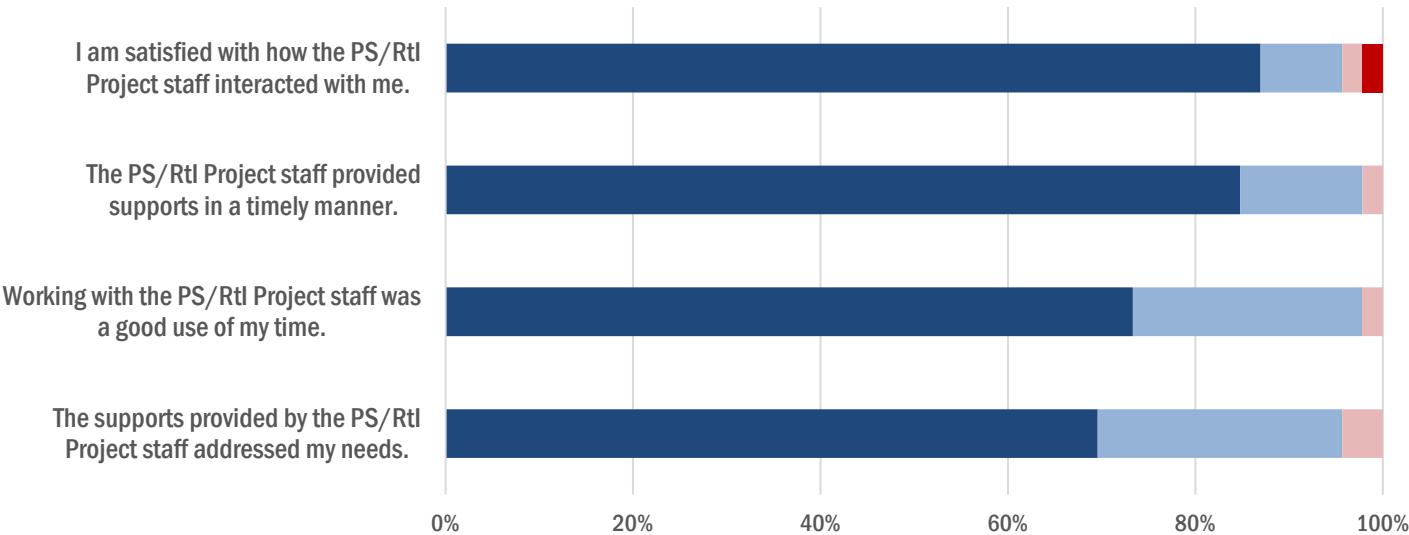
96% of districts receiving technical assistance agreed that PS/RtI supports addressed their needs, with most supports focusing on goal-setting, MTSS implementation, or the initial stages of problem solving.

Data below are from the bi-annual Technical Assistance (TA) Survey, sent to district contacts and ESE directors at districts that were actively receiving TA from the Project. The contacts were asked to select the type of support they were provided, and then to rate their agreement to the four questions below, on a scale of **Strongly Disagree**, **Disagree**, **Agree**, and **Strongly Agree**.

Reported Types of Support

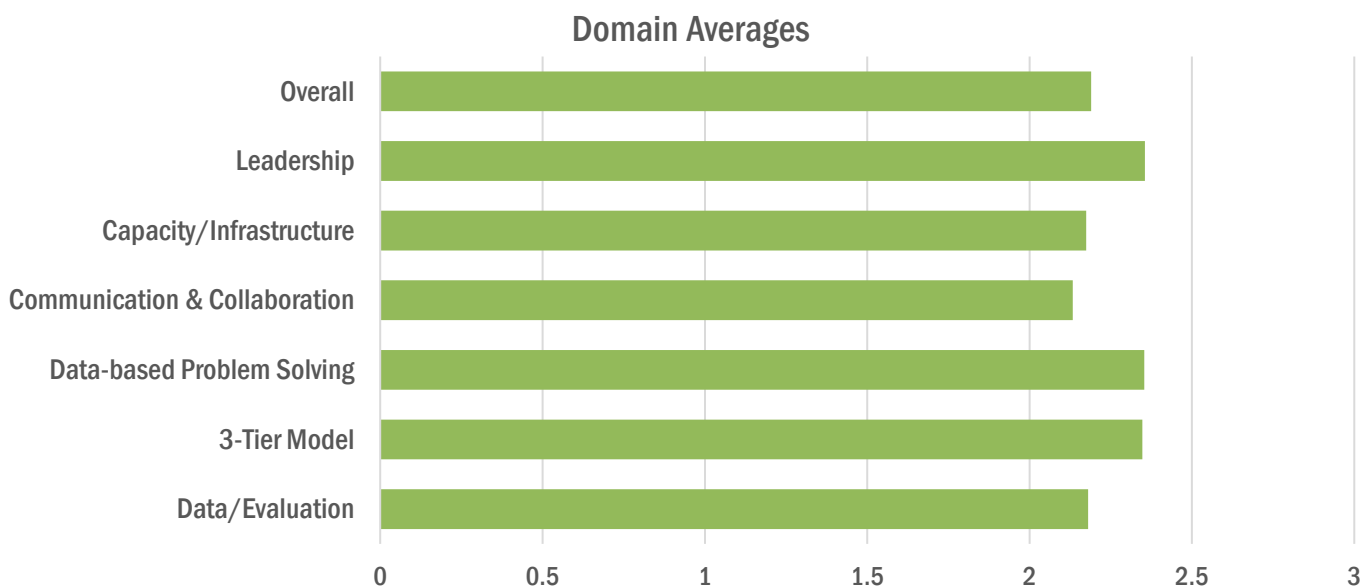
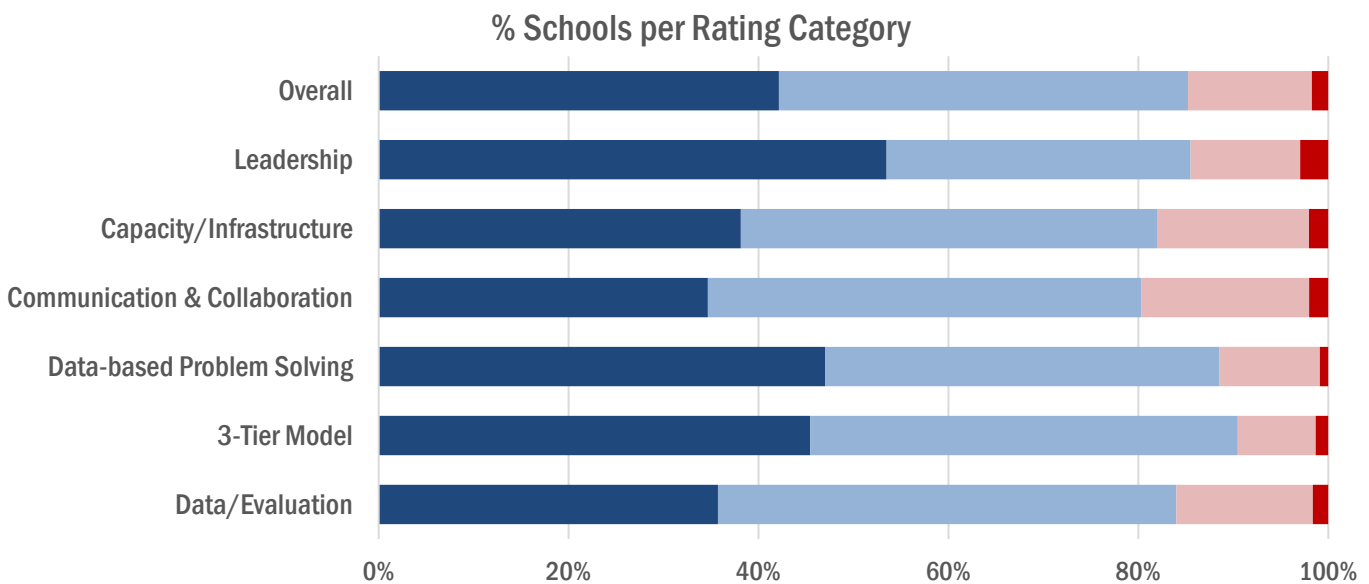


Agreement Questions



SELF-ASSESSMENT OF MTSS IMPLEMENTATION

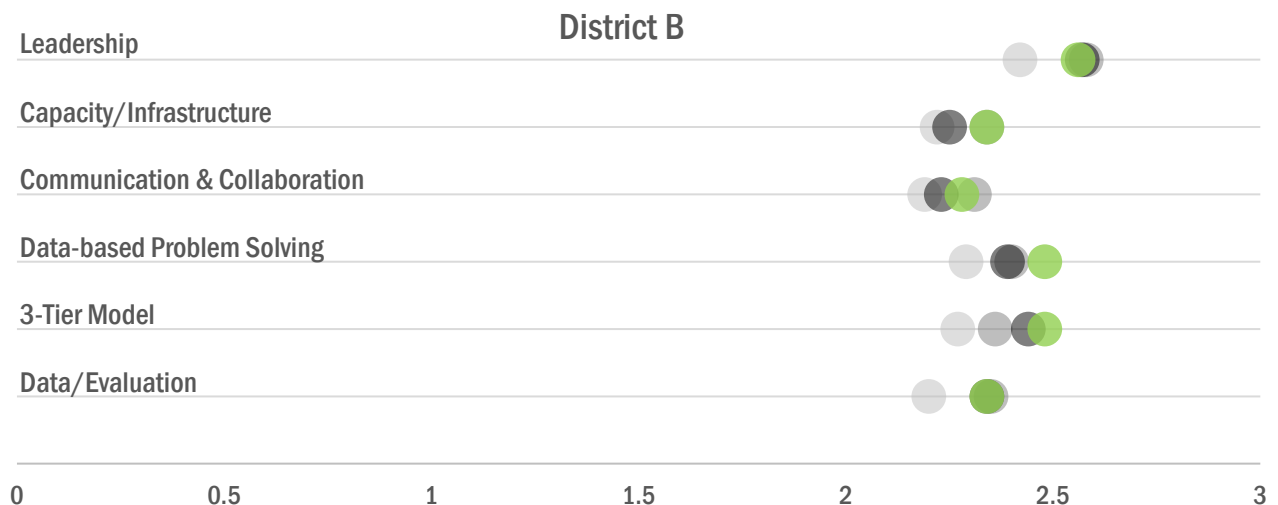
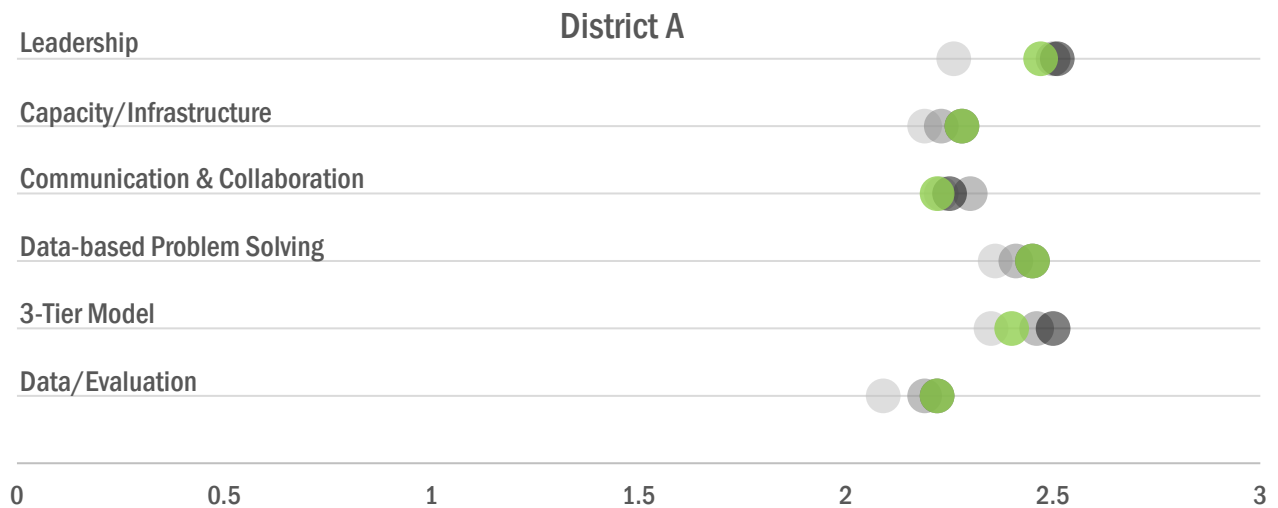
The Self-Assessment of MTSS implementation (SAM) is a tool that schools can use to monitor their implementation of MTSS. In 2021-2022, a total of 600 schools across 20 districts utilized the SAM and provided their ratings to the Project. Ratings were on a 0-3 scale- **Not Implementing**, **Emerging**, **Operationalizing**, and **Optimizing**. The majority of schools (**80-90%**) rated themselves as **Operationalizing** or **Optimizing** in each domain. All domain averages fell within the **Operationalizing** to **Optimizing** levels, with mean scores ranging from 2.13 to 2.36.



SELF-ASSESSMENT OF MTSS IMPLEMENTATION

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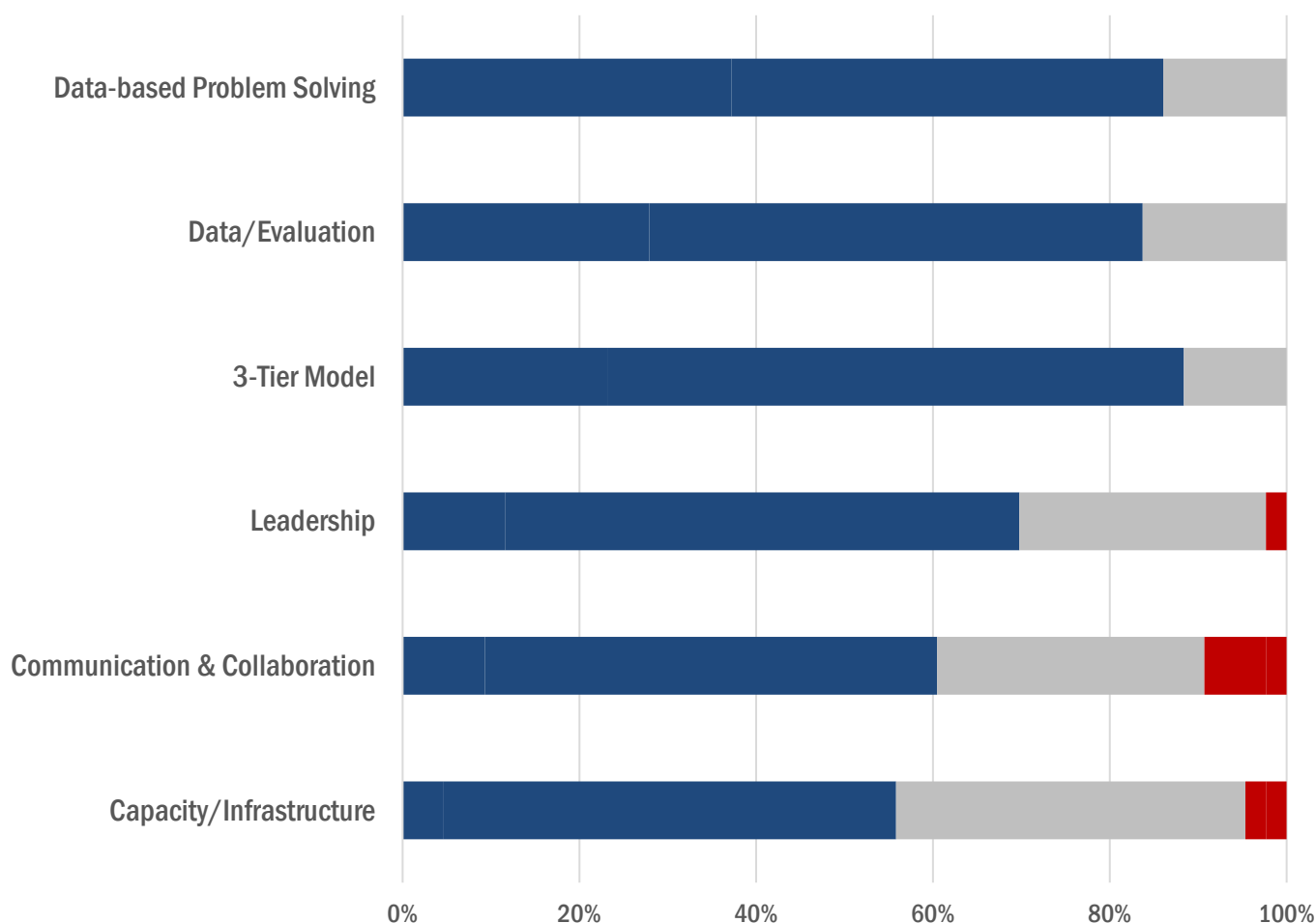
Two districts have used the SAM in their schools for the last four years. Their domain averages for the **18-19**, **19-20**, **20-21**, and **21-22** years are in the graphs below. For both districts, the scores are similar across years, falling in-between the Operationalizing and Optimizing ratings.



MTSS IMPLEMENTATION

Between 55-88% of districts reported that their schools often or always engage in work to implement each of the domains.

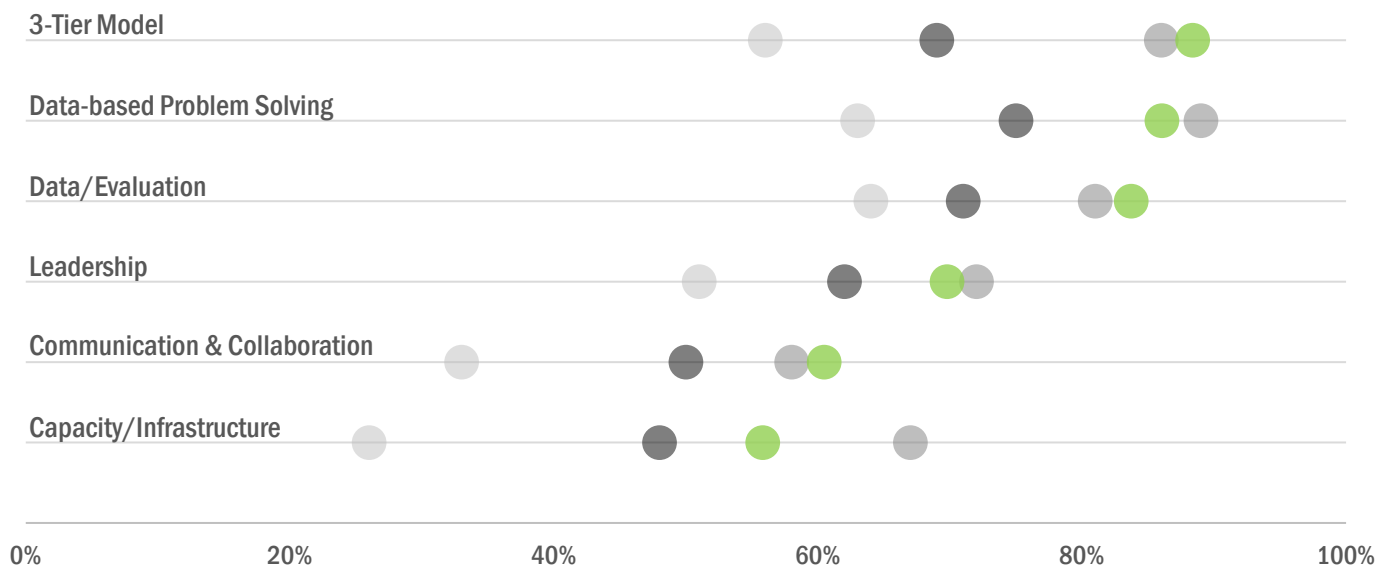
Another measure of MTSS implementation comes from the annual needs assessment. In this survey, district contacts from every district in the state were asked to rate how often schools in their district engage in key practices aligned to each of the six MTSS domains. 43 districts responded to the survey. 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**.



MTSS IMPLEMENTATION

Between 55-88% of districts reported that their schools often or always engage in work to implement each of the domains.

The graph below shows the percent of Often or Always ratings over time. For **2021-2022**, ratings remained above **2018-2019** and **2020-2021**, and moved above **2019-2020** ratings in three domains: 3-Tier Model, Data/Evaluation, and Communication & Collaboration.

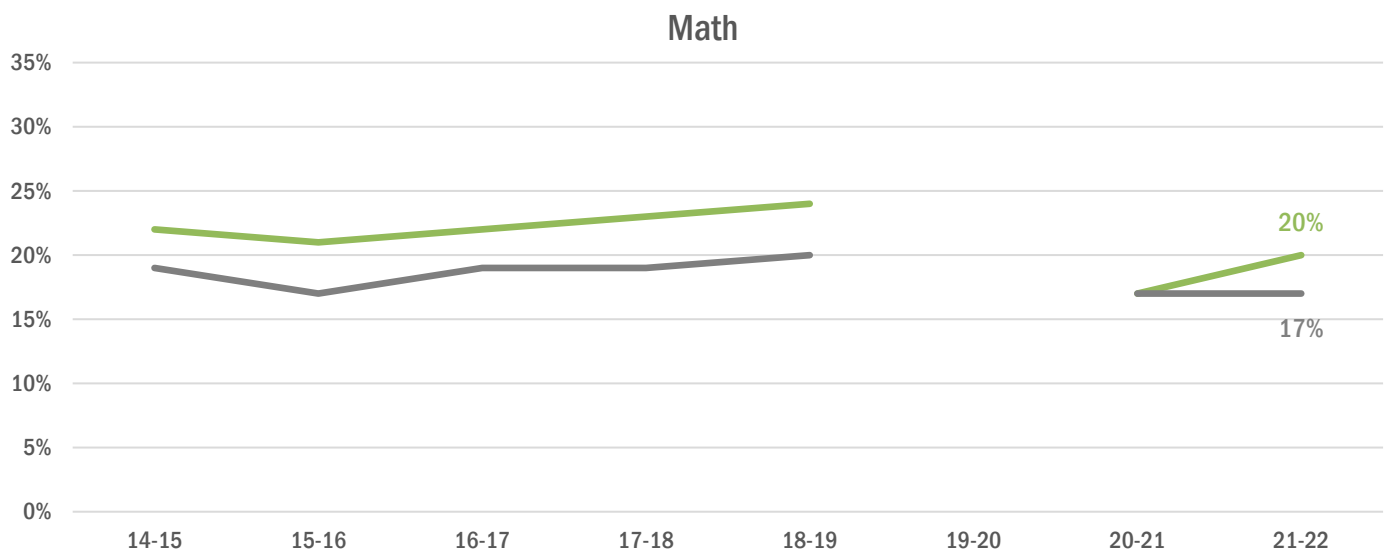
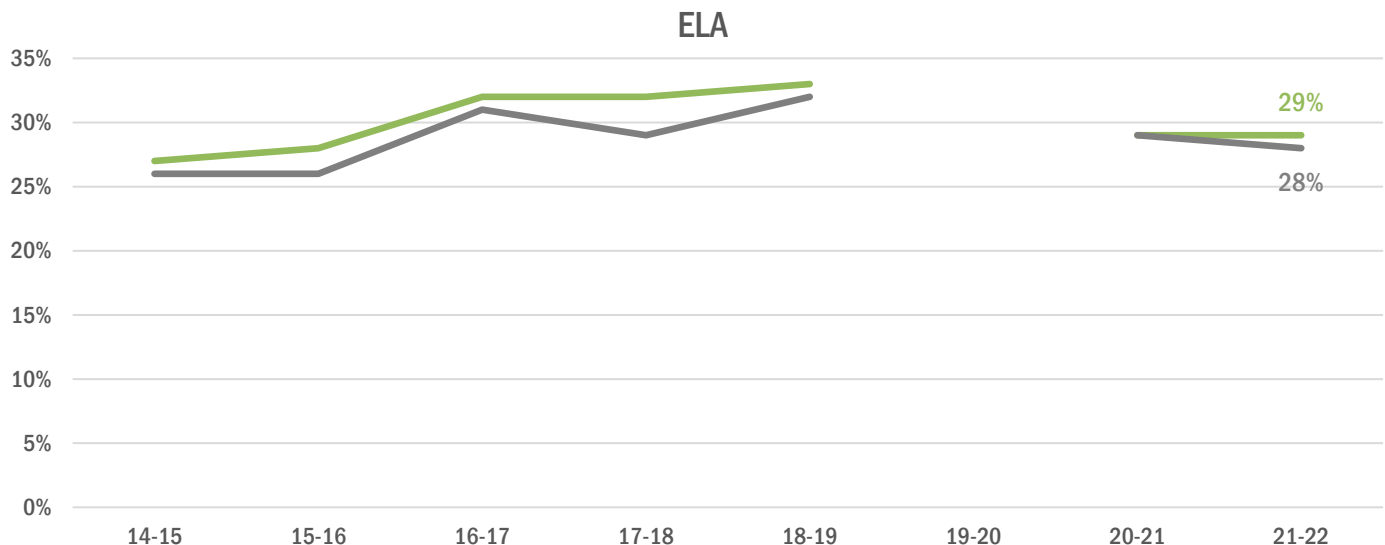


INDICATOR DATA- FSA

3rd grade students with disabilities performed slightly better on the FSA ELA in **PS/Rtl partner districts** than in **non-partner districts**.

Middle grades students with disabilities performed better on the FSA Math in **PS/Rtl partner districts** than in **non-partner districts**.

The graphs below represent the percent of students of disabilities that scored at a level 3 or above on the FSA ELA and Math in **PS/Rtl partner districts** as compared to districts where **support was offered, but not accepted**. ELA data are for third graders, and math data are for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. The graphs include all years of available FSA data.

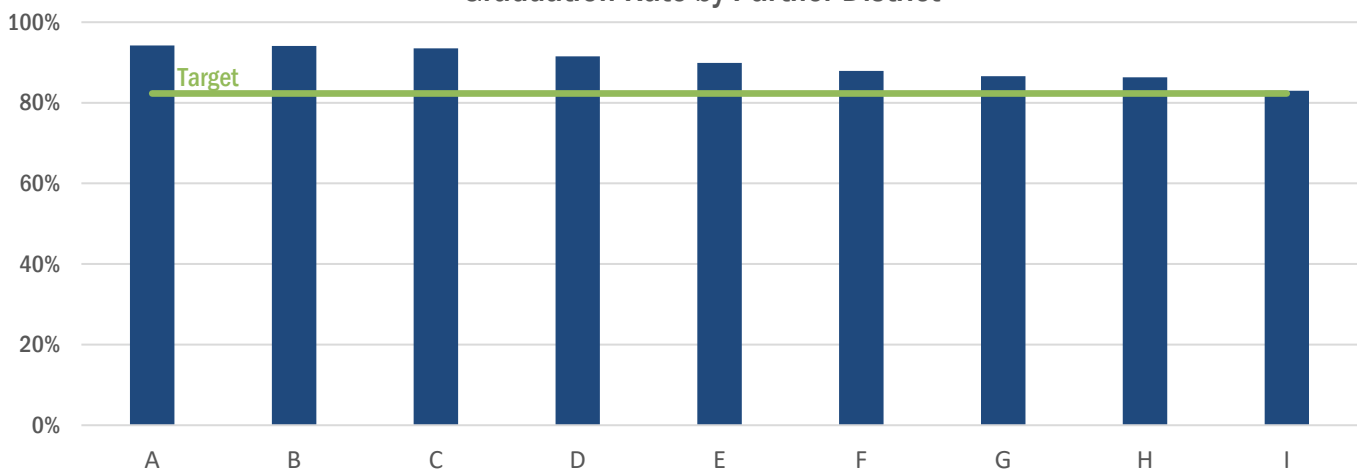


INDICATOR DATA- GRADUATION RATE

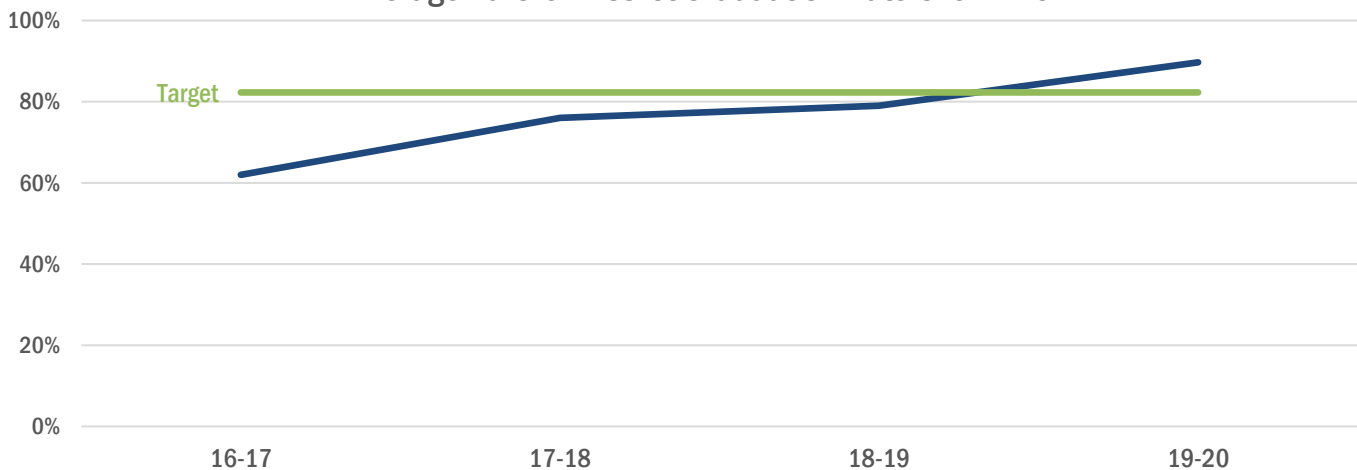
100% of partner districts met the state graduation rate target. The average graduation rate across these partner districts has also increased over time.

The PS/RtI project supports effective instruction and intervention through a multi-tiered system of supports, which when optimized, supports increased graduation rates (SPP 1) and decreased dropout rates (SPP 2). Data from the four most recent LEA profiles are shown below for partner districts that received the most intensive supports from the Project (anonymized with letters A-I). These data represent the percentage of students with IEPs that graduate with a standard diploma in the 4-year cohort.

Graduation Rate by Partner District



Average Partner District Graduation Rate Over Time



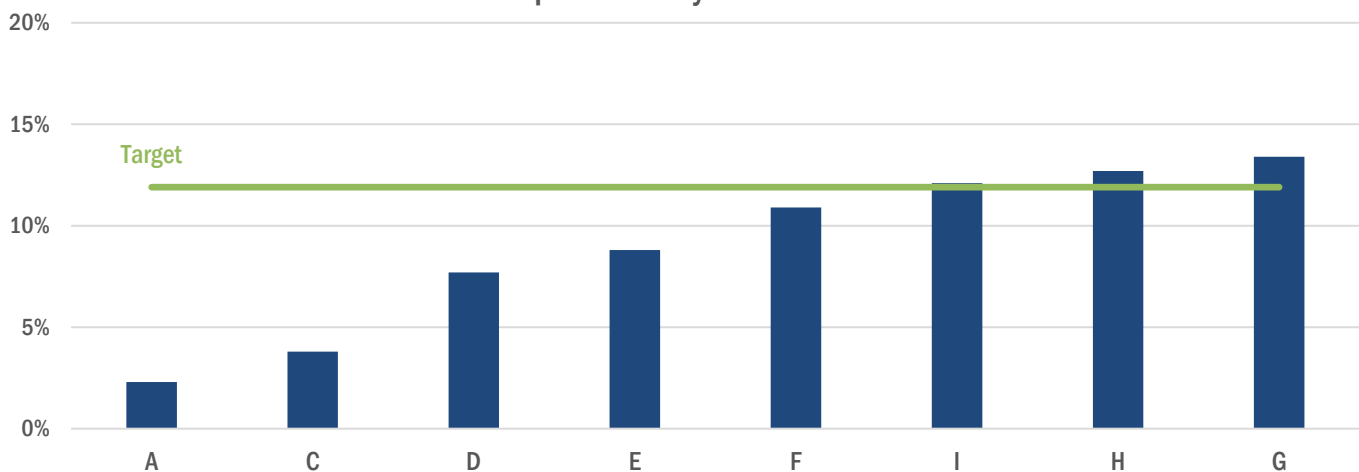
INDICATOR DATA-

DROPOUT RATE

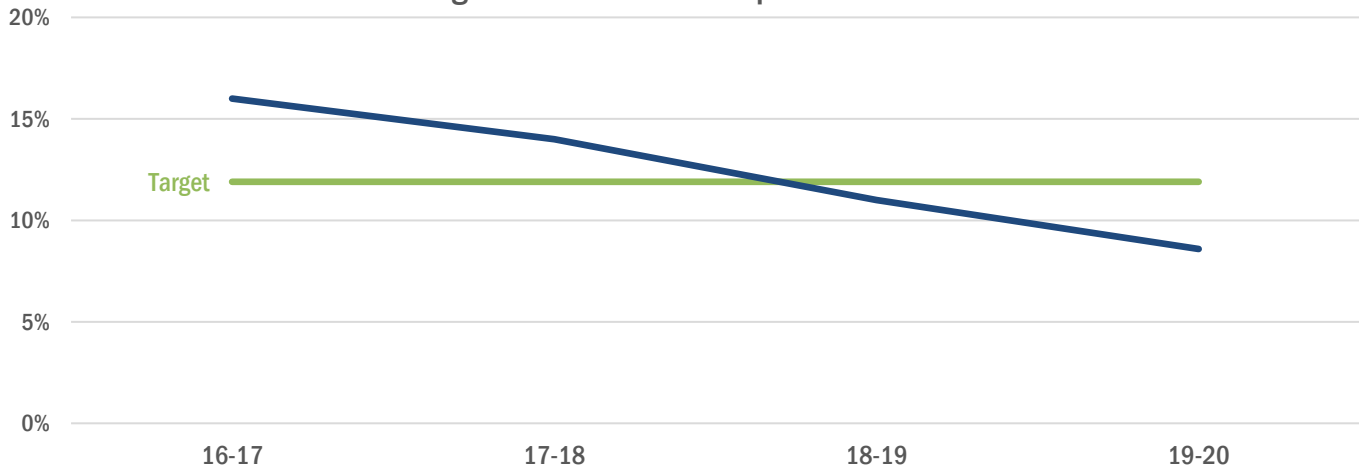
Most partner districts met the **state dropout rate target**. The average dropout rate across these partner districts has also decreased over time.

The PS/RtI project supports effective instruction and intervention through a multi-tiered system of supports, which when optimized, supports increased graduation rates (SPP 1) and decreased dropout rates (SPP 2). Data from the four most recent LEA profiles are shown below for partner districts that received the most intensive supports from the Project (anonymized with letters A-I). These data represent the percentage of students with IEPs that drop out.

Dropout Rate by Partner District



Average Partner District Dropout Rate Over Time



DISTRICT B SPOTLIGHT

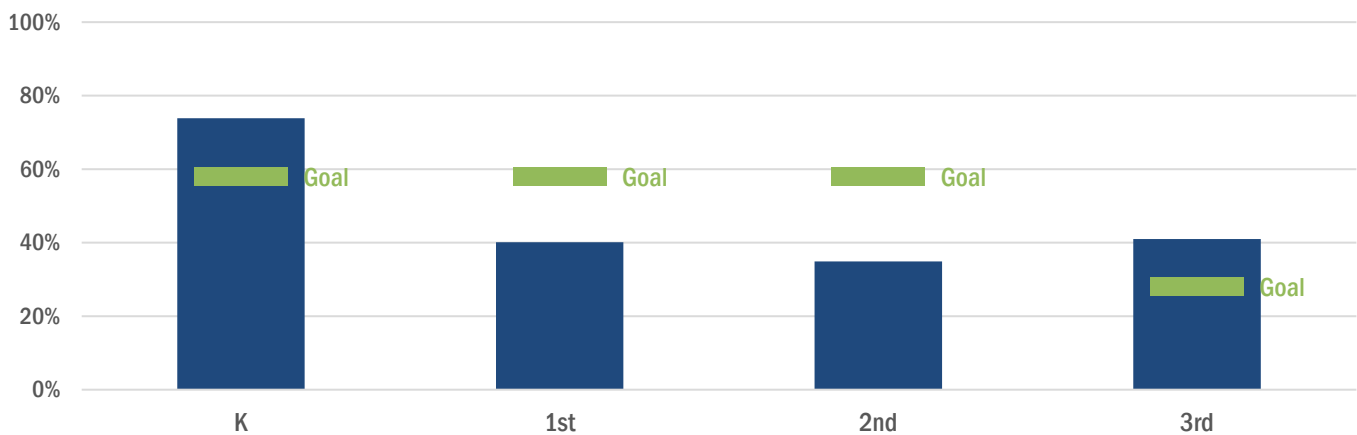
In 2021-2022, the PS/Rtl Project provided intensive support to partner districts. With support from Project staff, these partner districts would develop goals aligned to their needs, determine what actions are needed to achieve the goals, and then monitor their progress along the way. Though many of these goals are longer-term in nature and meaningful progress will take longer than a single year, the Project is highlighting some of the progress districts have made by the end of the 2021-2022 year.

District B Interim Goal #1: 58% of kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade students with disabilities will score on or above grade level on iReady ELA by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

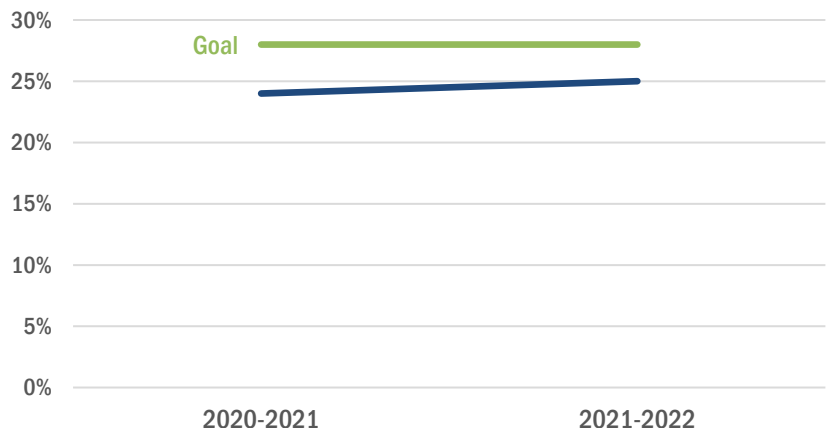
District B Interim Goal #2: 28% of 3rd grade students with disabilities will score on or above grade level on iReady and a level 3 or higher on FSA ELA by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

PS/Rtl Supports: Progress monitoring and problem solving based on assessment data

The **goal** for percent of students on or above grade level in iReady was met for the kindergarten and 3rd grade student groups, but was not for 1st and 2nd grade groups.



The **goal** for percent of 3rd grade students on or above level 3 on FSA ELA was not met for the 2021-2022 school year, but this group did show slight improvement from the previous year.



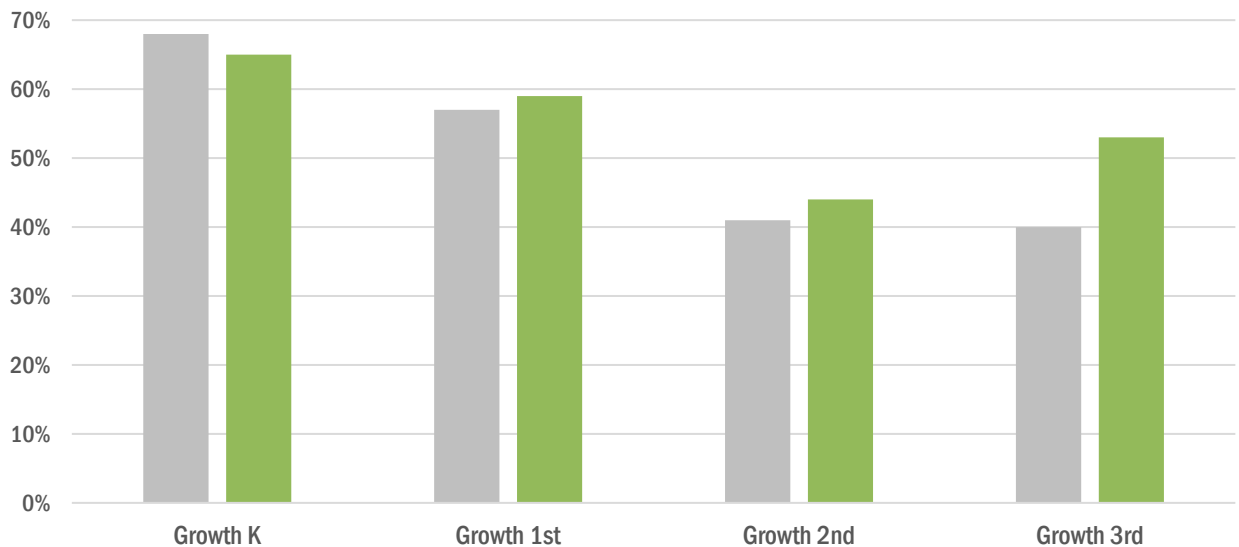
DISTRICT D SPOTLIGHT

In 2021-2022, the PS/Rtl Project provided intensive support to partner districts. With support from Project staff, these partner districts would develop goals aligned to their needs, determine what actions are needed to achieve the goals, and then monitor their progress along the way. Though many of these goals are longer-term in nature and meaningful progress will take longer than a single year, the Project is highlighting some of the progress districts have made by the end of the 2021-2022 year.

District D Interim Goal: Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade students at four state-identified R.A.I.S.E. schools will increase their reading achievement on Lexia at the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

PS/Rtl Supports: Problem solving with district leadership and direct support via trainings and data dives for the identified schools' teacher leads and reading coaches

1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade students at the **identified schools** showed higher levels of growth than the same grades of students at district-identified **comparison schools** that did not receive PS/Rtl supports. Kindergarten students did not follow this same trend.



DISTRICT E SPOTLIGHT

In 2021-2022, the PS/Rtl Project provided intensive support to partner districts. With support from Project staff, these partner districts would develop goals aligned to their needs, determine what actions are needed to achieve the goals, and then monitor their progress along the way. Though many of these goals are longer-term in nature and meaningful progress will take longer than a single year, the Project is highlighting some of the progress districts have made by the end of the 2021-2022 year.

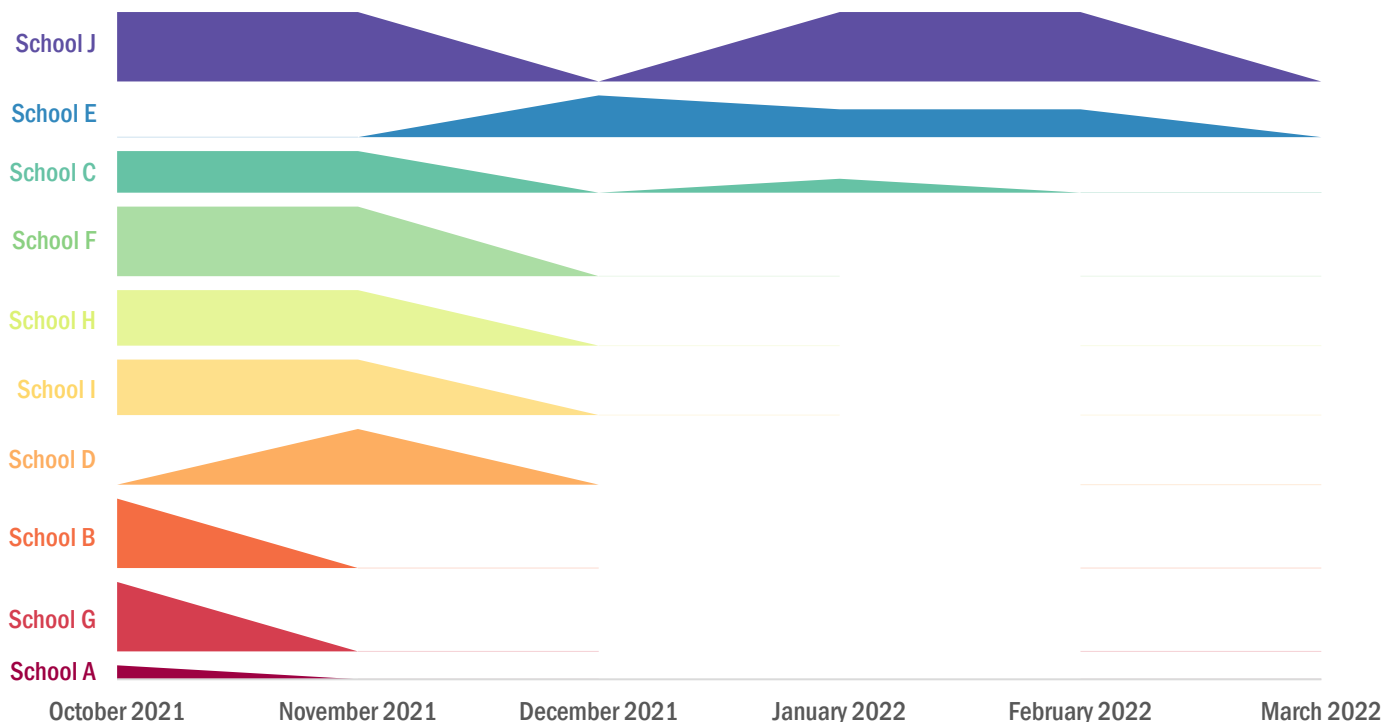
District E Interim Goal: District E will achieve a district-wide increase of 5% in positive school climate for students in emotional regulation, grit, self-management, optimism, and sense of belonging by Spring 2022 as measured by the Panorama School Climate Screening.

Fidelity Plan: Assistant Principals will report monthly on the percent of Classroom Champions that are implementing the program.

PS/Rtl Supports: Technical assistance for problem solving, MTSS implementation, and identification of Tier 1 fidelity. Progress monitoring for the goal, including collection, organization, and display of data.

Most schools stopped reporting implementation fidelity data by December 2021.

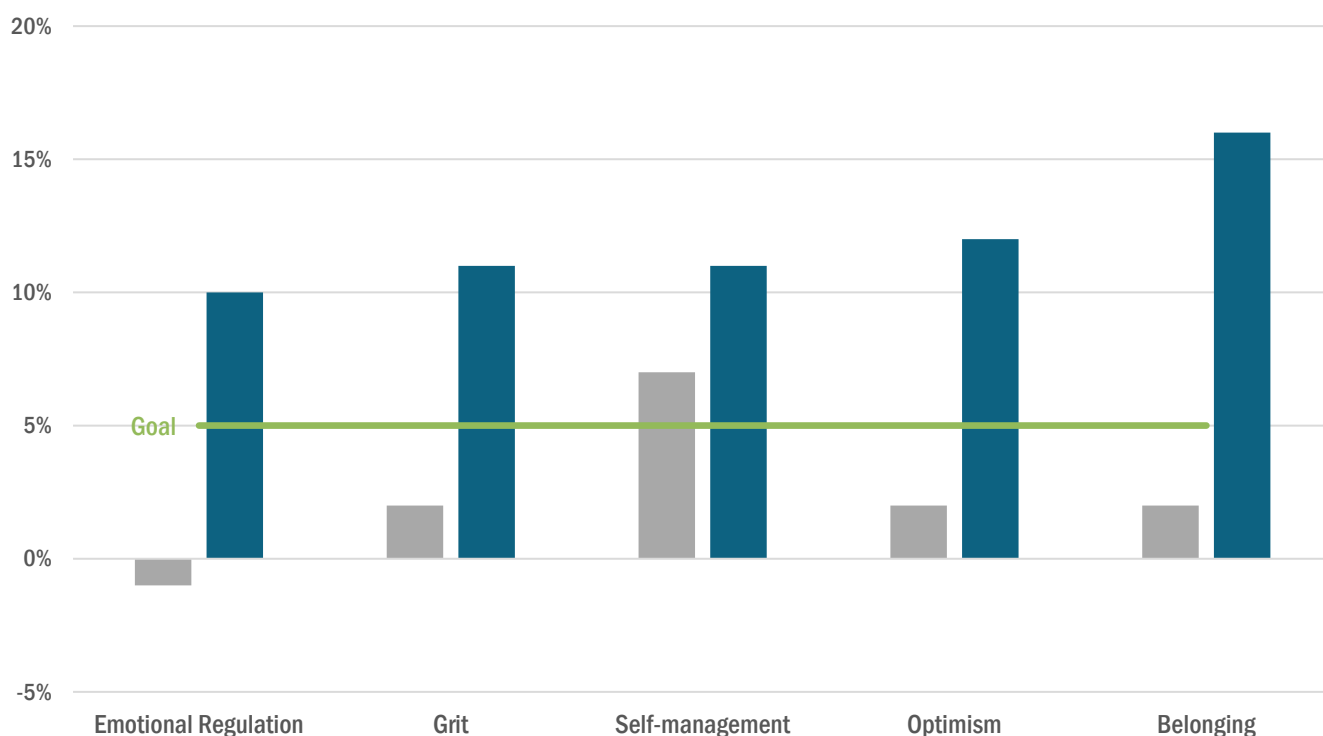
Implementation is shown for each school, with thinner segments indicating a lower level of reported implementation at that school.



DISTRICT E SPOTLIGHT

In 2021-2022, the PS/Rtl Project provided intensive support to partner districts. With support from Project staff, these partner districts would develop goals aligned to their needs, determine what actions are needed to achieve the goals, and then monitor their progress along the way. Though many of these goals are longer-term in nature and meaningful progress will take longer than a single year, the Project is highlighting some of the progress districts have made by the end of the 2021-2022 year.

While the all students group only met the %5 goal for Self-management, the students with disabilities group exceeded the goal in every area.



District E Action Plan: District E will extend their goal into the 2022-2023 school year in order to continue efforts to improve outcomes for all students. Given that the fidelity data were inconsistent, they will instead utilize observations as a more sensitive and accurate fidelity measure moving forward.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & EVALUATION

Beyond direct technical assistance to districts, the Project also supports Florida educators by providing high-quality professional learning in order to positively impact educators' knowledge, skills, and MTSS implementation. As such, this priority encompasses the Project's work on modules, trainings, resources, and reports to build the capacity of educators to implement MTSS with fidelity. In 2021-2022, this included:

41 Districts/1024 Educators

PS/RtI & PS/RtI Tech Trainings

32 Districts/314 Educators

Online MTSS Modules

22 Districts/75 Educators

RtI-E Online Modules

20 Districts/600 Schools

Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation

15 Districts/76 Schools

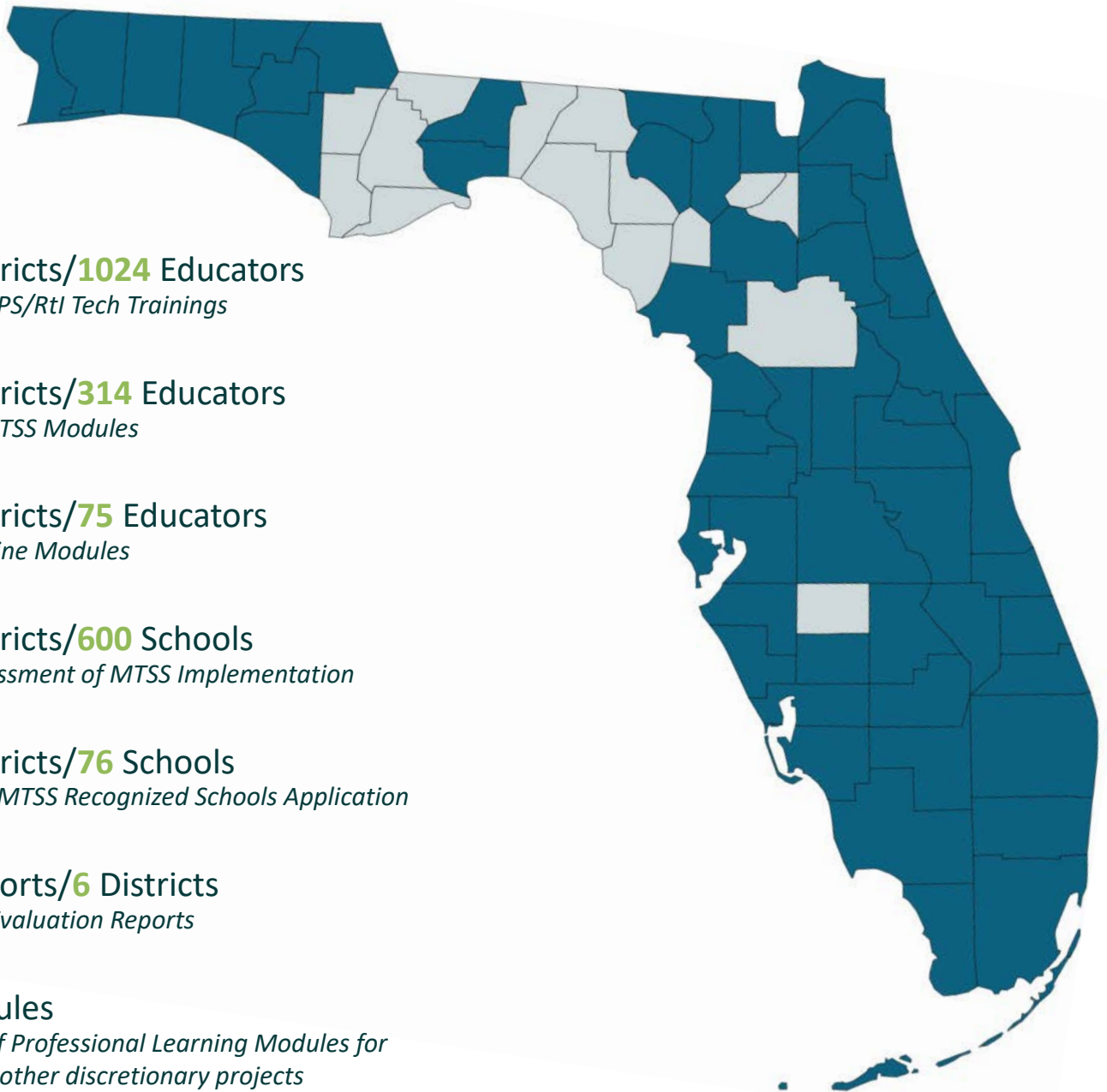
Florida's MTSS Recognized Schools Application

10 Reports/6 Districts

Custom Evaluation Reports

8 Modules

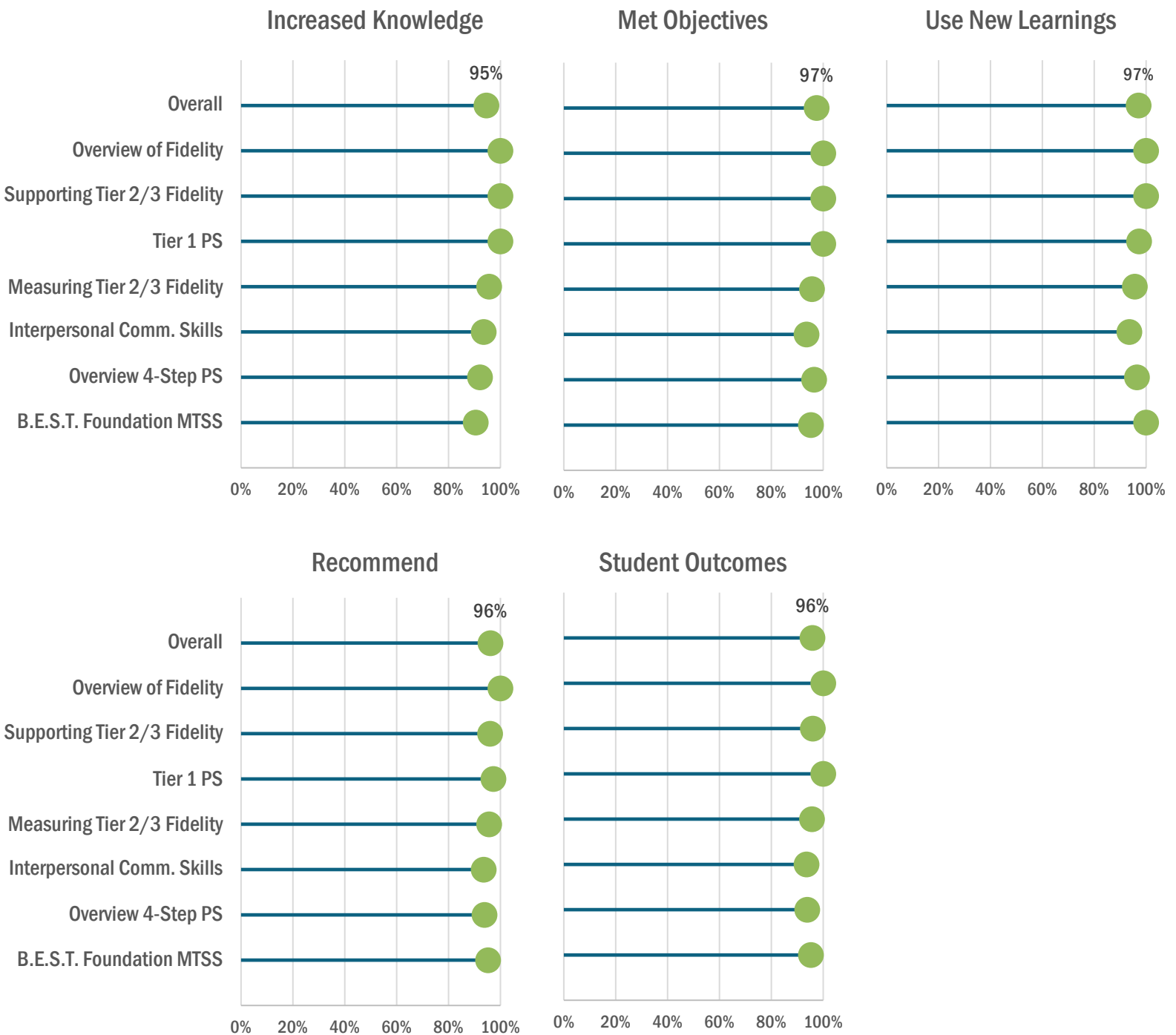
*Review of Professional Learning Modules for
BEES or other discretionary projects*



MTSS MODULES

Every MTSS module had a positive rating of at least 90% in each of the key areas.

In 2021-2022, the PS/RtI project provided a library of MTSS professional learning modules for educators throughout Florida to use to enhance their MTSS implementation. Topics included fidelity, Tier 1 problem solving, and integrating the B.E.S.T. standards. Only modules with at least 10 evaluations were included in the individual analyses below. Ratings reflect the percent of evaluation responses rated 4, 5 or 6 on a 1-6 scale.



RtI-E MODULES

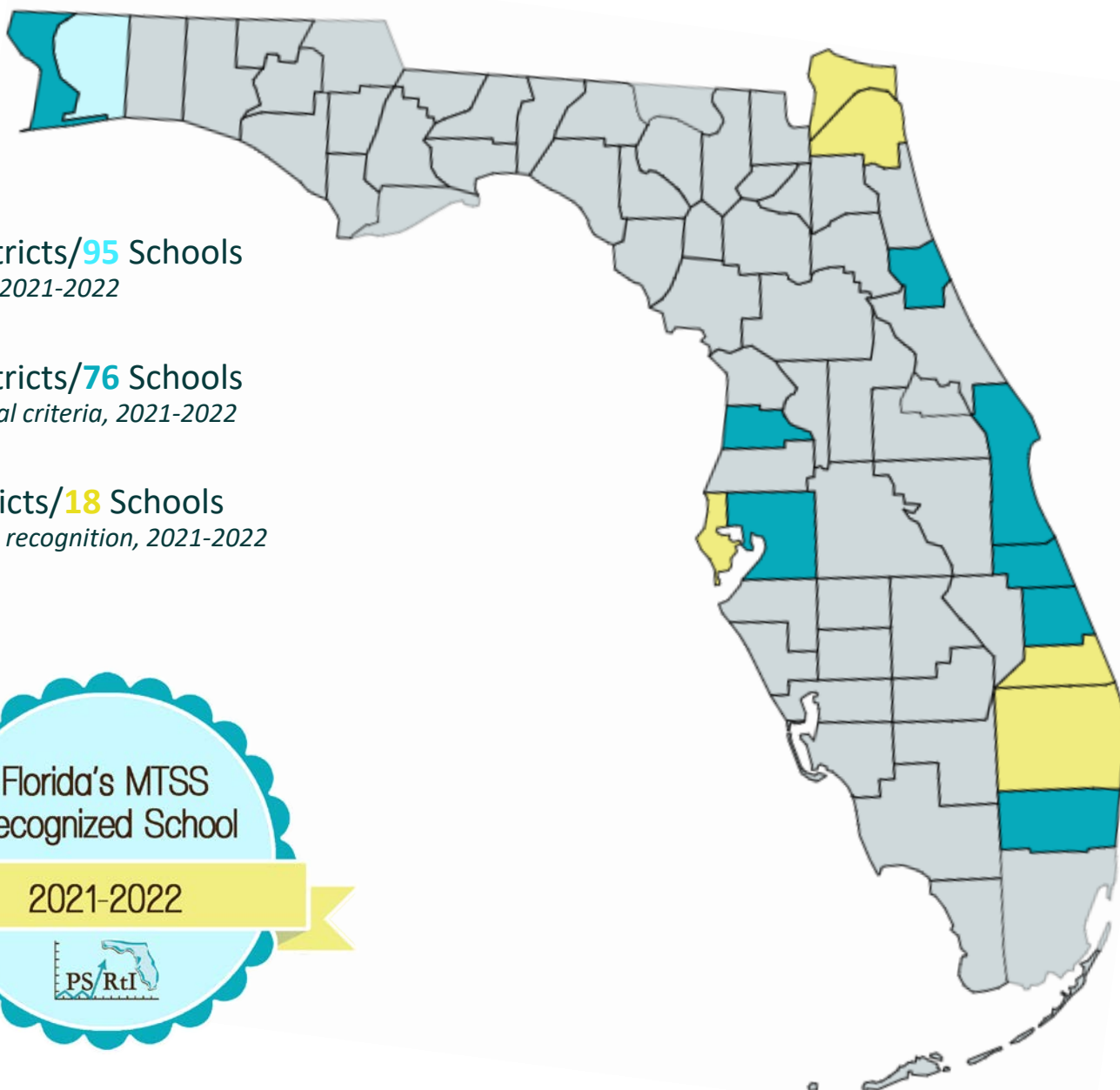
Every RtI-E module had a positive rating of at least 84% in each of the key areas.

Starting in the 2018-2019 year, PS/RtI developed a statewide professional learning program around Response to Intervention for SLD eligibility. Since 2020, these have been available as a series of online modules. Only modules with at least 10 evaluations were included in the individual analyses below. Ratings reflect the percent of evaluation responses rated 4, 5 or 6 on a 1-6 scale.



MTSS RECOGNIZED SCHOOLS

Starting in 2020-2021, the 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.



15 Districts/95 Schools
Applied, 2021-2022

14 Districts/76 Schools
Met initial criteria, 2021-2022

6 Districts/18 Schools
Received recognition, 2021-2022



STATEWIDE SUPPORTS

In addition to supporting Florida's districts directly, PS/RtI also provides support for key Department of Education initiatives and priorities. Examples and descriptions are provided below.

Membership on B.E.S.T. Standards Implementation Teams

Multiple Project staff have actively participated in the rollout of the B.E.S.T. Standards. During 2021-22, these project staff supported scoping reviews to inform evidence-based practice, the development of practice profiles and other resources, regional trainings and coaching on the standards, and other team activities.

Presenting at Statewide Institutes

Project staff led the development of various presentations for the ISRD Winter Institute, the Summer Literacy Institute, and the new Summer ESE Institute. Over 300 educators attended these sessions, with topics such as using Tier 1 problem solving to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, using UDL principles to design Tier 1, using appropriate reading assessments for data-based decision making, and implementing the B.E.S.T. Standards for math.

Membership on BEESS Workgroups

Several project staff participated on and supported the work of BEESS workgroups. The PS/RtI Math and Literacy specialists held co-leadership roles on the BEESS Math and ELA workgroups focused on improving the ELA and Math outcomes of students with disabilities. Three additional staff members acted as members of the ELA workgroup.

Discretionary Project Collaboration

PS/RtI staff regularly partnered with other discretionary projects (i.e., FDLRS, ISRD, NEFEC, PBIS, FIN) to support Florida districts and statewide initiatives. This included the development of tools and resources, providing statewide trainings, and providing planning and problem solving for schools and districts.

FUNDING & SUPPORT

PROJECT FUNDED BY

Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

EVALUATION SUPPORT

Stephanie Green is the project evaluator for the PS/RtI project. The author would like to thank USF doctoral students Rachael Hite and Karrah Sampson, as well as the PS/RtI data assistants for their work in collecting and analyzing data included in this report.



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