

FEBRUARY 2022

Nevada's School Climate Transformation Project: Building Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

2020–21 Evaluation Report

SUBMITTED TO:

Nevada PBIS Technical Assistance Center

SUBMITTED BY:

Julia Alemany and Luciana Viscarra

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS:

Ashley Greenwald and Kaci Fleetwood



metis associates
partners for meaningful change

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Table of Figures and Tables	1
Introduction	3
Findings at A Glance	4
What Are MTSS and PBIS?	6
What is the Nevada MTSS Project?	7
Implementation Findings.....	12
Statewide Outcomes	13
District and School Outcomes.....	16
Student Outcomes	20
Moving Forward	24

Table of Figures and Tables

Table 1. Evaluation Methods and Data Sources	3
Figure 1: Nevada School Climate Transformation Project's Hierarchy of Supports	7
Figure 2: Logic Model for the Nevada MTSS Project.....	8
Figure 3. Implementation Stages.....	9
Figure 4. The Hexagon Tool.....	10
Figure 5. Nevada MTSS Training Series	11
Figure 6. 2020-21 Implementation at a Glance	12
Figure 7. Participant Satisfaction with Aspects of PD.....	12

Figure 8. Results from the State Systems Fidelity Inventory (SSFI)	13
Figure 9. Feedback on SLT Meetings (SLT Survey)	14
Table 2. State Successes and Challenges	14
Figure 10. Results from the District Systems Fidelity Inventory (DSFI)	16
Figure 11. Impact of MTSS Training on Coach Knowledge.....	17
Figure 12. Impact of the MTSS Project on District Capacity and Practices (2021 DLT Survey).....	17
Table 3. District/School Successes and Challenges.....	18
Figure 13. Impact of MTSS Trainings on School Staff Knowledge.....	18
Figure 14. Fidelity of Implementation (TFI Results)	19
Figure 15. Trends in Disciplinary Incidents Related to Violence and Possession (State Report Card Data)	20
Figure 16. Trends in Disciplinary Incidents Related to Bullying (State Report Card Data)	21
Figure 17. Trends in Average Daily Attendance (Nevada State Report Card Data)	22
Figure 18. Trends in Chronic Absenteeism Rates (Nevada State Report Card Data)	22
Figure 19. Weighted Math Proficiency Rates (Nevada State Report Card Data).....	23
Figure 20. Weighted ELA Proficiency Rates (Nevada State Report Card Data)	23

Introduction

In fall 2018, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), in collaboration with Nevada's Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Technical Assistance Center, was awarded a second five-year federally-funded School Climate Transformation Grant (SCTG). Funded through this grant, the Nevada MTSS project seeks to improve its capacity to establish, scale-up, and sustain multi-tiered behavioral frameworks in Nevada's schools through the implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS). The 2020–21 school year was the third grant year and the second year of full implementation.

In 2020–21, the MTSS project was implemented in **eight target high-need school districts**. Collectively, the project districts serve 99,491 students, ranging from 636 students at Pershing School District to 70,024 students in the Clark County School District.

This report presents program **evaluation findings for Year 3 (2020–21)** of the grant. The evaluation uses a mixed-methods approach, drawing from multiple data sources and respondent groups, described below.

This report was prepared by Metis Associates on behalf of the Nevada PBIS Technical Assistance Center, which is located in the Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities at the College of Education and Human Development (University of Nevada, Reno).

The mission of the **Nevada PBIS Technical Assistance Center** is to provide the tools, knowledge, and skills for organizations to develop and sustain systems that support safety and social emotional wellness.

Table 1. Evaluation Methods and Data Sources

Documentation Review	Program data and documentation reviews, such as professional development (PD) attendance records, training materials, and PD scope and sequence
Training Evaluations	Training evaluations completed by state, regional, district, and school staff after each training (N=979)
TFI Data	Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) data measuring school-level fidelity of implementation
SSAFI and DSFI Data	State Systems Fidelity Inventory (SSFI) and District Systems Fidelity Inventory (DSFI) data measuring fidelity of implementation at the state and district levels
State Report Cards	Nevada state report card data and school/district data on student outcomes
SLT Surveys	State Leadership Team (SLT) surveys (N=28)
DLT Surveys	District Leadership Team (DLT) surveys (N=24)

Findings at A Glance



10
DISTRICTS



149
SCHOOLS



99,419
STUDENTS



41
TRAININGS

STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

- ❖ **State capacity to support MTSS implementation has continued to increase**, with considerable gains in Leadership Teaming, Policy, and Workforce Capacity, as measured by the State Systems Fidelity Inventory. Stakeholder Engagement and Funding and Alignment were the lowest-rated areas.
- ❖ **The Nevada MTSS initiative has improved the coordination and alignment of statewide initiatives.** Specifically, the large majority of SLT members report that the initiative has had a moderate (29%) or strong impact (47%) on increasing coordination and collaboration at the state level. Furthermore, the MTSS project collaborated with the State's School Safety Team to bring an MTSS approach to school safety's preventative and responsive components and developed a formal partnership with Project AWARE.
- ❖ **Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting school closures, the Nevada MTSS project continued to offer a robust and flexible menu of supports and trainings** to District Leadership Teams, coaches, and schools. Almost all participants were satisfied with all aspects of the PD they participated in, and they reported that these PD offerings have positively impacted their knowledge, skills, and future practices.
- ❖ **Carson City School District and Pyramid Lake Schools joined as formal implementation partners of the Nevada MTSS Project in 2020-21.**

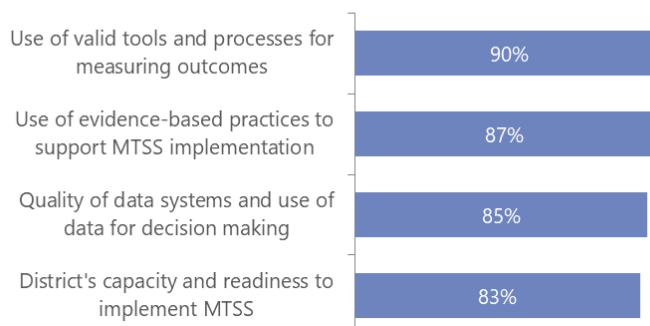
DISTRICT/SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

- ❖ **Participating districts have shown important gains in their fidelity of implementation, reporting gains in every area assessed through the DSFI.** Districts scored highest in the areas of Leadership Teaming and Policy; the lowest-rated areas were Workforce Capacity and Local Implementation Demonstrations.
- ❖ **Participating districts and schools have continued to build their capacity to implement PBIS and reported positive changes in their MTSS practices,** particularly around using valid tools and processes and evidence-based practices to support MTSS implementation, the quality of data systems, and the use of data for decision making and the districts' overall capacity and readiness to implement MTSS. Integrating mental health services in MTSS and using opioid abuse prevention and mitigation strategies were rated the lowest and remain a priority area moving forward.

Impact of MTSS Initiative on District Outcomes

What impact, if any, has the initiative (supports and resources) had on the following outcome areas?

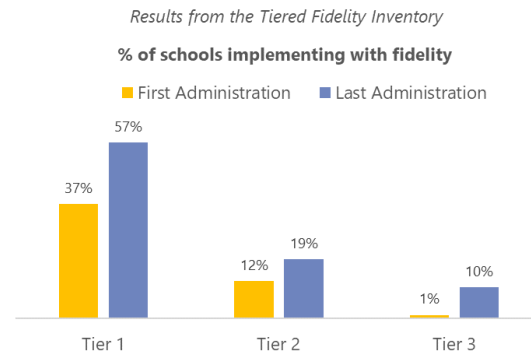
% of DLTs who reported moderate to large impact



- ❖ **Through coach and school trainings and supports, the MTSS project helped build local and regional capacity for MTSS implementation.** Coaches and school staff reported large gains in their knowledge and skills as a result of the trainings. Specifically, the percentage of coaches who reported being very to extremely knowledgeable about the topics covered in the PDs increased from 35% before the trainings to 81% after the trainings. Similarly, the percentage of school staff who reported the same increased from 41% to 71%.

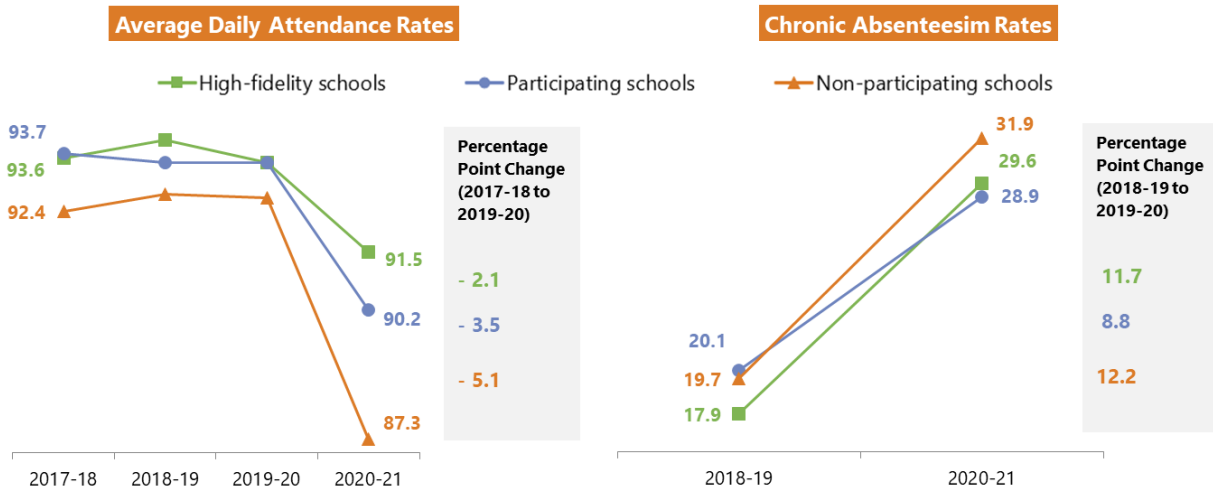
- ❖ **Participating schools demonstrated gains in implementation fidelity, thus reflecting systemic improvements to provide better supports to students.** Participating schools that completed the Tiered Fidelity of Implementation (TFI) showed increases in both average ratio scores for each Tier, as well as the percentage of schools implementing each tier with fidelity.

Fidelity of Implementation Among Schools



STUDENT OUTCOMES

When looking at trends over the last few years in student outcomes, results show that participating schools—and particularly high-fidelity implementing sites—outperformed non-participating schools in most instances, including average daily attendance, chronic absenteeism, and disciplinary incidents related to violence, possession or use of substances and alcohol, and bullying.



MOVING FORWARD

- ✓ Continue to adapt training and TA offerings to meet the districts' and schools' evolving needs, both in terms of content and format (in-person, virtual or hybrid programming);
- ✓ Implement additional statewide efforts to advance implementation, particularly around Stakeholder Engagement, Alignment and Funding, and Evaluation; and,
- ✓ Further support districts and schools to integrate mental health services in MTSS and use opioid abuse prevention and mitigation strategies.
- ✓ Consider leveraging MTSS leadership and data decision making for School Performance Plans

What Is MTSS?

Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) comes from two well-researched approaches: academic Response to Intervention (RTI) and School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). Both academic and behavioral initiatives have certain fundamental principles that underlie the successful implementation of practices within the system. Typically, these principles are almost identical when discussed from the perspective of optimized learning and prevention. Traditional academic initiatives and frameworks such as RTI take the preventative approach of delivering high-quality academic instruction for all students, differentiated instruction as needed, and a general teaming process for progress monitoring and decision-making. The same can and should be true for behavioral initiatives such as the PBIS framework, where the focus is on preventing challenging behaviors. There is a social and emotional instruction system in place for all students, differentiated behavioral supports as needed, and a team process for progress monitoring and decision-making. As a result of the partnership with the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning Environments, the Nevada's MTSS Project has strong foundations in PBIS and other social-emotional and behavioral initiatives, however many LEAs elect to integrate their academic support systems within their frameworks to create a more comprehensive MTSS.

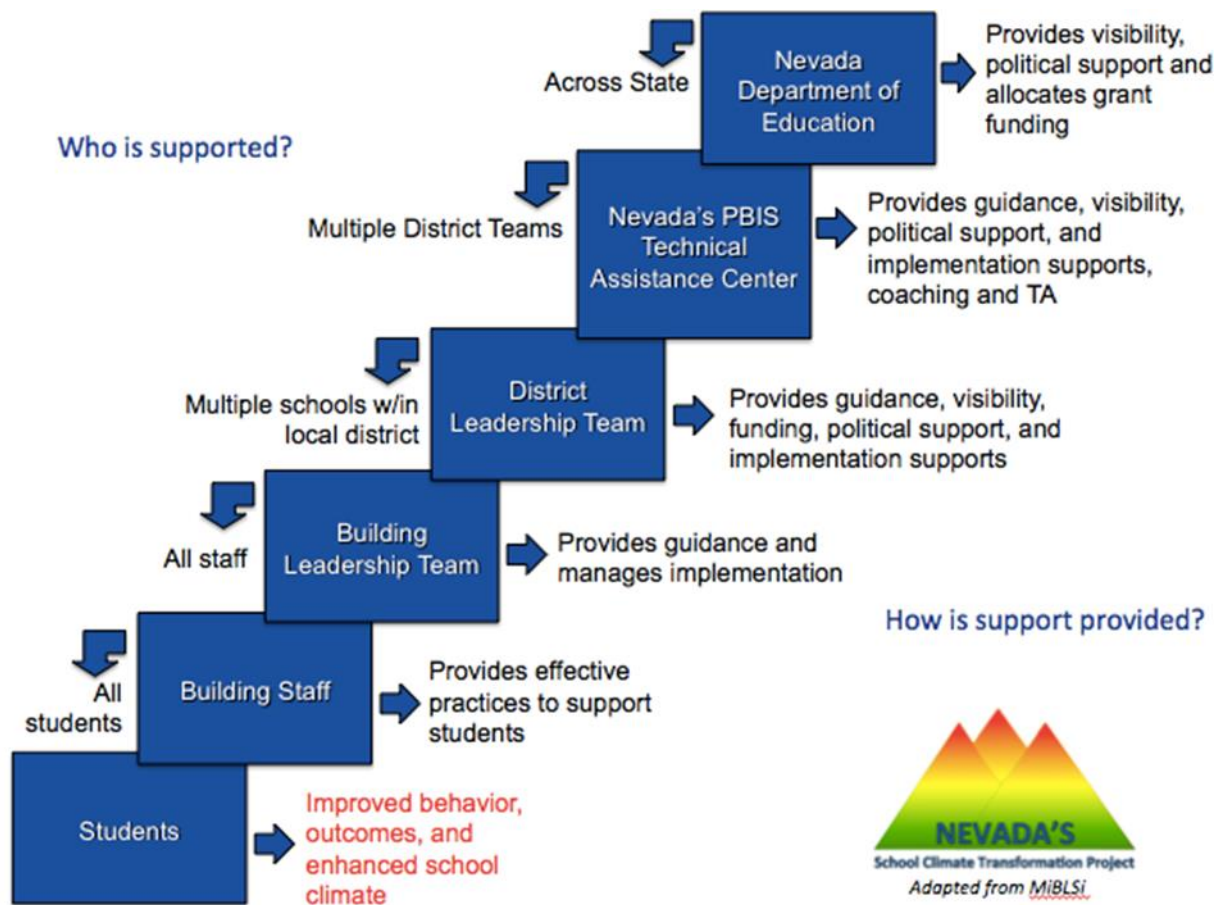
- **Tier 1 - Universal Supports for the All Students.** Tier 1 includes instructional practices to support school-wide outcomes. Tier 1 is stewarded by a "school MTSS team" that attends training events and professional learning activities to enhance their knowledge and deepen their implementation practice. The team is responsible for the leadership of MTSS, regular review of data, and oversight of the school action plan. Features of Tier 1 includes delivery of high-quality core curriculum, universal prevention programming, universal screening, data-based decision making, teaming, and progress monitoring.
- **Tier 2 – Targeted Interventions for Students at Risk.** It involves specialized group interventions to supplement the Tier 1 supports these students already receive. Tier 2 interventions include targeted and explicit instruction of skills, opportunities to practice new skills, and frequent feedback to the student. The role of the team advanced tiers includes matching student needs to interventions, progress monitoring, and evaluating the efficacy of targeted interventions.
- **Tier 3 - Individualized Supports for Few Students.** Tier 3 interventions are utilized for students that demonstrate the highest need, based on lack of responsiveness to Tier 1 and 2 supports. These interventions are evidence-based, informed by individualized assessment, and person-centered. Interventions are tailor to address the specific skill deficits as indicated within the individualized assessments. The role of the team at Tier 3 is similar to that of Tier 2, however the team may collaborate with external and/or community-based providers to support the student.

What is the Nevada MTSS Project?

In 2018, the Nevada Department of Education, in collaboration with the Nevada PBIS Technical Assistance Center, received a second five-year School Climate Transformation (SCT) grant from the United States Department of Education. The mission of the Nevada MTSS project is to build state and district capacity for supporting the sustained and broad-scale implementation of School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) in Nevada schools. It builds upon the successes of the first SCT grant implemented from 2015 to 2019.

Supported by these grants, the Nevada MTSS initiative has provided the necessary resources to allow ongoing on-site training and technical assistance through a **coaching hierarchy on behavior and data systems**. Each district's capacity is being built during a three-year period in which State Coordinators from the Nevada PBIS Technical Assistance Center work closely with External Coaches within each district, who, in turn, work directly with Internal Coaches at each school.

Figure 1: Nevada School Climate Transformation Project's Hierarchy of Supports



The following page is the logic model, describing the goals, inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the Nevada PBIS efforts.

Figure 2: Logic Model for the Nevada MTSS Project

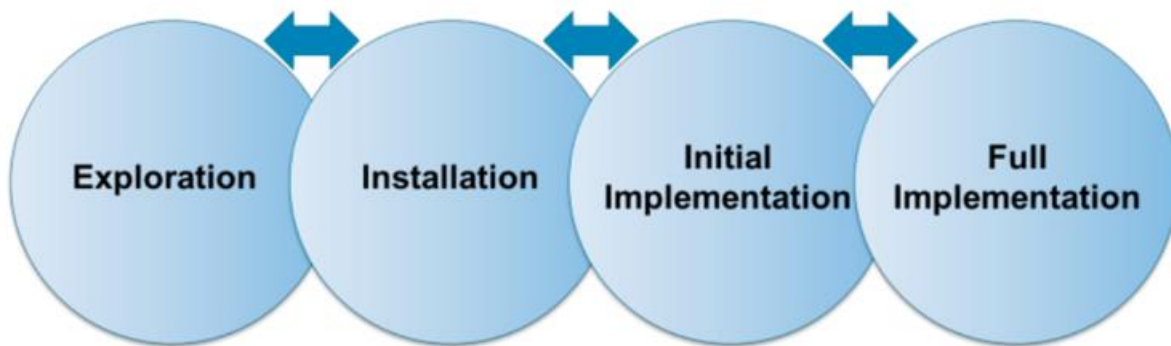
GOAL <i>What is the program trying to accomplish?</i>	ACTIVITIES <i>What are key components?</i>	OUTPUTS <i>What are the tangible products?</i>	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES <i>What changes do we expect in 1-2 years?</i>	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES <i>What changes do we expect in 3-5 years?</i>
<p>Improve state, district, and school capacity to implement MTSS through a multi-tiered integrated behavior framework</p>	<p>Develop a hierarchy of training support, beginning with State Coordinators, at least one External Coach at each district and at least one Internal Coach at each of the individual schools</p> <p>Provide training opportunities for project staff (e.g., APBS and PBIS Leadership conferences, national PBIS technical assistance center support)</p>	<p>Sequence and scope of trainings and supports</p> <p>Number of trainings offered</p> <p>Number of project staff and state coordinators trained</p>	<p>FOR THE STATE</p> <p>Increased knowledge and skills of project staff and state-level coordinators</p> <p>Increased support at the state for MTSS implementation</p> <p>Improved data collection tools, methods, and practices</p>	<p>FOR THE STATE</p> <p>Increased capacity to provide supports to schools/ districts</p> <p>Increased alignment and coordination of federal, state, and local resources</p>
INPUTS <i>What resources are needed?</i> <p>5-year USDOE School Climate Transformation grant</p> <p>NDE staffing and resources</p> <p>Nevada PBIS Technical Assistance Center staffing and resources</p> <p>State Coordinators</p> <p>Nevada PBIS network of partners</p> <p>State Leadership Team</p> <p>Participating school districts</p>	<p>Create, train, and support District Leadership Teams (DLTs) and facilitate administration of DSFI to inform district action plans</p> <p>Provide MTSS training and coaching for school teams</p> <p>Conduct monthly meetings of state coordinators, external coaches, and internal coaches</p> <p>Provide access to School-Wide Information System (SWIS) and train state and district staff in the use of SWIS data</p> <p>Collect and review implementation and outcome data to inform project activities</p> <p>Create a State Leadership Team (SLT), hold quarterly meetings, and administer SSFI to inform state's action plan</p>	<p>Number and % of district staff trained; district action plans</p> <p>Number and % of schools and school staff trained</p> <p>Training materials, videos, and podcasts</p> <p>SWIS data, data reports, and action plans based on data</p> <p>Number of SLT meetings, agendas, meeting minutes, and state action plan</p>	<p>FOR DISTRICTS/ SCHOOLS</p> <p>Increased district capacity to train, monitor, improve, and evaluate MTSS implementation</p> <p>Increased school capacity, resources, and protocols to implement MTSS</p> <p>Increased fidelity of implementation of Tier 1 (universal) practices</p> <p>Improved data collection practices and data-informed decision-making</p> <p>FOR YOUTH</p> <p>Decrease in reported student behavior (ODRs, suspensions, referrals)</p> <p>Decreased use of restraints and seclusions</p> <p>Improved student and staff attendance</p>	<p>FOR SCHOOLS/ DISTRICTS</p> <p>Increased fidelity of implementation of Tier 2 (targeted) and Tier 3 (individual) practices</p> <p>Improved data systems</p> <p>Improved school climate</p> <p>FOR YOUTH</p> <p>Improved growth rate of academic performance (CRT, MAPS)</p> <p>Increased high school graduation rates</p>

Following the guidelines of implementation science, the Nevada MTSS Project supports LEAs in implementing MTSS in four stages: exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation. The exploration stage focuses on assessing the organization's needs, how well the proposed evidence-based practice (EBP) being considered "fits" the organization, and how practical it is to implement the EBP. When exploration results in the decision to move forward, installation begins. The installation stage focuses on building capacity at both the organization and practitioner level to implement the EBP. After capacity is built, initial implementation begins. At this stage, staff begin to use the EBP with important attention given to collecting and using data to monitor implementation fidelity, as well as outcomes. When the EBP is being used by staff with fidelity, and with the organization's valued outcomes being achieved, the organization has moved into the stage of full implementation (National Implementation Research Network, 2020).

School districts participating in the MTSS Project have access to the following opportunities:

- 1) **Technical Assistance and Coaching for Participating Districts.** The Nevada PBIS Technical Assistance State Coaches work with each District Leadership Team (DLT) to build their capacity to develop, implement, assess, and refine their MTSS frameworks.

Figure 3. Implementation Stages

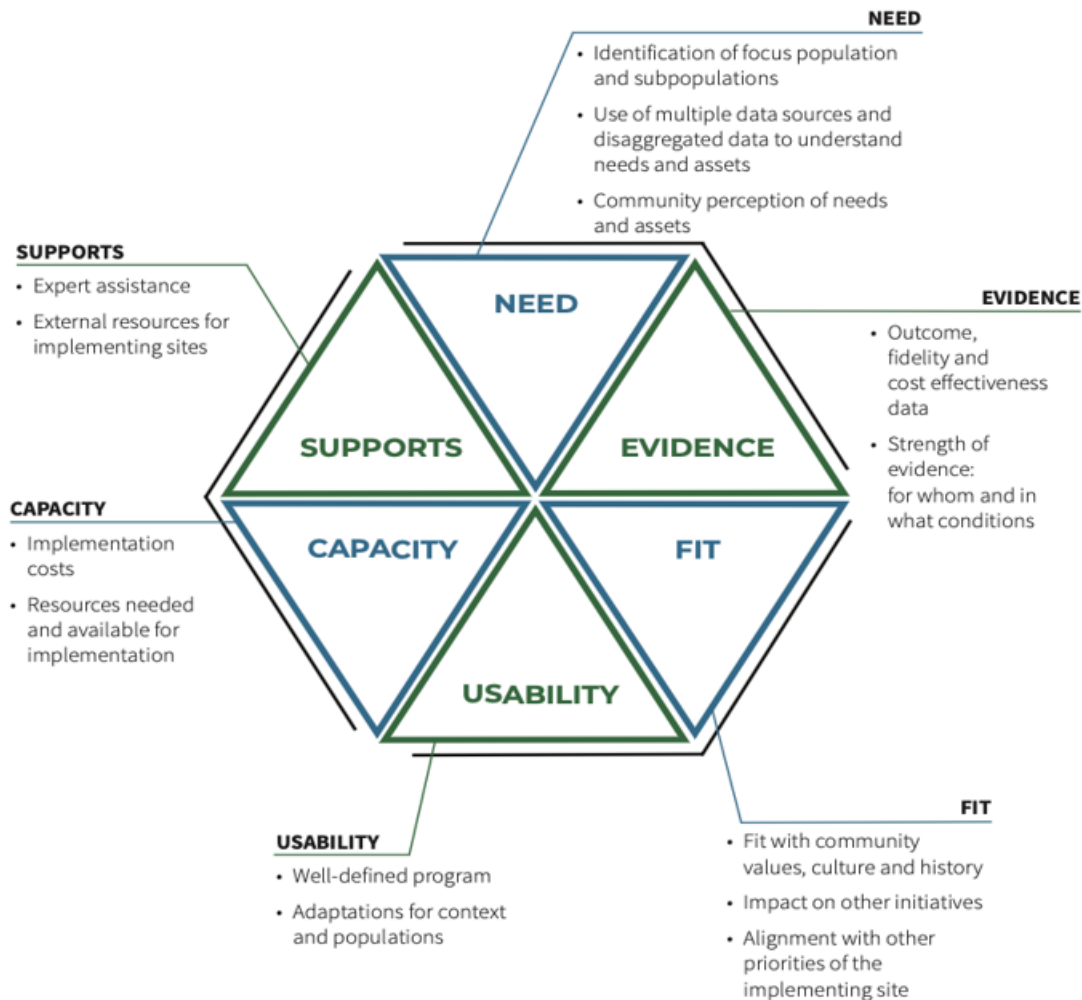


One role of the DLT is to engage in the thoughtful and ongoing alignment of budgets, personnel, and initiatives to reduce potential "siloification" and disproportionate access to opportunities and programming within the district. Fiscally, this includes developing a budget plan that prioritizes funding to support operating structures and capacity-building activities to implement MTSS. Operationally, funding and organizational resources across related initiatives must continually be examined to facilitate alignment and sustained implementation.

As districts advance and enhance their implementation at advanced tiers of MTSS, the DLT should formally identify, document, and endorse Tier 2 and Tier 3 evidence-based interventions that are both contextually appropriate and adequately supported. At least annually, the DLT conducts a formal review (audit, resource mapping, initiative inventory) supported by the State MTSS Coordinator to document and refine the initiatives included within the district's MTSS framework and examine the effectiveness, relevance, and fidelity of implementation. When it is determined that innovation is needed, the DLT utilizes initiative adoption procedures (i.e., the NIRN hexagon tool, see below) prior to adopting new programming, practices, or initiatives.

Figure 4. The Hexagon Tool

The Hexagon can be used as a planning tool to guide selection and assess the fit and feasibility of potential programs and practices for use. It includes three **program indicators** and three **implementing site indicators**.



Lastly and perhaps most importantly, the DLT is charged with MTSS alignment to district outcomes. As district-level strategic plans evolve, soft funding sources come and go, and leadership changes, MTSS can be at risk for having a short-term “shelf life” if not aligned to publicly identified district outcomes and goals. Therefore, ensuring that the components of an LEA’s MTSS are directly aligned with key district performance goals in each rendition of an LEA’s strategic plan is imperative for durable and sustainable implementation.

In Nevada, the SEA provides coaching to the LEA and the LEA provides coaching to the school building. Nevada’s SEA MTSS Team currently has 1 MTSS State Coordinator and 3 MTSS Regional Coordinators. The State Coordinator facilitates or co-facilitates the DLT in each participating LEA. The Regional Coordinators are responsible for building the capacity of the LEA coaches.

- 2) **Nevada's LEA Coaches formally implementing MTSS participate in a feedback program called Nevada's Total Performance System (TPS) for Coaching, facilitated by the SEA Regional Coordinators.** The TPS outlines coaching competencies, training responsibilities, and the expected coaching activities performed with the district and the school teams. SEA Regional Coordinators also provide weekly coaching calls to build a community of practice, monthly meetings to provide feedback on the TPS coaching objectives for each LEA coach, and quarterly coaching professional development series to build and enhance capacity. The SEA Regional Coordinators also provide ongoing technical assistance through direct email, phone, and video conference communication to the LEA coaches. Coaching content created by the SEA is based on LEA requests for assistance and identified needs as determined by LEA data sources.
- 3) **Districtwide Awareness Trainings (by Request).** These sessions are typically half-day or one-day and cover the following topics: Trauma-Informed Practices, Restorative Practices, School Mental Health, and Social-Emotional Academic Development.
- 4) **Training Series for Participating School Teams.** Participating school teams are invited to participate in training series focusing on Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 strategies. School and district coaches can also participate in a coach training series. Each training series (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, and Coaches Professional Development Series) consists of an introductory workshop (one or two days) and four Professional Development sessions (half or full days) throughout the year. The scope and sequence of professional development are described in the graphic below.

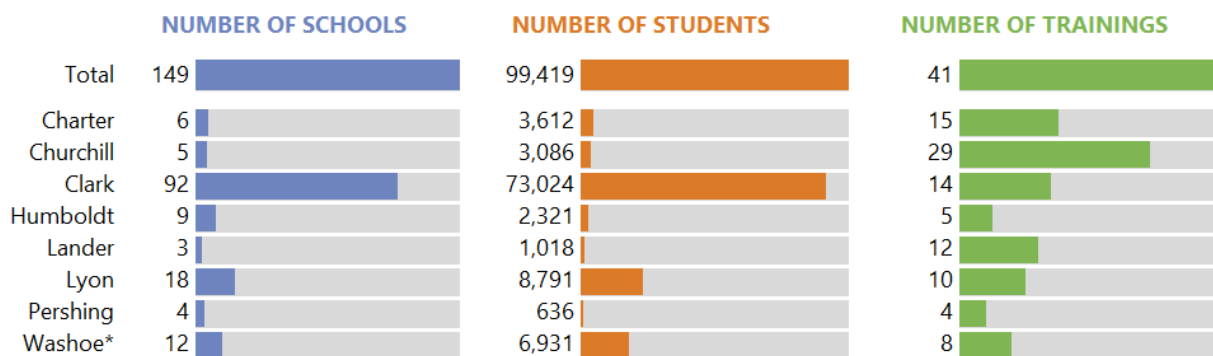
Figure 5. Nevada MTSS Training Series

TIER 1 TRAINING SERIES	TIER 2 TRAINING SERIES	TIER 3 TRAINING SERIES	COACHING SERIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Workshop: Tier 1 Universal Strategies (2 days) PD #1: School-Wide Data-Based Decision Making (full day) PD #2: Classroom Systems & Supports (full day) PD #3: Data-Based Tier 1 Enhancement in MTSS (full day) PD #4: Disproportionality & Sustainability (full day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Workshop: Tier 2 Targeted Interventions (2 days) PD #1: Universal Screening and Tier 2 Intervention Selection (half day) PD #2: Progress Monitoring (half day) PD #3: Communication to Staff, Parents, and Community (half day) PD #4: Evaluating Efficacy & Outcomes of Tier 2 Systems & Social Validity (half day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Workshop: Tier 3 Intensive Supports (2 days) PD #1: Brief FBA/Competing Pathway (half day) PD #2: Comprehensive FBA/PTR (half day) PD #3: School-Based Wraparound: RENEW (half day) PD #4: Evaluating Efficacy & Outcomes of Tier 3 (half day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Workshop: Coach Kick-Off (full day) PD #1: Ethics & Effective Spokesperson (full day) PD #2: Pre-Requisite Knowledge & Experience (full day) PD #3: Systems Coaching (full day) PD #4: Implementation Science (half day)

Implementation Findings

In 2020–21, the Nevada MTSS project worked with 149 schools from 8 districts and delivered 41 trainings (six for coaches and 35 for school staff). In addition, the project worked closely with district leadership in two other districts, Carson City and Pyramid Lake; their schools will begin implementation in 2021-22.

Figure 6. 2020-21 School Implementation at a Glance



*Due to COVID-related challenges, Washoe decided to pause their participation midway through 2020-21; their data are included regarding their implementation and feedback on the PDs, but are not included in the outcome analyses.

Almost all participants were satisfied with all aspects of the PD they participated in, and they reported that these PD offerings have positively impacted their knowledge, skills, and future practices. During the 2020–21 school year, educators and administrators attending MTSS trainings completed 1,064 training evaluations. Almost all participants were *satisfied to highly satisfied* with the training they attended, including the presenters (98%), the presentations (95%), content understanding (94%), and their ability to implement strategies/content learned (87%). According to participants, the best features of the trainings were: team time and breakout rooms; presenters' knowledge and engagement of participants; and the content (e.g., the examples, visuals, materials, and information shared).

The training was helpful and engaging. The breakout rooms were a nice addition to share comments and ideas.

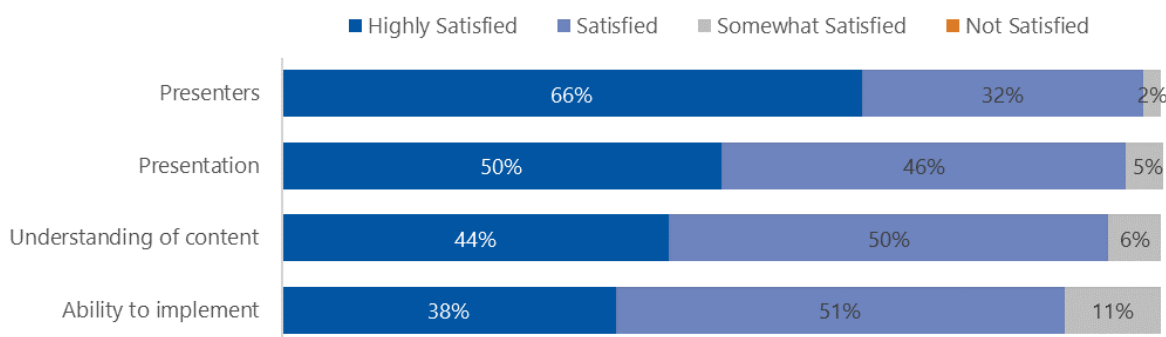
This provided reinforcement for me and for our school. It motivated us to keep on going.

Excellent training. Definitely helped me see how my knowledge can be applied schoolwide.

– PD Participants

Figure 7. Participant Satisfaction with Aspects of PD

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the training you attended?

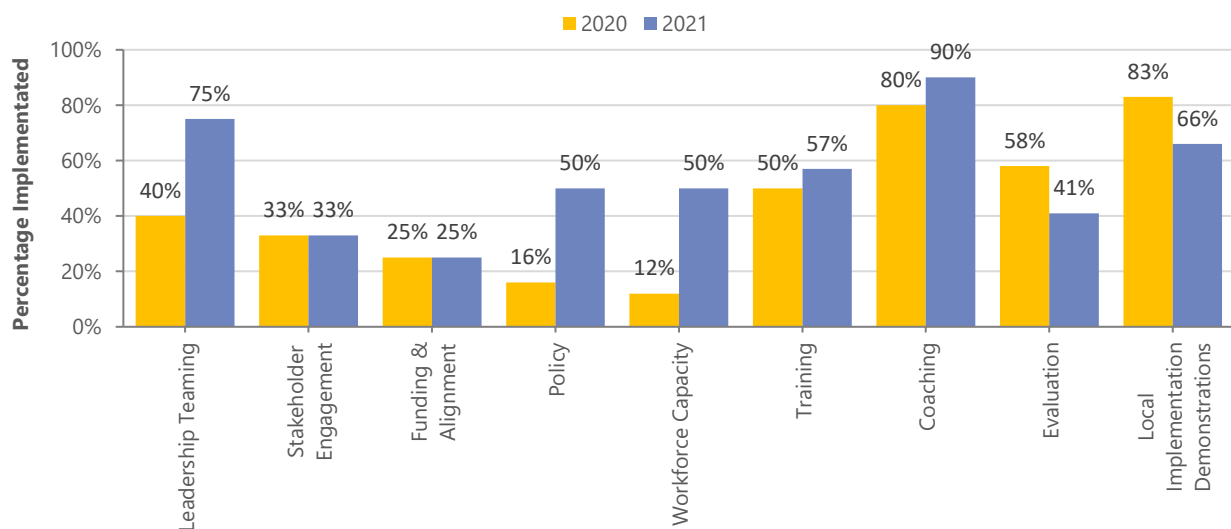


Statewide Outcomes

The Nevada PBIS Technical Assistance Center has worked collaboratively with the Nevada State Department of Education, specifically the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning Environments, on the School Climate Transformation Grants over the past several years. One of the key goals of the grant is to build state capacity for supporting the implementation of MTSS and fostering greater alignment, coordination, and integration of other key initiatives and supports. The 2020-21 evaluation results indicate Nevada has made great strides in these critical areas.

- **State capacity to support MTSS implementation has continued to increase, with considerable gains in Leadership Teaming, Policy, and Workforce Capacity.** During this school year, the Nevada Department of Education completed their second State Systems Fidelity Inventory (SSFI) assessment to determine the state's current capacity for MTSS and areas needed to focus on for improvement. An annual action plan was created from the areas targeted for growth. As shown in Figure 8, Nevada has experienced important gains in five key areas, including Leadership Teaming (from 40% to 75%), Policy (from 16% to 50%), Workforce Capacity (from 12% to 50%), Training (from 50% to 57%), and Coaching (from 80% to 90%). Stakeholder Engagement and Funding and Alignment were the lowest-rated areas and stayed stagnant; declines were noted in the evaluation and local implementation demonstrations.

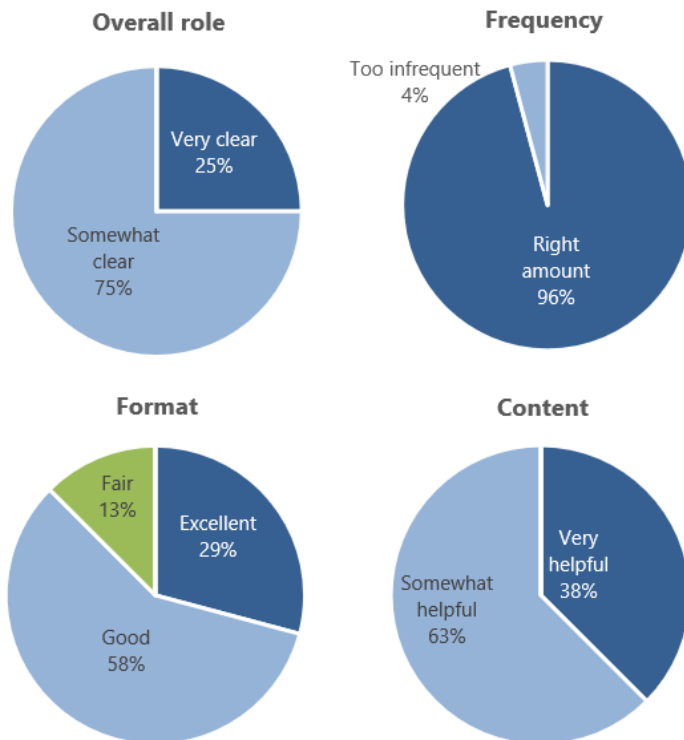
Figure 8. Results from the State Systems Fidelity Inventory (SSFI)



- **The Nevada State Leadership Team continued to guide and support statewide implementation and alignment efforts.** Towards the end of the first five-year grant, the State Management Team was converted into the State MTSS Leadership Team to better serve the state's needs and place greater emphasis on developing a statewide MTSS framework. In 2020-21, the SLT met quarterly to foster collaboration and coordination among diverse stakeholders, including several behavioral health grants and initiatives awarded to the Department of Education, school districts, the Nevada Association of School Psychologists, and the Nevada School Counselor Association, and State Departments.

Overall, members of the SLT provided very positive feedback about the structure and helpfulness of the SLT meetings. Most SLT members responding to the survey indicated that the role of the SLT was *somewhat clear* (75%) or *very clear* (25%), that the frequency of the meetings was the right amount (96%), that the format was *good* (58%) or *excellent* (29%), and that the content of the meetings was *somewhat helpful* (63%) or *very helpful* (38%).

Figure 9. Feedback on SLT Meetings (SLT Survey)



The SLT team is incredibly knowledgeable, patient, and flexible.

Thank you for all you are doing and always evaluating the effectiveness of MTSS implementation!

I think the group is fantastic and look forward to participating more in the future.

I find participating in the meetings so helpful. I feel that my personal comments in the meetings have been considered in state level decision making which makes me feel heard.

– SLT Members

- **The Nevada MTSS initiative, particularly the SLT, has resulted in better coordination and alignment at the state level.** Specifically, the large majority of SLT members report that the initiative has had a *moderate* (29%) or *strong impact* (47%) on increasing coordination and collaboration at the state level. SLT members also highlighted a number of other successes and challenges at the state level, summarized below.

Table 2. State Successes and Challenges

Successes	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increased collaboration and coordination among agencies ✓ Integration of MTSS across initiatives ✓ Securing funding for additional coaches ✓ Embedding MTSS in policy and current legislation ✓ Increased access to experts in the mental health field ✓ Use of SSFI data to create and implement action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Need for further integration and alignment ✓ Need for more sustainable funding ✓ Need for more differentiated support for urban vs. rural districts ✓ More integration of the academic piece into MTSS

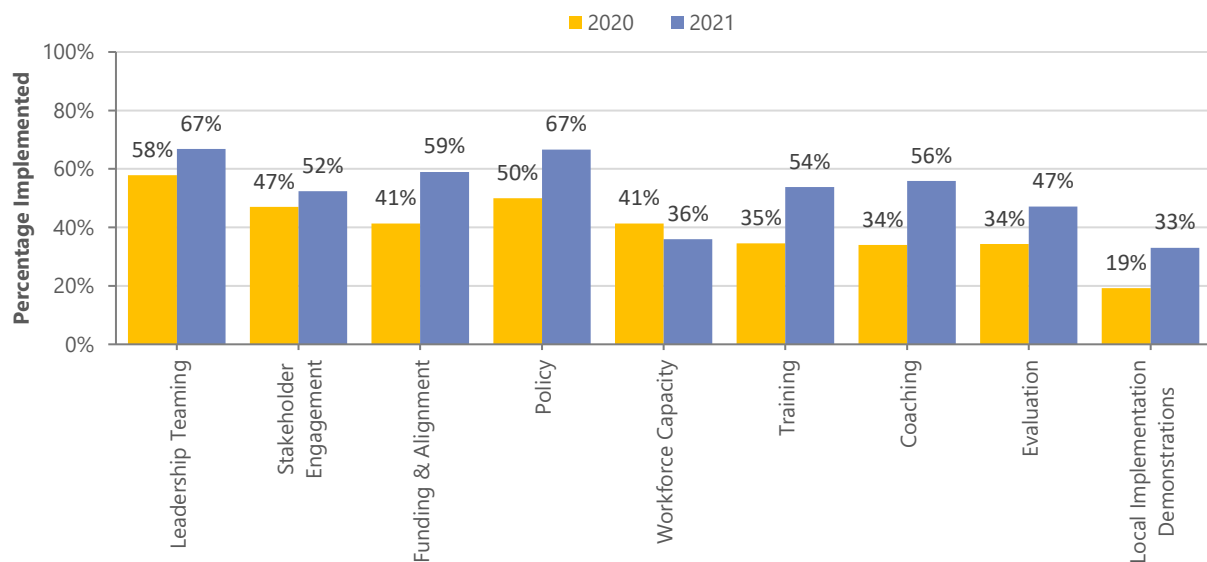
- **During the 2020–21 school year, efforts were made to include opioid abuse prevention strategies and practices into the tiered model of training that schools receive through this project.** A baseline assessment was sent to each school district to identify which LEAs were engaged in opioid abuse prevention and what programs each was using. This baseline will help to inform future efforts in the important topic area.
- **The Nevada MTSS project supported district and school efforts in adopting restorative practices and Youth Mental Health First strategies.** State capacity was built through having the MTSS Regional Coordinators become certified trainers for Youth Mental Health First Aid. Additionally, all MTSS Regional Coordinators received certifications in Restorative Practices so that national expertise could be shared at the local level as schools continue to build out their restorative discipline plans.
- **In 2020–21, the MTSS project collaborated with the State's School Safety Team to bring an MTSS approach to schools' safety preventative and responsive components.** This team met bi-weekly and was responsible for continuously analyzing statewide "tip" reports from the SafeVoice anonymous tip line for level, trend, tip types, and school responses. Leveraging this data-based decision-making structure, the team developed resources for rising tip types (for example, self-injurious behavior, targeted school attack, and bullying). Additionally, the project trained district liaisons from all school districts in Nevada to leverage their SafeVoice "tip" data to inform and refine their districtwide MTSS systems and prevention/intervention programming.
- **The MTSS and Project AWARE initiatives developed a formal partnership to align statewide initiatives.** In 2020–21, the MTSS project strengthened its partnership with Nevada's Project AWARE to enhance behavioral health and clinical services that students can access utilizing an Interconnected Systems Framework model. In addition to supporting the state team with the installation and evaluation of mental health services within MTSS, the project has directly supported the district leadership teams, project managers, and implementation sites with coaching, training, and evaluation.
- **As the pandemic continues to surge, the MTSS Project has been flexible with meeting the preferences and needs of our LEA and school teams.** For example, in 2020—21, the project provided both in-person and virtual training and coaching opportunities to capture as many trainees as possible during these trying times.
- **Carson City School District and Pyramid Lake Schools joined the MTSS initiative.** Towards the end of the 2020–21 school year, the MTSS project formally partnered with two new LEAs. Both Carson City and Pyramid Lake began formal DLT activities in their respective LEAs and are currently rolling out Tier 1 to several schools.

District and School Outcomes

- **Participating districts have shown important gains in their implementation fidelity, reporting improvements in every area assessed through the DSFI.**

In 2021, participating districts were asked to complete their second District Systems Fidelity Inventory (DSFI) assessment to determine their capacity for MTSS and areas of improvement. With support from Nevada MTSS coaches, districts then created action plans from the areas targeted for growth. As shown in Figure 10, districts completing both administrations of the DSFI (N=6) experienced important gains in all key areas. Districts scored highest in Leadership Teaming and Policy; the lowest-rated results were Workforce Capacity and Local Implementation Demonstrations. Note: Two LEAs were unable to administer the DSFI during the 2021 school year so their data were excluded from Figure 10.

Figure 10. Results from the District Systems Fidelity Inventory (DSFI)

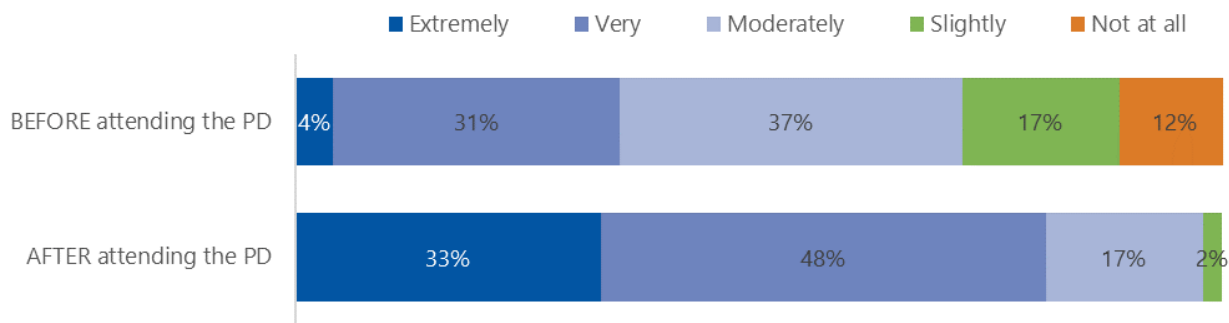


- **The MTSS project helped build local and regional capacity for MTSS implementation through coach training and support. Coaches reported considerable gains in their knowledge and skills as a result of the trainings.**

Coaching is a critical component of MTSS implementation. The Nevada MTSS project has built a statewide coaching hierarchy that is building local MTSS implementation capacity with support at the district, community, and state levels. This included state-level coordinators, external coaches at the district level, and internal coaches at the school level. As of the 2020–21 school year, districts supported 19 external coaches. These coaches were integral to the implementation of MTSS statewide. External coaches received training from the Nevada PBIS TA Center State Coordinators throughout the year and turnkeyed that training to their districts. Evaluation results show that coaches have improved their competencies and skills due to their support. Specifically, the percentage of coaches who were *very to extremely knowledgeable* about the PD content increased from 35% before the training to 81% after the training.

Figure 11. Impact of MTSS Training on Coach Knowledge

How knowledgeable were you about the topic covered in the PD BEFORE/AFTER the PD?



- Participating districts and schools have continued to build their capacity to implement MTSS and reported positive changes in their MTSS practices.

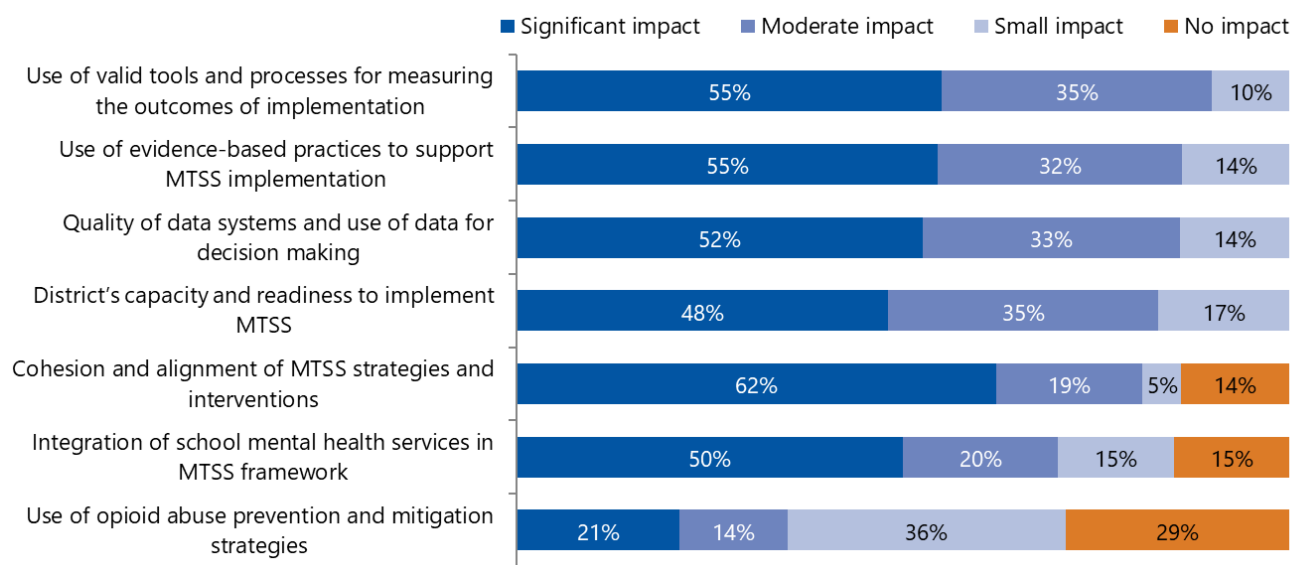
All respondents completing the 2021 DLT survey reported that the MTSS project positively impacted key outcomes (Figure 12). Most notably, most respondents reported a *moderate to large* impact on using valid tools and processes (90%) and evidence-based practices to support MTSS implementation (86%). They also indicated the same for the quality of data systems and use of data for decision making (86%) and district capacity and readiness to implement MTSS (85%). Integrating mental health services in MTSS and using opioid abuse prevention and mitigation strategies were rated the lowest and remain a priority area moving forward.

We are starting to have a common focus, mission and vision. It's great to be on the same page!

We continue to get higher levels of implementation each year. We have schools where staff involvement is increasing by leaps and bounds. Students are obviously impacted in a positive way through this.

– DLT Members

Figure 12. Impact of the MTSS Project on District Capacity and Practices (2021 DLT Survey)



- Although still a priority area, in 2020-21, the **project delivered 15 technical assistance events to assist LEAs who implement, or plan to implement, approaches that address opioid abuse prevention and mitigation**. These included Tier 1 and 2 trainings and inventories with each district planning to assess and facilitate discussions around substance abuse prevention or mitigation efforts. Over the course of the grant, four school districts have implemented strategies in this area: Pershing adopted the Second Step and Botvin Life Skills curricula, Clark implemented a substance abuse program in High Schools; Pyramid Lake Schools adopted a drug treatment program delivered by a qualified mental health professional; and Churchill partnered with the Community Coalition.

DLT respondents were also asked to reflect on their most significant accomplishments, as well as the challenges they have experienced in the past year. Results are summarized in the table below.

Table 3. District/School Successes and Challenges

Successes	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Greater implementation of MTSS strategies, particularly around Tier 1 ✓ Using data to drive decisions ✓ Creating district action plan ✓ Identifying priority areas ✓ Having a “common focus, mission, and vision” ✓ Increasing student engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inconsistent DLT meetings ✓ Lack of leadership ✓ Principal and staff buy-in ✓ Staff turnover ✓ Aligning ICAT and MTSS programs ✓ Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic ✓ Budget crisis/constraints

- The MTSS initiative has built school capacity; administrators and educators participating in the training reported considerable gains in content knowledge.**

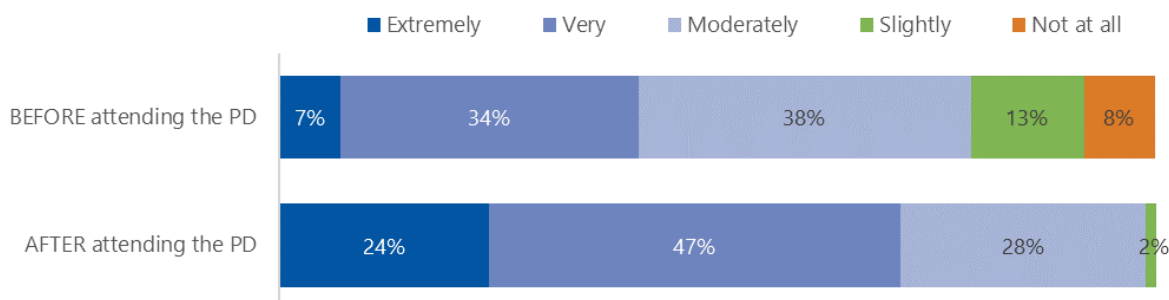
In 2020–21, educators and administrators attending MTSS trainings completed 1,007 training evaluations and reported gains in their content knowledge (Figure 13). Specifically, the percentage of administrators and educators who were *very to extremely knowledgeable* increased from 41% before the training to 71% after the training.

94%

of school staff said they will change the way they do their job as a result of the techniques they learned.

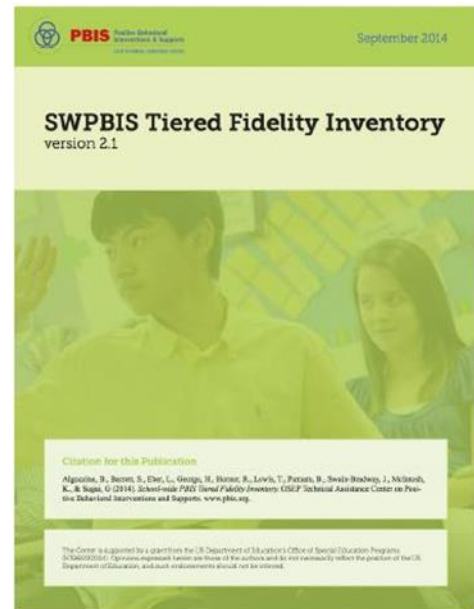
Figure 13. Impact of MTSS Trainings on School Staff Knowledge

How knowledgeable were you about the topic covered in the PD BEFORE/AFTER the PD?



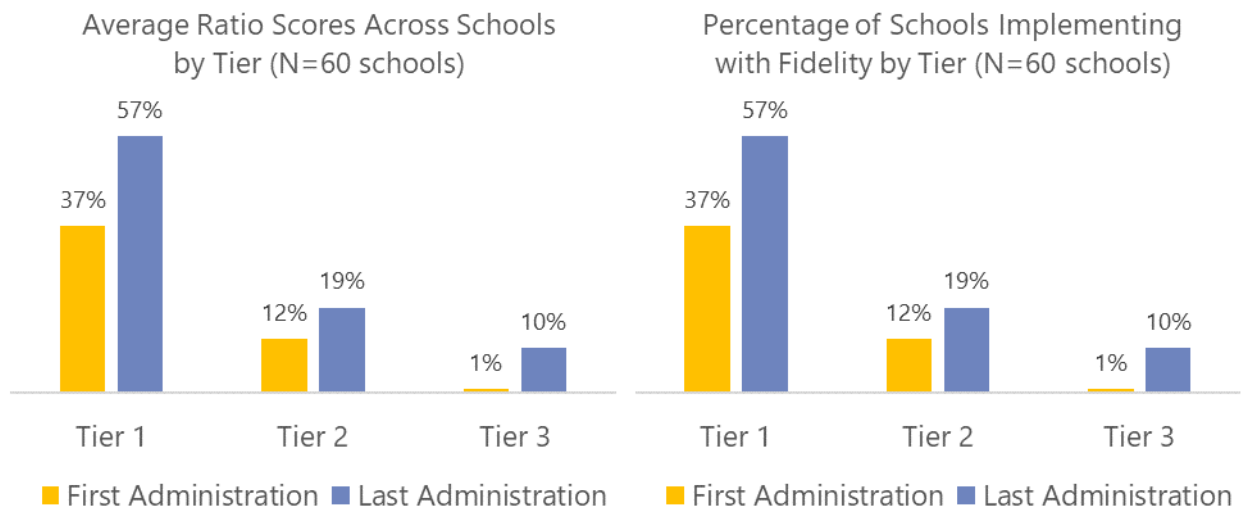
- **The 2020-21 evaluation results also show that participating schools achieved important gains in their Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) scores, thus reflecting systemic improvements to provide better student support.** As part of the MTSS initiative, participating schools must complete the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) to assess implementation fidelity. The TFI measures the extent to which the critical MTSS components are in place in a school.

- ✓ At Tier 1, the TFI assesses team composition and meeting effectiveness, consistent universal practices, including teaching school-wide expectations, acknowledgment systems for recognizing good behavior, structured discipline systems that emphasize proactive and instructional consequences, staff and community involvement in the Tier 1 systems, the use of data to evaluate Tier 1 practices, and more.
- ✓ At Tier 2, the TFI assesses team composition and meeting effectiveness, systems to identify students who may benefit from Tier 2 services, the availability and usage of Tier 2 services, the use of data to evaluate Tier 2 practices, and more.
- ✓ At Tier 3, the TFI assesses team composition and meeting effectiveness, systems to identify students who may benefit from Tier 3 services, the adequacy of Tier 3 behavior plans, the use of data to evaluate Tier 2 practices, and more.



As shown in Figure 14, participating schools have demonstrated significant gains in MTSS/PBIS implementation; over the course of the grant, the percentage of schools implementing with fidelity increased from 15% to 80% for Tier 1, 0% to 28% for Tier 3, and 0% to 12% for Tier 3. Similarly, average ratio scores also increased over the same period across all dimensions.

Figure 14. Fidelity of Implementation (TFI Results)



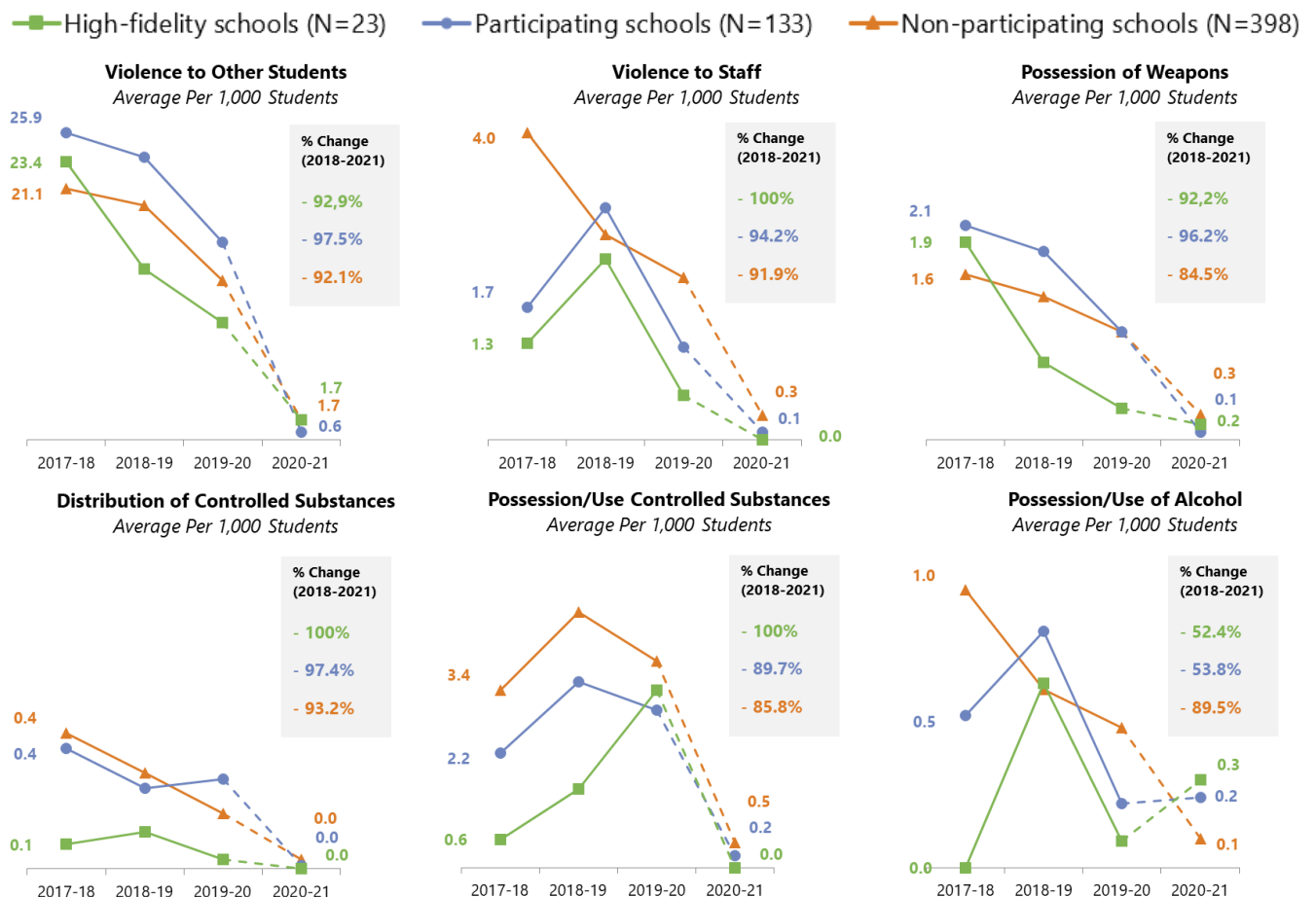
Student Outcomes

The evaluation team obtained discipline, attendance, and dropout data from the Nevada state report cards. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting school closures, data for the 2019–20 and 2020–21 school years should be interpreted with caution. It may be inaccurate, incomplete, or non-comparable to prior years. Furthermore, other reporting requirements, such as state assessments and chronic absenteeism rates, were waived and not reported for this school year.

School Discipline and Behaviors

Results for the last four years show positive trends (i.e., declines in discipline incidences) among all Nevada schools, probably partly due to the pandemic school closures. Importantly, when looking at violence, weapons possession, controlled substances, and alcohol, the results showed that participating schools, and particularly those that maintained Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 fidelity for three consecutive years (referred to here as “high-fidelity schools”), typically had fewer incidences in 2020–21 and experienced sharper declines in the number of incidences than did the non-participating schools (Figure 15).

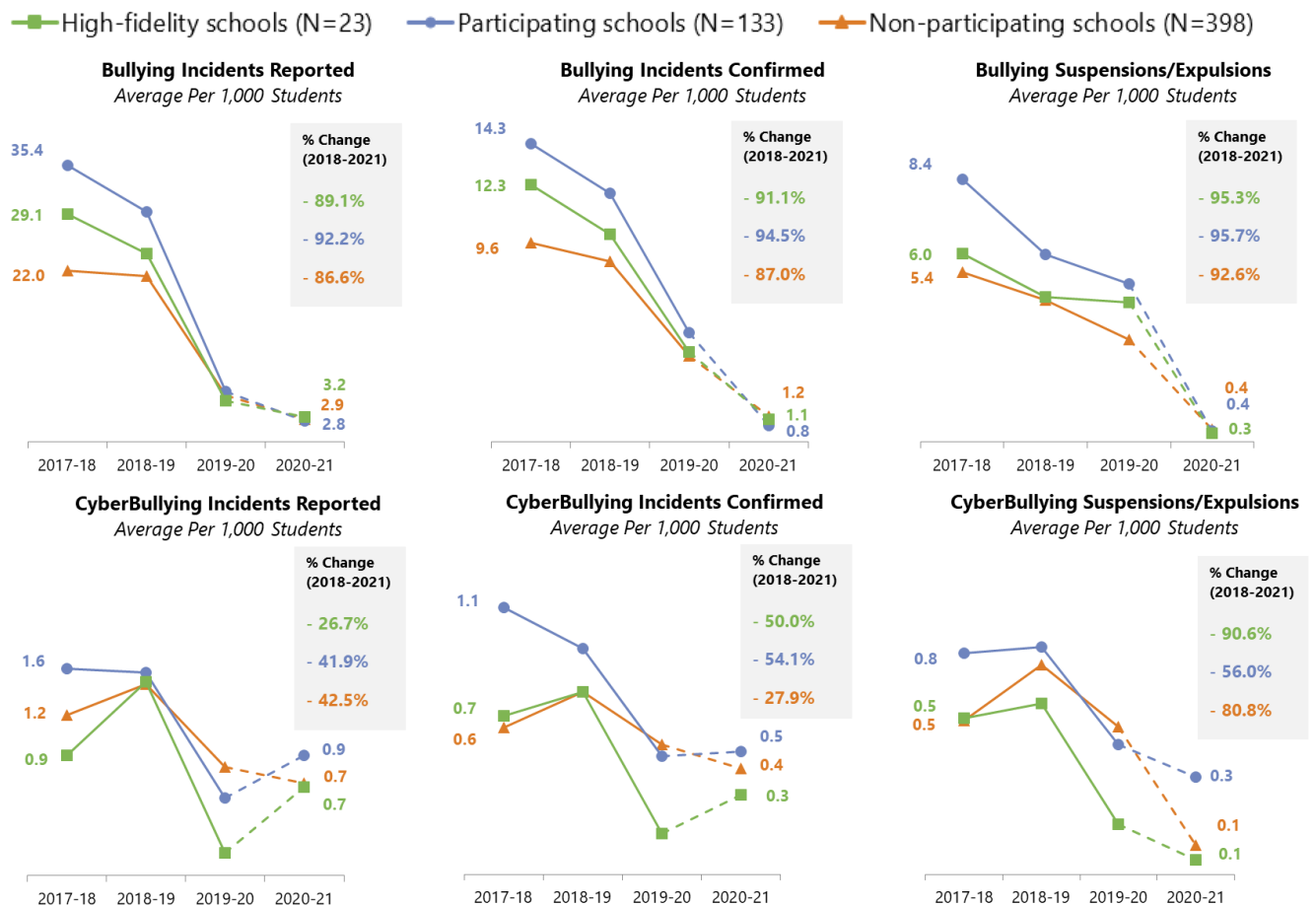
Figure 15. Trends in Disciplinary Incidents Related to Violence and Possession (State Report Card Data)



--- Outcomes for 2020-21 may have been drastically impacted by pandemic disruptions and the fact that almost all Nevada schools were virtual or had a virtual option in 2020-21.

Similarly, results for the last four years show positive trends (i.e., declines) regarding bullying and cyberbullying. When looking at bullying incidents, results show that schools that participated in the MTSS initiative had lower incidences in 2020-21 and experienced sharper declines in the number of incidences than non-participating schools. When looking at cyberbullying, data shows a slight increase over the last two years among participating schools in the number of incidents reported and, of those, the number confirmed after initial investigation; however, the number of suspensions or expulsions for cyberbullying declined over the same time. Participating schools and, among those, schools that maintained fidelity for three years in a row experienced larger declines in the number of incidents confirmed.

Figure 16. Trends in Disciplinary Incidents Related to Bullying (State Report Card Data)

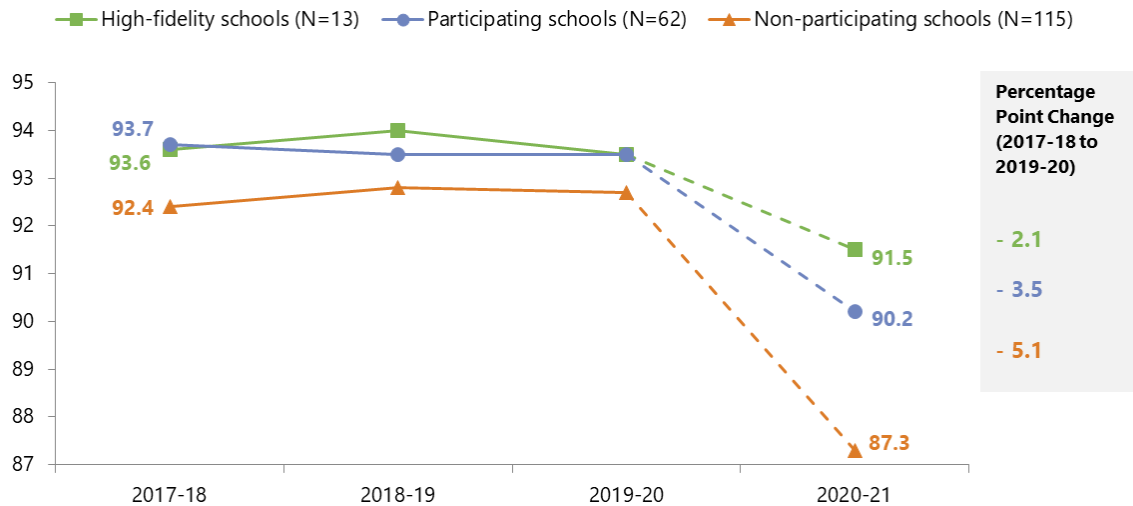


--- Outcomes for 2020-21 may have been drastically impacted by pandemic disruptions and the fact that almost all Nevada schools were virtual or had a virtual option in 2020-21.

• School Attendance

Over the last two years, average daily attendance declined considerably across Nevada schools, most certainly due to the disruptions and hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as shown in Figure 17, schools that participated in the MTSS initiative had smaller declines than non-participating schools. And within participating schools, high-fidelity schools experienced the smallest declines.

Figure 17. Trends in Average Daily Attendance (Nevada State Report Card Data)



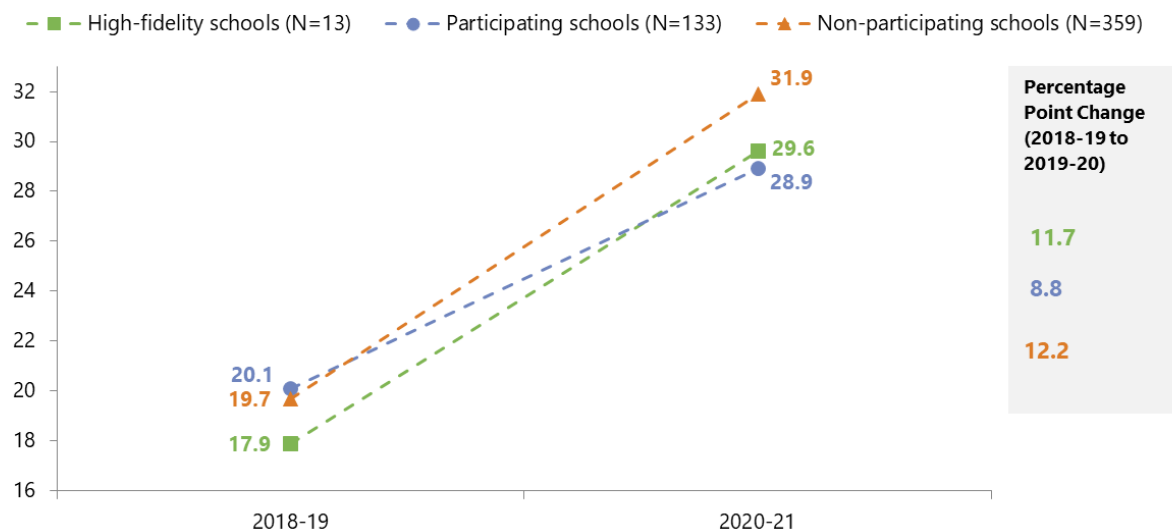
*Note: Schools that had suppressed data (where ADA >95.0) were not included in the analyses.

----- Outcomes for 2020-21 may have been drastically impacted by pandemic disruptions and the fact that almost all Nevada schools were virtual or had a virtual option in 2020-21.

Chronic Absenteeism Rates

Nevada state report card data on dropout rates were available for a subset of schools for 2018-19 and 2020-21. As shown in Figure 18, Nevada schools experienced considerable increases in chronic absenteeism rates across the board. Similar to average attendance data, schools that participated in the MTSS initiative had smaller increases in absenteeism rates than non-participating schools and schools statewide.

Figure 18. Trends in Chronic Absenteeism Rates (Nevada State Report Card Data)

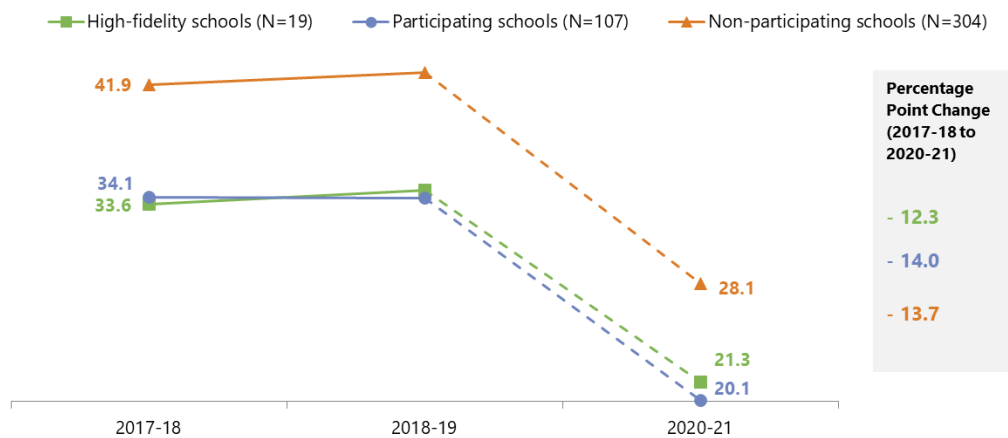


----- Outcomes for 2020-21 may have been drastically impacted by pandemic disruptions and the fact that almost all Nevada schools were virtual or had a virtual option in 2020-21.

- Mathematics and ELA Performance

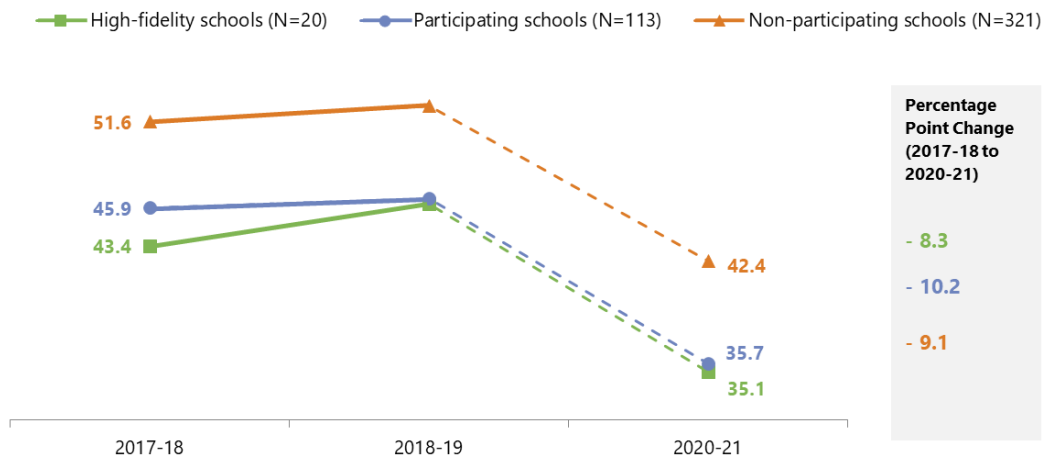
Data on students' performance on the Grades 3-8 mathematics and ELA state tests were collected and analyzed. Test requirements were waved in 2019-20, therefore data are not presented for that year. As shown in Figures 19 and 20, there were important declines in proficiency rates across the board including schools that participated in MTSS in 2020-21, schools that never participated, and participating schools that have maintained Tier1, 2, or 3 fidelity for at least 3 years. However, results indicate that high-fidelity schools outperformed other schools, showing smaller declines in proficiency rates for both mathematics and ELA. When considering the discrepancies in proficiency rates, it is important to consider the tendency for LEAs to prioritize relatively lower performing schools to access support through the Nevada MTSS Project. However, the lesser change for implementing and high-fidelity implementing sites in percentage points across both math and ELA proficiency during this past school year may be indicative of more stable systems.

Figure 19. Weighted Math Proficiency Rates (Nevada State Report Card Data)



--- Outcomes for 2020-21 may have been drastically impacted by pandemic disruptions and the fact that almost all Nevada schools were virtual or had a virtual option in 2020-21.

Figure 20. Weighted ELA Proficiency Rates (Nevada State Report Card Data)



--- Outcomes for 2020-21 may have been drastically impacted by pandemic disruptions and the fact that almost all Nevada schools were virtual or had a virtual option in 2020-21.

Moving Forward

In 2020–21, the Nevada MTSS project completed its third year of the five-year grant cycle. Despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project continued to offer a robust menu of trainings and coaching supports to 149 schools in ten participating districts. Results from the annual evaluation indicate the project has played a key role in building state, regional, and local capacity to implement an MTSS framework.

State capacity to support MTSS implementation has continued to increase, with considerable gains in Leadership Teaming, Policy, and Workforce Capacity. Other statewide successes were: inclusion of opioid abuse prevention strategies and practices into the tiered model of training; training for state coaches on restorative practices and Youth Mental Health First strategies; further collaboration with the State's School Safety Team to bring an MTSS approach to the preventative and responsive components of school safety; and alignment of statewide initiatives such as MTSS and Project AWARE.

Participating districts demonstrated important gains in all key areas assessed in the District Systems Fidelity Inventory, and most notably in the areas of Leadership Teaming and Policy. Furthermore, coaches and district and school staff reported substantial increases in content knowledge on topics covered during the trainings. In the spring, all DLT members reported that the Nevada MTSS Project has positively impacted their district and schools' readiness and capacity to implement MTSS, their use of evidence-based practices, and their data systems, tools, and processes.

When looking at trends over the last few years in student outcomes, results show that participating schools outperformed non-participating schools in most instances. This was true for average daily attendance, chronic absenteeism, and disciplinary incidents related to violence, possession or use of substances and alcohol, and bullying. When looking at proficiency rates in ELA and mathematics, results show that high-fidelity implementing schools outperformed other schools by showing smaller declines.

The following are a number of recommendations stemming from feedback and data collected through the evaluation:

- Continue to adapt training and TA offerings to meet the districts' and schools' evolving needs, both in terms of content and format (in-person, virtual, or hybrid programming);
- Differentiate coaching support to advance implementation in the areas rated lowest in the State Systems Fidelity Inventory, including Stakeholder Engagement, Alignment and Funding, and Evaluation; and,
- Further support districts and schools in their efforts to integrate academics and mental health services in MTSS and use opioid abuse prevention and mitigation strategies; possibly identify demonstration sites in districts that are implementing promising practices in these and other areas.
- Leverage sources of sustainable funding to provide ongoing training and technical assistance in systems change to Nevada LEAs and school sites.