



BEST

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



College of Education and Social Services
Center on Disability and Community Inclusion



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Introduction

The [Building Effective Supports for Teaching \(BEST\) Project](#) reports three times a year. This Annual Report captures the full scope of activities from the 2024-2025 school year (July 2024-June 2025) and includes an Action Plan for Sustainability for the 2025-2026 school year. The plan builds upon current efforts while laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability.

During the 2024-2025 school year, the BEST Project was funded by the [Agency of Education \(AOE\)](#) and supported by the [Center on Disability and Community Inclusion \(CDCI\)](#) at the [University of Vermont \(UVM\)](#). The Project also was awarded contracts from the [Department of Mental Health](#) and [Pyramid Model Consortium](#).

This report includes the following initiatives: [VT Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports \(VTPBIS\)](#), [Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in](#)

[Education \(Project AWARE\)](#), and [Early MTSS/Pyramid Model](#). Through these projects, we continued to expand training, technical assistance, and resources to address the growing social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) learning needs, as well as the well-being and mental health of Vermont students, educators, and families/caregivers.

The BEST Project remains committed to supporting schools in strengthening and transforming their systems, data, and practices so that learning environments lead to positive academic and behavioral outcomes for every student. This report highlights our projects' **reach**, details our **process** of implementation and efforts to build **capacity**, monitors **fidelity** of implementation, and documents **outcomes**. The report incorporates the following quantitative and qualitative data as part of the annual evaluation of implementation efforts.



Process

To measure the **reach** of the BEST Project in Vermont, we report on:

- Number of schools implementing or exploring PBIS
- Online presence

To evaluate our **process** of training schools in Vermont, we report on:

- Number of trainings offered by the BEST Project
- Number of training participants
- Training satisfaction rates
- Qualitative feedback provided by training attendees

To evaluate our **capacity**, we report on:

- Number of BEST TA Providers, Coaches, and Trainers
- Number of schools that have connected with a coach
- Special projects and grants the BEST Project works on

To evaluate the **fidelity** to the PBIS implementation process:

- The measures that schools are required to complete annually, are:
 - Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)
 - Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) and/or School Climate Survey (SCS)

To evaluate **outcomes** we report on:

- Student Behavior Observation and Data Forms (BODFs)
- Out-of-School and In-School Suspension Rates
- Bullying Rates
- School Climate Survey (SCS)
- Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)
- School Acknowledgments



Results

The BEST Project continues to partner with hundreds of Vermont schools, community organizations, and colleagues from state agencies as they navigate persistent challenges related to staff shortages, rising student behavioral and mental health needs, and financial pressures.

We provide timely, relevant technical assistance, coaching, professional learning opportunities, and resources, while staying mindful of and responsive to the daily realities educators experience.

Results in this section reflect five categories of evaluation:

REACH

PROCESS

CAPACITY

FIDELITY

OUTCOMES

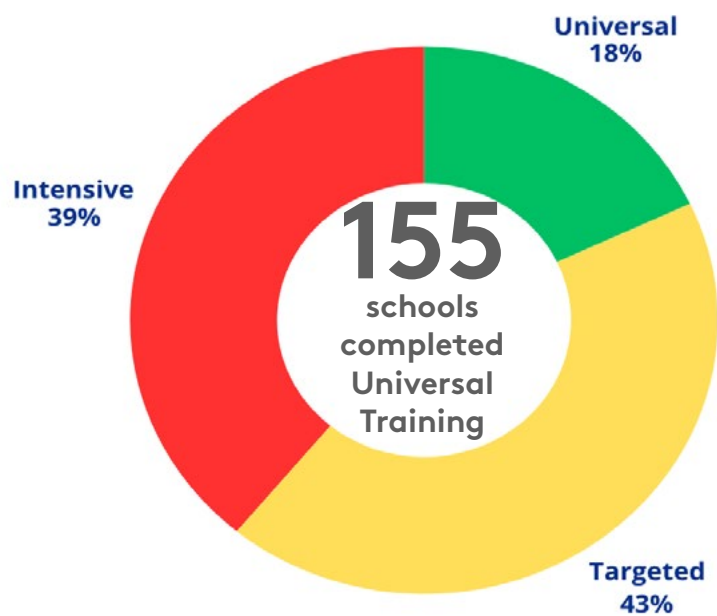
In the 2024-2025 school year, the BEST Project supported [155 schools](#) to implement PBIS with the shared goal of achieving social, emotional, behavioral, and academic success for every student.

This year, the BEST Project offered VTPBIS Core Trainings in March and at the BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute in June. Through these professional learning opportunities, two new schools were trained at the Universal Level, eight schools participated in Refreshing, Enhancing, and Deepening Universal PBIS, and eight schools advanced their skills through training in Expanding and Enhancing Targeted Level Interventions. Six new schools are currently exploring PBIS implementation.

All VTPBIS schools begin their implementation journey with Universal training, which equips them with systems, data, and practices to support all students. When schools demonstrate fidelity of implementation at this level, they may choose to strengthen their systems, data, and practices further by being trained at the Targeted and Intensive level to address the needs of students requiring additional support.

Since the implementation of PBIS in VT, 155 schools have maintained implementation of PBIS at the Universal Level. Of these schools, 43% have progressed to the Targeted Level, and 39% have received training to implement individualized interventions at the Intensive Level (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Schools by Level of Implementation



Online Presence

The BEST Project reached a wide audience through its websites, twice-monthly newsletter, *BEST Project Updates*, as well as monthly communications specifically designed for School/SU/SD VTPBIS Coordinators and Administrators, titled *VTPBIS Connections*.



Above, PBISVermont.org.

At left, go.uvm.edu/thebestproject

**2024-
2025:**



of
email
subscribers:
1,915



of *BEST Project
Updates* sent:
33

of *VTPBIS
Monthly
Connections*
sent:
12



of website
visitors:

10,373

of website
views:

30,415

REACH

PROCESS

Over the past year, BEST Project activities have aligned with the objectives outlined in the SY 25 Action Plan for Sustainability. Below, we highlight the specific goals and action steps carried out during the 2024–2025 school year.

GOAL 1: Form an overarching team that encompasses the BEST Project/VTPBIS, along with other projects the team participates in.

This year, the BEST Project partnered with strategic planning facilitator Jon Kidde to lead a thoughtful and inclusive process to shape the future direction of our work. A key focus was to engage partners meaningfully and ensure their voices guided decisions about our organizational identity and priorities.

To inform this effort, we conducted 38 interviews with individuals representing 23 organizations, gathering valuable insights from a diverse range of perspectives. We also distributed a fieldwide survey, which provided additional feedback from educators across Vermont. Together, these conversations and survey findings provided a strong foundation for decision-making.

Building on this input, the team reviewed our organizational identity, including the project's name, logo, mission, vision, and values. We confirmed that our overarching initiative will continue to be known as the BEST Project, maintaining the strong recognition it holds across the state. We also began exploring updates to our logo to reflect a refreshed vision. As a result of this process, the team adopted new foundational statements to guide our work:

BEST Project:

Vision: All learning communities in Vermont will foster a deep sense of belonging, safety, and well-being, ensuring everyone feels supported, valued, and empowered to thrive.

Mission: We collaborate with Vermont's learning communities to build sustainable systems that result in equitable social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for all. We provide high-quality learning opportunities, coaching, consultation, technical assistance, and resources to promote inclusive and engaging learning environments.

Values:

Inclusive Excellence – Ensure that everyone has access to and can participate in equitable opportunities with the support they need.

Collaboration – Build partnerships among schools, families, caregivers, and communities.

Well-Being – Promote evidence-informed practices to create joyful and compassionate learning environments for all.

Innovation – Embrace change by using data, feedback, and reflection to develop creative, strengths-based solutions.

To further strengthen our organizational structure, the team committed to completing a “Working Smarter, Not Harder” matrix to examine our purpose, membership, and goals. This step will help ensure efficiency, clear roles, and adequate representation across the project.

The work undertaken this year has laid a strong foundation for the future. Insights gained from our partners and the field will continue to guide our decisions as we move into the next action plan, keeping our focus on building inclusive, collaborative, and data-informed systems that support and serve all Vermont learning communities.

Figure 2: Responses from the field to the question: “What does the BEST Project do?”



GOAL 2: Develop a 3-year plan for improving the fidelity of PBIS implementation in Vermont schools.

In this first year, our goal was to determine the current levels of fidelity of implementation across VTPBIS schools and identify areas for both improvement and celebration. Our efforts focused on increasing the use of the [Tiered Fidelity Inventory \(TFI\)](#), preparing for the roll-out of the [new TFI 3.0](#), and enhancing recognition for schools demonstrating high-quality implementation.

This year, the BEST Project built a stronger foundation for measuring and supporting fidelity of PBIS implementation statewide. A key element of this work involved preparing for the roll-out of the new TFI 3.0, which places a stronger emphasis on classroom implementation, mental health integration, equity, and elevating family/caregiver and student voice. The team designated this year as a planning phase, with the statewide roll-out of the TFI 3.0 scheduled for November 2025.

To prepare for this transition, seven schools piloted the use of the TFI 3.0, providing valuable early insights into the revised tool's functionality and impact. These pilot experiences will inform training, resources, and supports for all schools statewide as they adopt the TFI 3.0. We plan to have TAs, coaches, and SU/SD VTPBIS Coordinators support facilitation of the TFI 3.0 as schools

complete the new assessment for the first time.

A goal for the year was to increase the percentage of VTPBIS schools completing the TFI from 67% to 80%. While we maintained the previous year's participation rate of 67%, this stability reflects continued engagement in fidelity assessment during a year of transition.

To further strengthen schools' ability to conduct fidelity assessments, technical assistance (TA) providers supported 18 schools in completing the TFI.

In parallel, the team revised and launched a new [VTPBIS Annual Acknowledgement System](#), offering schools a more streamlined and equitable way to be recognized for their implementation efforts. This updated process celebrates schools' achievements and provides motivation for continuous improvement.



Finally, to highlight exemplary practices and provide real-world models of success, ten schools were recognized as VTPBIS Gold-Level Schools. These schools represent elementary, K–8, middle, and high school levels, demonstrating that high-fidelity PBIS implementation is achievable across diverse educational contexts. See the Student Outcomes section on page 24 to learn more about the impact PBIS is having on students, families/caregivers, and educators in bronze-, silver-, and gold-level schools.

GOAL 3: Develop a plan for measuring and assess- ing outcomes of PBIS implementation.

This year, the BEST Project began laying the groundwork for a comprehensive approach to measuring and assessing the outcomes of PBIS implementation. Recognizing the importance of evidence-based decision-making, the team sought to learn from other states with similar demographics and contexts.

In partnership with the [University of Vermont's College of Education and Social Services](#), the BEST Project collaborated with doctoral students in the Research-Practice Partnership course to research how rural states are measuring social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes. This work provided insights into the tools and strategies being used elsewhere, helping to shape our thinking about what meaningful measurement could look like in Vermont. The findings will inform the development of Vermont's approach, ensuring that our outcome measures reflect the needs of local schools while aligning with best practices nationally. Building on this research, the team began identifying priority outcomes to measure, including:

- Student engagement and attendance
- School climate (as experienced by students, staff, and families/ caregivers)
- Academic achievement

- Exclusionary discipline (behavioral office discipline forms, in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions)
- Seclusion and restraint
- Bullying incidents

This work is in progress, as the team continues to refine the indicators and select appropriate tools for data collection and reporting.

The revised VTPBIS Annual Acknowledgment system played a critical role in this effort. By recognizing schools that implement PBIS at varying levels of fidelity, the BEST Project has created a valuable framework for identifying model sites. These model schools provide opportunities to compare outcomes across schools at different implementation levels, offering insights into the impact of fidelity on student and schoolwide outcomes.

Looking ahead, the data gathered through this new system will guide resource allocation and targeted supports, helping ensure that efforts are focused where they will have the greatest impact.



CAPACITY

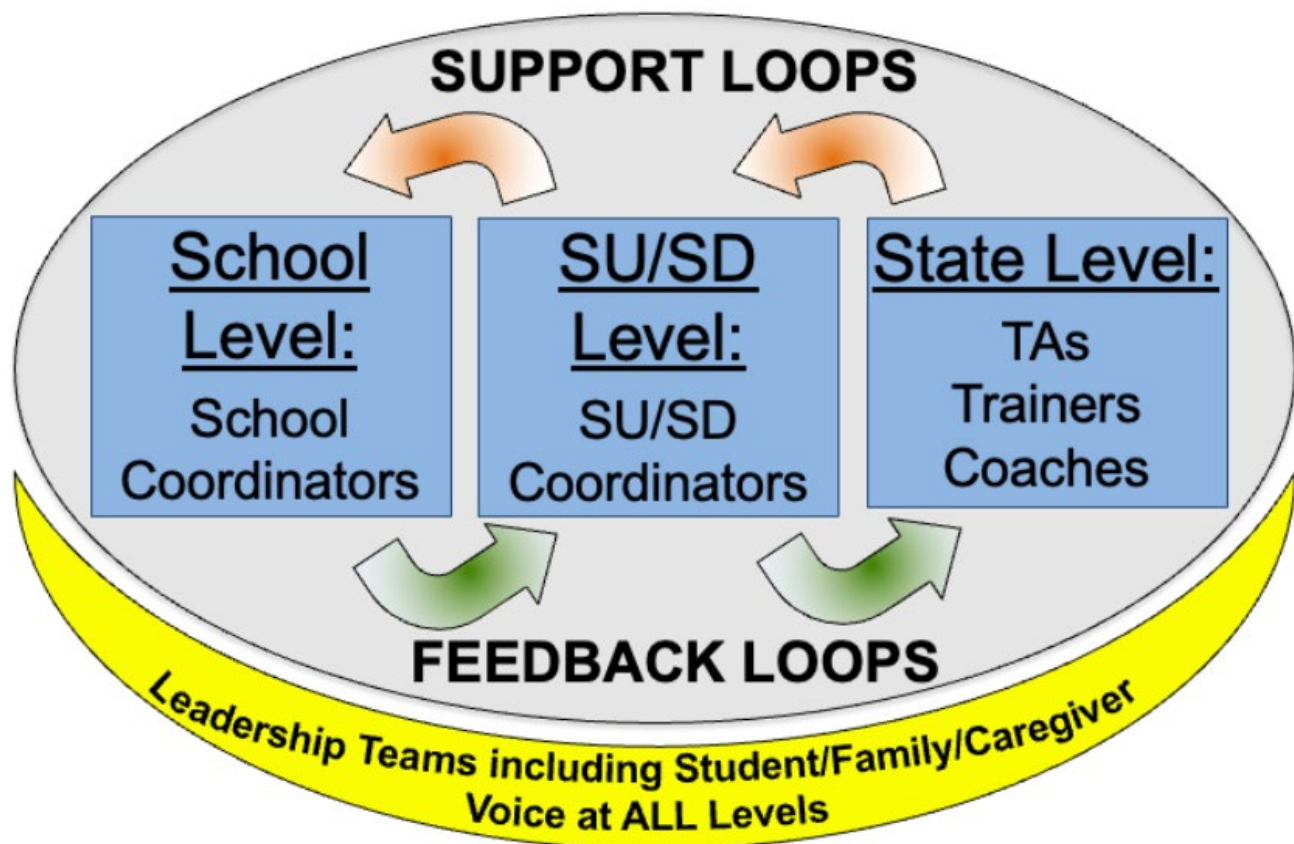
The BEST Project continues to refine and strengthen its system of support designed to build schools' capacity to implement PBIS with fidelity. The design (Figure 3) includes dynamic feedback loops that promote continuous improvement and sustainability at the school, SU/SD, and state level.

By fostering open communication and meaningful two-way feedback, the project aims to ensure that all perspectives inform decision-making and support efforts.

At the school level, [coordinators](#) share insights and feedback with their [SU/SD coordinators](#), who, in turn, communicate with [TA providers](#), trainers, and [coaches](#) at the state level.

These ongoing feedback loops guide state-level supports, which then flow back to SU/SD and school coordinators—strengthening the overall system and sustaining implementation efforts.

Figure 3: VTPBIS Systems of Support



Technical Assistance, Coaching, and Training

The BEST Project continues to strengthen and expand access to technical assistance (TA) and coaching, both on-site and virtually. VTPBIS TA Providers play a vital role in supporting schools and SUs/SDs as they explore, implement, and sustain PBIS with fidelity. Support is offered through technology and/or 1–2 in-person visits per year. Our five TA Providers also email a monthly newsletter to share timely information, resources, ideas, and updates—ensuring that schools, SU/SD Coordinators, and administrators receive the right support at the right time.

This year, TA Providers placed an increased focus on supporting schools with pre-training readiness activities, ensuring these steps were completed with fidelity and informed by input from students, staff, and families/caregivers. This approach fosters collective ownership and engagement. Additional areas of TA support included strengthening team infrastructure, providing data and evaluation guidance, addressing current PBIS updates, orienting new leaders and team members, refining systems, and supporting the adoption of evidence-based practices, among other topics.

When SUs/SDs or schools identify a need for deeper, sustained support, VTPBIS State-Approved Coaches are available to assist. In 2024–2025, [10 coaches](#) were available to provide targeted coaching to promote fidelity of PBIS practices and build local capacity for implementation.

Over the past year, nine VTPBIS schools engaged in coaching focused on topics such as reinvigoration, initiative alignment, function-based thinking, developing behavioral systems, and increasing fidelity of implementation at the Universal level.

Due to lower than desired use of coaching, the funding model will be revised for the 2025–2026 school year.

“Coaching definitely helped us achieve our PBIS goals this year. This is my third year working with [our coach], and each year she has been deeply insightful and supportive with building PBIS at [our school]. She responds quickly to email inquiries, provides in-person and remote support during team meetings, and conducts walk-throughs that provide direction for future planning and improvement. [Our coach] is also so kind and thoughtful in her approach. Her help is always appreciated.”



The BEST Project maintains a strong and experienced cohort of trainers whose expertise spans all tiers of the MTSS Framework—linking systems, data, and practices to promote social, emotional, and behavioral learning and well-being, with equity as a guiding principle.

Several trainers also bring specialized expertise in restorative and trauma-informed approaches, de-escalation, and their integration with PBIS. All trainers receive ongoing support to continuously refine and update their content.

To ensure the delivery of high-quality, relevant professional learning opportunities, the BEST Project engaged in a variety of activities this year:

- Held monthly meetings with TA Providers to review data, analyze current research, and identify strategies for gathering field input;
- Convened four State Leadership Team meetings with key partners to

strengthen equitable social, emotional, behavioral learning opportunities statewide and to share best practices with the field;

- Met with our cohort of coaches and trainers four times to build shared capacity and explore new professional learning content;
- Monitored legislative priorities and policy changes impacting SEB learning and mental health across Vermont.

BEST staff also participated in external professional learning opportunities, including presenting at the [Northeast PBIS Leadership Forum](#) in Groton, CT, alongside Jayme Gaudet, Colchester School District Social Emotional Learning Coordinator, on Enhancing and Expanding Targeted (Tier 2) Interventions, pictured below.

Additionally, BEST Project staff represented Vermont in the [Northeast PBIS Advisory Group](#) and the National State PBIS Leaders Network.



Learning Opportunities

22
trainings

906
participants

98%
Highly Satisfied/
Satisfied

This past year, new offerings included:



Tackling Absenteeism Through Student Engagement [Webinar](#)

4

[New strands at the BEST/
VTmtss Summer Institute:](#)

- *Strengthening Schools Through the Inclusive Skill-Building Approach*
- *Behavior Intervention Boot Camp*
- *Exploring Play*
- *Strengthening Your Continuous Improvement Planning*

[And many
new
workshops
at the
Institute!](#)

Each year, the BEST Project analyzes professional learning evaluation data, conducts learning needs assessments, and gathers direct feedback from educators about what they need to effectively support students, staff, and families/ caregivers. Using these insights, the BEST Project develops a comprehensive calendar of multi-modal learning opportunities tailored to meet their needs.

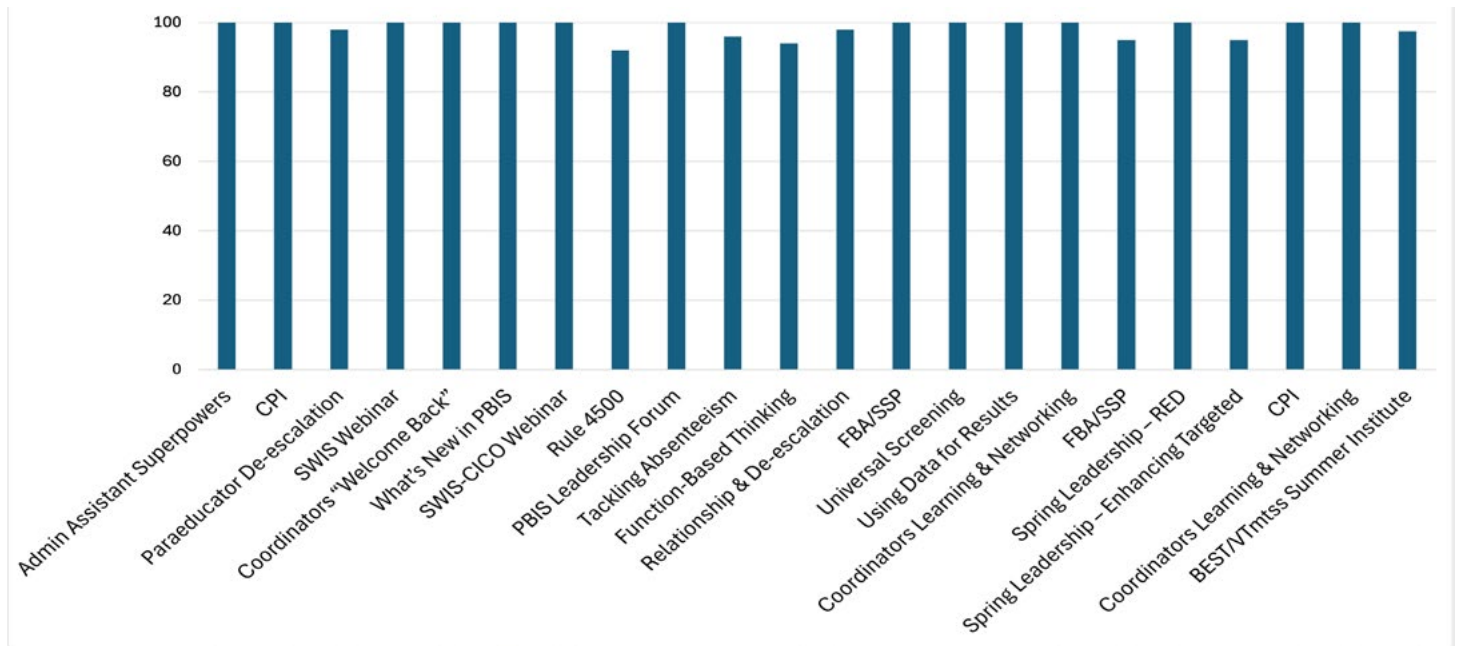
During the 2024–2025 school year, the BEST Project conducted 22 learning events across a range of topics, including building relationships, de-escalation strategies, and Functional-Behavioral Assessment. These offerings were designed to strengthen educators' capacity to create inclusive, supportive learning environments. **The graph below (Figure 4)** highlights the full list of training opportunities offered and the corresponding participant satisfaction rates, demonstrating the

Project's commitment to delivering high-quality, responsive professional learning experiences.

The Annual VTPBIS Forum is the keystone professional development event of the fall. This past year, over **131 participants** from **57 schools** attended the October event to share insights, collaborate with colleagues, and explore new ideas.

Gregg Stoller offered an insightful keynote address titled, *"Re-envisioning MTSS for Social, Emotional, Behavioral Learning: Creating Community within the PBIS Framework."* The Forum offered participants 18 workshop sessions on a variety of topics including Integrating Social Emotional Well-being into Early Learning Environments, The Restorative Leader: Role-Modeling for Your School Community, and Centering Equity within PBIS.

Figure 4: BEST Project Learning Opportunities: Percent Highly Satisfied and Satisfied



The BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute

The [BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute](#) is the most significant professional development event of the year, providing four days of learning and sharing of evidence-based practices within a VTmtss Framework. This year's theme was *"Shining Brighter Together: Igniting Passion, Well-being, and Joy in Education."*



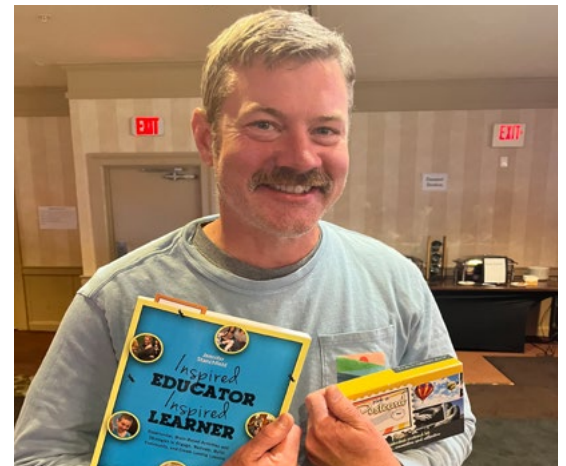
"We received information, strategies, tips, etc. that can be put to use immediately. We had opportunities to discuss with each other and ask for clarification. Several times during the week one or all of our team said, 'Oh! I could have used this in the past year!' I feel so much better equipped to connect with students and their families."

380

participants and
trainers

60

teams



CAPACITY

The BEST Project collects evaluation data on participants' perceptions of the Summer Institute's accessibility and the inclusion of content relevant to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Over the years, this data has shown a trend of increasing satisfaction.

Figure 5 illustrates how participants responded to the statement, "This training included relevant information on diversity, equity, and inclusion" using the scale Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

In SY21, 1% of participants responded Strongly Disagree, 2% Disagreed, 61% Agreed, and 36% Strongly Agreed.

In SY22, no one responded Strongly Disagree, 1% Disagreed, 47% Agreed, and 52% Strongly Agreed.

In SY23, 0.6% Strongly Disagreed, 0.6% Disagreed, 40% Agreed, and 59% Strongly Agreed.

In SY24, no one responded Strongly Disagree or Disagree, 45% Agreed, and 54% Strongly Agreed.

In SY25, 0.5% Strongly Disagreed, 1% Disagreed, 46% Agreed, and 53% Strongly Agreed.

Figure 5: Responses to: "The BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute included relevant information on diversity, equity and inclusion"

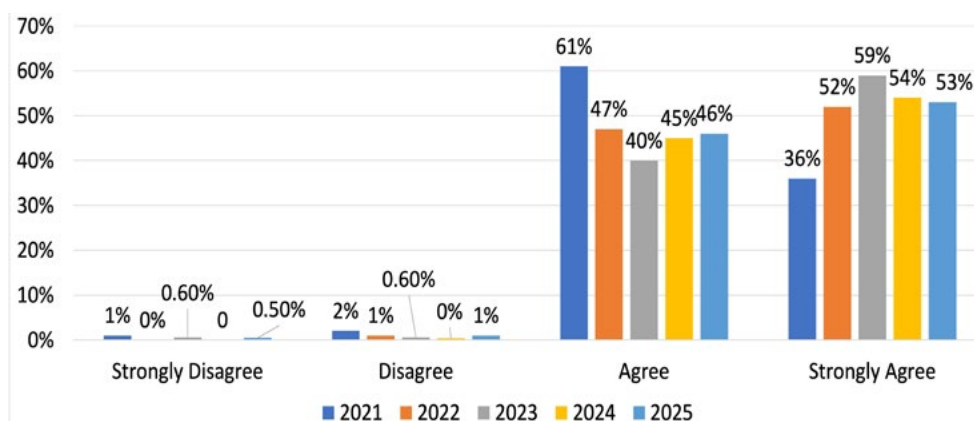


Figure 6: Responses to: "The BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute was accessible to me (e.g., able to access the material, able to request and receive accommodations, able to hear and/or understand the presenter)."

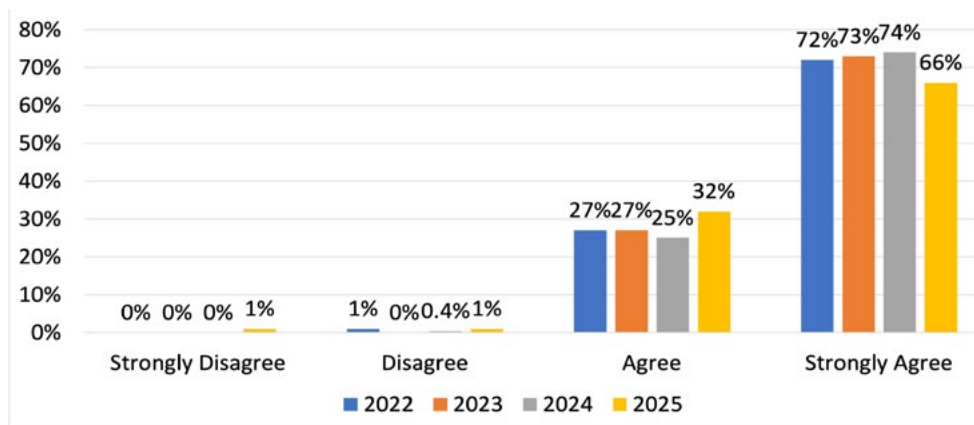


Figure 6 shows how participants responded to the statement, "This training was accessible to me," over four years, using the same scale.

In SY22, none of the participants responded Strongly Disagree, 1% responded Disagree, 27% responded Agree, and 72% responded Strongly Agree.

In SY23, no one responded Strongly Disagree or Disagree, 27% Agreed, and 73% Strongly Agreed.

In SY24, no one responded Strongly Disagree, 0.4% Disagreed, 25% Agreed, and 74% Strongly Agreed.

In SY25, 1% responded Strongly Disagree and Disagree, 32% Agreed, and 66% Strongly Agreed.

Feedback from BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute Participants

"I thought the strand was very well designed and executed. The material was succinct, relatable, digestible, and relevant to the goal our school has identified as an area of growth."

"I have been to BEST many years and I continue to love it! I find it informational, relevant to my teaching and refreshing."

"It is such a rarity to be able to have so much time with our team and we were able to do a lot of planning and have deep discussions about our school's policies, data, and how to improve."

"I loved the movement and the use of the strategies versus just talking about them. Using them in real-time and then discussing how to incorporate them into content was extremely rewarding!"

"This week of learning was rooted in connection, deep thinking and self reflection. I and my team are so appreciative!"

Additional Projects

The BEST Project continued to successfully secure grants that strengthen and expand its efforts. These funds enable the Project to provide technical assistance and coaching support while contributing to scale-up efforts, initiative alignment, and data-informed discussions.

Project AWARE

The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) grant, awarded to the Vermont Department of Mental Health, supports three Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Designated Mental Health agencies (DAs) in increasing awareness of mental health, improving access to support, and strengthening community teams and partnerships across education and mental health systems.

In February 2024, the BEST Project received a second round of grant funding from the Department of Mental Health to provide technical assistance, coaching, and training. Since then, BEST Project TAs have provided hundreds of hours of direct support to the three LEAs and DAs. BEST Co-Directors provide coordination and project management for the TA activities. In June of 2025, the three sites attended a Project AWARE strand at the BEST/VTmtss Summer Institute, led by national consultant Ami Flammini.



Early MTSS

Since 2022, Vermont has been working to revitalize the cross-sector scale-up of Early Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in public and private early childhood programs statewide. This effort includes Pyramid Model professional development, technical assistance, and coaching.

Lead by a representative State Leadership Team, the BEST Project partnered with the Agency of Education (AOE), the Child Development Division (CDD), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the national Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC), and local coaches. Funding came from the Vermont Integration Project: Building Integration in Vermont's B-5 Early Childhood Systems Preschool Development Grant (PDG) and the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG).

Educators and providers have enhanced their knowledge and skills to establish systems necessary for high-fidelity implementation of evidence-based practices that support young children's social and emotional wellness, competence, and confidence. This professional development is building capacity at the state, regional, and local levels to promote scale-up and ensure long-term sustainability.

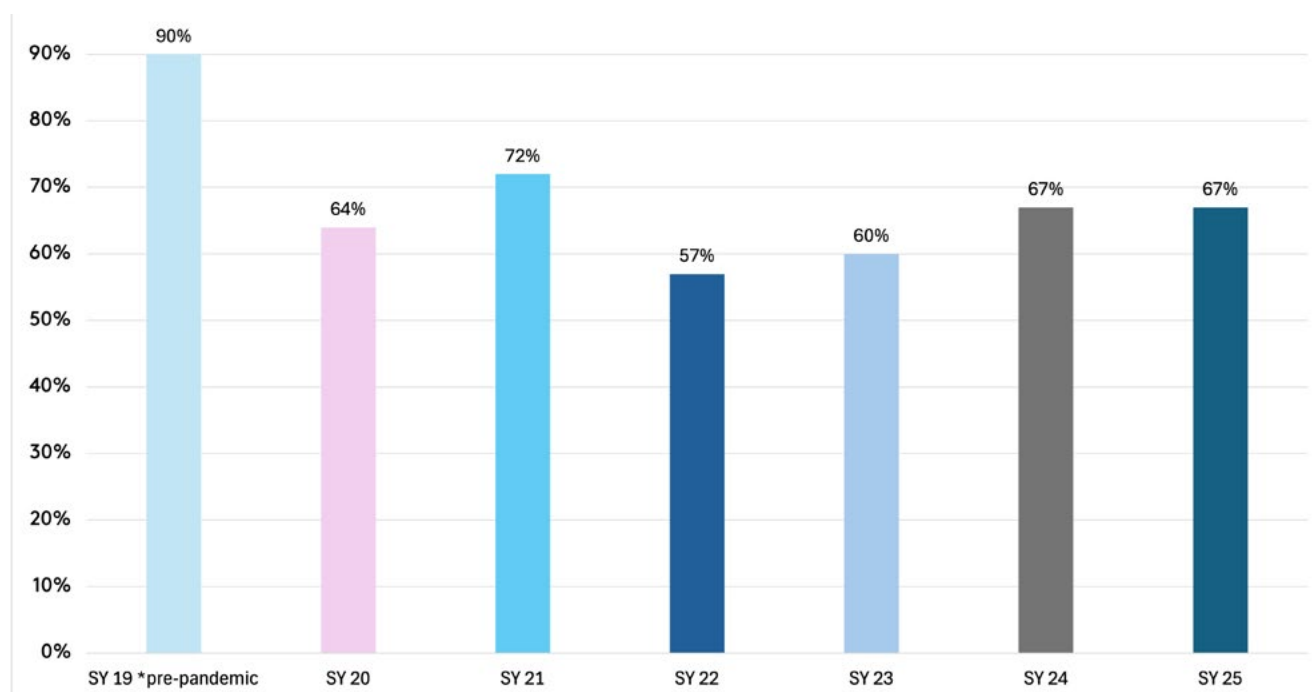


Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)

Each year, schools complete the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) to efficiently assess their PBIS implementation. The TFI enables school teams to measure fidelity at one, two, or all three tiers of PBIS implementation. Teams are expected to complete the TFI at each tier they are currently implementing.

Many schools report using the TFI not only as an assessment tool but also as a way to celebrate successes and identify next steps for improvement, guiding the development of comprehensive action plans. Of the 102 VTPBIS schools that completed the TFI this year, 76% met the fidelity benchmark (scoring 70% or higher on Tier I), an increase from 63% the previous year.

Figure 7: Tiered Fidelity Inventory Completion Rates



Before the pandemic (SY19), 90% of schools completed the TFI. Completion rates dropped to 64% in SY20, increased to 72% in SY21, and then declined to 57% in SY22. In SY23, 60% of VTPBIS schools completed Tier I of the TFI, and last year participation rose to 67%. This year, we sustained that level of engagement, with 67% of VTPBIS schools completing the TFI, maintaining steady progress toward our pre-pandemic benchmark.

Across schools completing the TFI, the highest-rated Tier I item ("fully in place") continued to be:

- **Behavioral Expectations (Agreements):** The school has five or fewer positively stated behavioral expectations (agreements) and examples by setting/location for student and staff behaviors (i.e., school teaching matrix) defined and in place; and

The lowest rated items ("not in place") on Tier 1 were:

- **Student/Family/Community Involvement:** Stakeholders (students, families, and community members) provide input on universal founda-

tions (e.g., expectations, consequences, acknowledgments) at least every 12 months.

- **Annual Evaluation:** Tier 1 team documents fidelity and effectiveness of Tier 1 practices at least annually (including year-by-year comparisons) that are shared with stakeholders (staff, families, community, district) in a usable format.

The BEST Project use these findings to inform updates to training materials and to guide technical assistance and coaching provided to schools.

"The PBIS team uses TFI data to determine how best to steer the PBIS ship during the upcoming school year. The data is used to look for gaps, as well as areas in need of improvement and opportunities for growth and expansion of efforts."



Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) & School Climate Survey (SCS)

Schools also use the [Self-Assessment Survey \(SAS\)](#) to capture staff perceptions of PBIS implementation and to identify priorities for improvement across school-wide, classroom, non-classroom, and individual student systems.

During the past year, when given the option to complete the SAS and/or a school climate survey (SCS), 41

schools (27%) completed the SAS. In total, at least 86 VTPBIS schools (56%) completed either the SAS, an SCS, or both. The actual number is likely higher, as completion of climate surveys outside the PBIS Apps suite can be difficult to track.

Outcomes related to the SAS and SCS are summarized in the Outcomes section.

“Office discipline referrals (ODRs) and behavior incidents have decreased, particularly in the second half of the year. This trend coincided with more consistent Tier 1 supports and an increase in Pawsitive Office Referrals, which totaled over 210 by November. School climate data and student surveys indicate stronger relationships with staff and improved student self-regulation skills.”

—Benson Village School

“Our student voice group (students in grades 5 and 6) review our climate survey data and develop a plan of action to improve the climate of our school.”

—Fair Haven Grade School



OUTCOMES

PBIS Works

Research shows that students, staff, and families/caregivers benefit when schools implement PBIS with fidelity. PBIS is not static and is constantly evolving based on feedback and research.

Figure 8: Why Implement PBIS?

Improved Student Outcomes	Reduced Exclusionary Discipline	Improved Teacher Outcomes
↑ academic achievement ↑ prosocial behavior ↑ attendance ↑ emotional regulation ↑ social & academic outcomes for students with disabilities ↓ bullying behaviors ↓ rates of drug/alcohol abuse	↓ referrals ↓ suspensions ↓ restraint and seclusion ↓ racial inequities	↑ teacher efficacy & wellbeing ↑ teacher-student relationships ↑ student engagement & instructional time ↑ school culture & organizational health ↑ climate & safety

← When Implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports with Fidelity →

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For a full list of citations related to PBIS Outcomes, visit [References for the Evidence of PBIS](#).

Student Outcomes

The BEST Project is excited to compare state-level student outcomes across different groups of schools for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic. We use both quantitative and qualitative data to guide our action planning.

Behavior Observation and Data Forms (BODFs)

The BEST Project reviews the “major” interfering behaviors as reported on Behavior Observation and Data Forms (BODFs) (formerly called Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs)) in School-wide Information System (SWIS).

In SY25, the most frequently reported interfering behaviors continued to be:

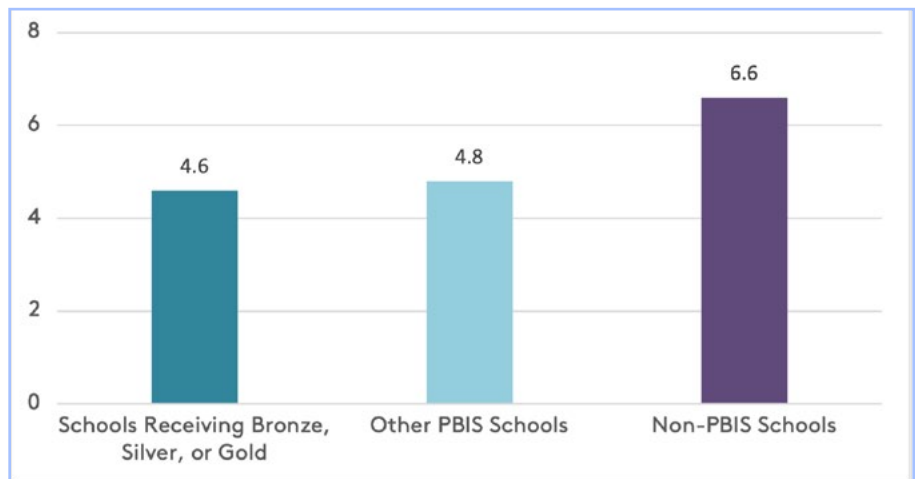
- Physical Aggression
- Defiance/Insubordination/Non-Compliance, and
- Abusive Language/Inappropriate Language/Profanity.

These patterns mirror those from the previous year and reflect ongoing feedback from the field. In response, the BEST Project will maintain its focus on professional development in proactive de-escalation strategies, relationship building, and social-emotional learning in the [2025-2026 BEST Project Professional Development Calendar \(.pdf\)](#).

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) Rates

Another indicator of impact is Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) rates. When comparing OSS rates across VTPBIS schools receiving bronze, silver, or gold acknowledgement, other VTPBIS schools, and non-VTPBIS schools, the analysis found that schools receiving acknowledgement had the lowest OSS rates (4.6%), other PBIS schools had slightly higher rates (4.8%), and non-PBIS schools had the highest rates of OSS (6.6%) (Figure 9).

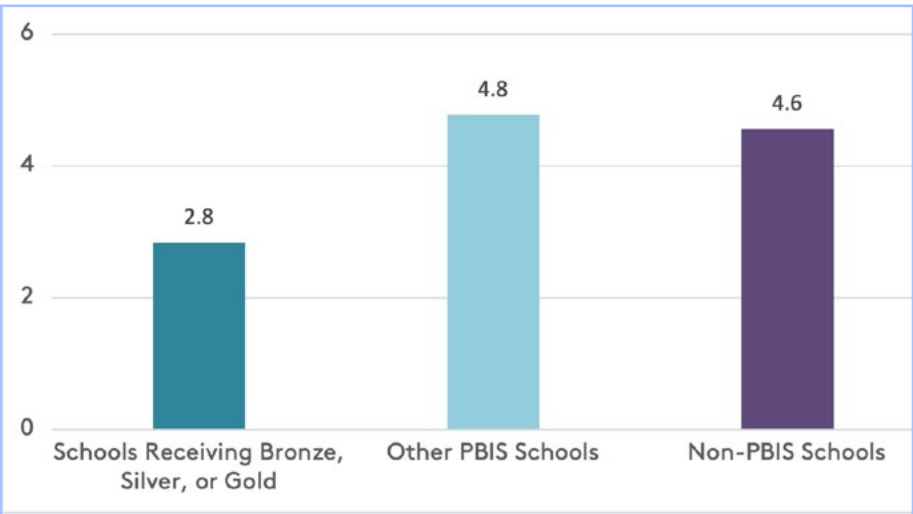
Figure 9: Percentage of OSS Incidents Per Enrollment*



*Data provided by the Agency of Education

In-School Suspension (ISS) Rates

Figure 10: Percentage of ISS Incidents Per Enrollment*



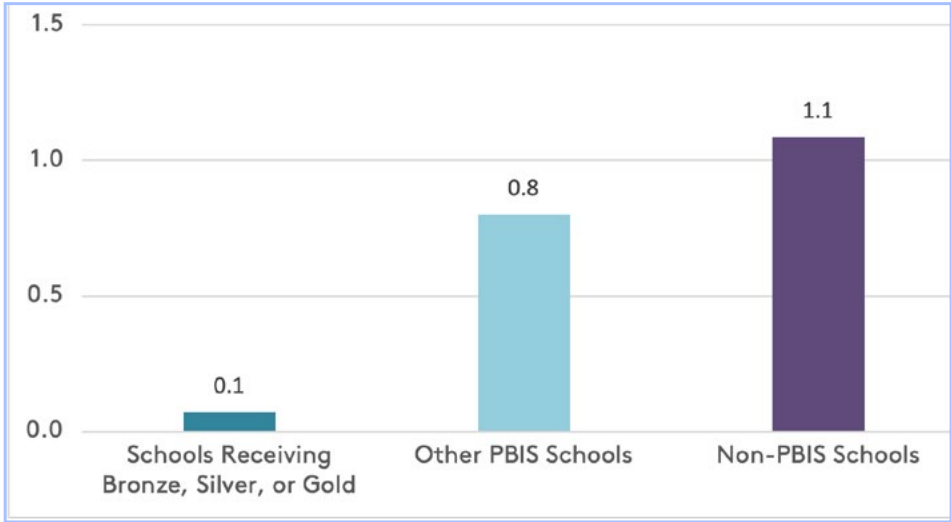
*Data provided by the Agency of Education

Similar patterns appear for In-of-School Suspension (ISS) rates. When comparing the rate of ISS across VTPBIS schools receiving bronze, silver, or gold acknowledgement, other VTPBIS schools, and non-VTPBIS schools, the analysis found that schools receiving acknowledgement had the lowest OSS rates (Figure 10). This is the first year ISS data have been analyzed.

Bullying Rates

We also were able to analyze bullying data for the first time and are proud to report that schools receiving bronze, silver, or gold acknowledgement had the lowest rates of bullying incidents (0.1% per enrollment) compared to other PBIS schools (0.8%), compared to non-PBIS schools (1.1%) (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Percentage of Bullying Incidents Per Enrollment*



*Data provided by the Agency of Education



School Climate

Schools implementing PBIS with fidelity are expected to see improvements in school climate, as reported by staff, students, and families/caregivers. Each year, the BEST Project encourages schools to complete a school climate survey. Some districts and schools created their own school climate survey or used other existing surveys.

At least 46 VTPBIS schools completed a [school climate survey](#) within PBIS Assessment for either staff, students, and/or families/caregivers this year. An additional 12 VTPBIS schools, at least, completed other versions of school climate surveys, although their scores are unavailable to us. This means that at least 38% of VTPBIS schools completed a school climate survey this year. At least seven schools administered the school climate survey multiple times to compare scores over time.



School climate data from PBIS Assessment included 22 elementary schools and 11 middle/high schools. Students rated their agreement with items on a scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). The average school climate scores were 3.02 for elementary schools and 2.9 for middle/high schools.

The highest-rated elementary school climate survey items were:

- My school wants me to do well (3.6)
- My school has clear rules for behavior (3.4)

The lowest-rated elementary school climate survey items were:

- Students in my classroom behave so teachers can teach (2.5)
- I like school (2.6)

For middle/high schools, the highest-rated items were:

- I believe in helping others (3.4)
- I treat other students fairly.

The lowest items for middle/high schools were:

- Students in my school take pride in keeping our school building (e.g., bathrooms, classrooms, lockers) in good condition" (2.2)
- Most days I look forward to going to school (2.2)

Staff Outcomes

Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)

In 2024-2025, 41 schools completed the SAS. Staff perceived school-wide systems to be in place at an average of 72%, up from 55% on 2022-2023. However, the survey questions have been updated (schools now use the SAS 4.0), so the comparison is not direct. Staff perceived classroom practices to be in place at an average of 85%, while their perception of Tier II in place was lower at 61%, and Tier III at 60%.



School Climate Survey (SCS)

This past year, 32 schools (up from 29 last year and 25 the year before) administered the personnel version of the PBIS School Climate Survey to understand staff perceptions of school climate. Staff rated their agreement with items on a scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). The overall mean scores for the personnel survey were 3.2.

The highest-rated items on the personnel school climate survey were:

- I feel safe when entering and leaving my school building (3.7)

- Teachers at my school treat students fairly regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture (3.6).

The lowest-rated items were:

- Students at my school demonstrate behaviors that allow teachers to teach, and students to learn" (2.6)
- At this school, parents frequently volunteer to help on special projects (2.7)

Overall, school climate survey results for school personnel were up slightly from last year.

School Outcomes

Annual Acknowledgements

This year, the VTPBIS State Team invited VTPBIS schools that scored a 70% or higher on Tier I of the Tiered Fidelity Inventory to nominate their school for an Annual Acknowledgment at the bronze, silver, or gold level.

We are pleased to recognize 47 schools for their efforts. Schools that received VTPBIS Annual Acknowledgments are indicated with two to four stars on the back page of this Annual Report. The qualifications for all levels are also listed on the back page.

"Connecting the dots between social emotional and academic supports and student outcomes created deeper understanding and more sustained effort by all staff in working on our new initiatives and universal strategies. We also used professional development time throughout the year to...reflect on these practices, how they are being implemented, and student responses, which sustained focus and created accountability to implementing with fidelity across all settings."

—White River Valley High School

"GCS has remained consistent in our commitment to PBIS. It is ingrained in our culture... [We are] committed to improving our school culture and supporting students and staff for success."

—Gertrude Chamberlin School

"This year, our staff has deepened their understanding of the importance of consistency, clarity, and celebration within the PBIS framework. We've learned that reinforcing expectations through visual reminders, school-wide language, and positive recognition like Pawsitive Office Referrals has a powerful impact on student behavior and school climate. Staff also recognized the value of using data to drive decision-making and adjust supports in real time. Going into next year, we're committed to strengthening Tier 1 practices and increasing student voice in PBIS initiatives to further enhance ownership and engagement."

—Benson Village School



The BEST Project continues to provide high-quality training, technical assistance, and coaching support to Supervisory Unions/ Supervisory Districts and schools across Vermont, supporting the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based practices within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework. As the Project evolves to meet emerging needs in the field, we are excited to introduce our renewed vision, mission, and values—using them as a foundation to guide future directions and goals. The BEST Project remains dedicated to strengthening Vermont schools’ capacity to support all students, including those at risk for or experiencing social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) challenges. When implemented with fidelity, the PBIS Framework provides

a strong foundation for both proactive and responsive supports that promote positive outcomes for all. This year, we will continue advancing a multi-tiered approach to help schools enhance fidelity and measure impact. The SY26 BEST Project Action Plan for Sustainability was developed collaboratively with national, state, and local partners, incorporating valuable input from educators and practitioners across the field.

SY 26 Action Plan for Sustainability

We will improve professional development opportunities to ensure Vermont's educators have access to timely, evidence-based learning experiences.

GOAL 1:

Enhance High-Quality Learning Opportunities

- **Analyze Data to Inform PD Priorities:** Review training evaluation surveys, TFI scores, and Learning Needs and Resources Assessments to identify strengths and areas for growth, and use the findings to shape professional development offerings.
- **Enhance Professional Development Opportunities:** Develop and implement targeted, intensive professional development for advanced tiers of implementation that promotes the integration of mental health, community, and family/caregiver engagement, while enhancing supports for all staff and leaders across building and district systems.

We will strengthen schools and SU/SDs capacity for sustained implementation by developing multiple pathways to access differentiated supports so that at least 25% of schools implementing PBIS receive coaching support during the year.

GOAL 2:

Expand Coaching, Consultation, and Technical Assistance

- **Increase Access to and Utilization of Coaching/ Consultation:** Design and develop new options for school teams to access coaching/consultation, including leveraging funding to provide up to 10 hours of free coaching/consultation to targeted PBIS schools that recently completed core training or have low or no TFI scores.
- **Provide Support For TFI 3.0 Completion:** Encourage all schools to access their TA, Coach, and/or SU/SD VTPBIS Coordinator to assist in TFI 3.0 completion.

We will ensure schools and educators have timely access to high-quality, actionable PBIS resources and guidance.

GOAL 3:

Enhance Sharing of Information and Resources

- **Improve Resource Access and Use:** Update key resources, reorganize the VTPBIS website, and disseminate guidance on systems, data-based decision-making, and evidence-based practices across all tiers.
- **Increase Secondary-Level Engagement:** Conduct targeted outreach and develop resources to raise awareness and support PBIS adoption and improved implementation in middle and high schools.



GLOSSARY

The following definitions came from the [PBIS Implementation Blueprint \(.pdf\)](#) and the [PBIS Evaluation Blueprint \(.pdf\)](#).

Behavior Observation Data Form (BODF) - Recording of the details of a major or minor interfering behavior by a student that was observed by an educator for purposes of providing support to the student, if needed. This is Vermont's term for the national PBIS term, office discipline referral.

Capacity - Capacity sections of the report typically document two aspects of the initiative: (a) Structures for Supporting PBIS Implementation and (b) Formal Measurement of Capacity.

Coaching - Job-embedded professional learning provided to support implementation of new skills and practices. Frequently involves modeling, observing, and/or providing performance feedback.

Constructs - The systematic arranging of ideas or terms.

Data - Information that is used to select, monitor, and evaluate outcomes, practices, and systems.

Department of Mental Health (DMH) - The Department of Mental Health resides under the Agency of Human Services and has the same critical mission in mind: to improve the conditions and well-being of Vermonters and protect those who cannot protect themselves.

Disproportionality - Disproportionality refers to a group's representation in a particular category that exceeds expectations for that group, or differs substantially from the representation of others in that category. Special education disproportionality has been

referred to as the extent to which membership in a given group affects the probability of being placed in a specific disability category. Disciplinary disproportionality encompasses the disproportionately high rates at which students from certain racial/ethnic groups are subjected to office discipline referrals, suspensions, school arrests, and expulsion.

Evidence-based Practices (EBPs) - Interventions, strategies, and techniques supported by empirical evidence of their effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and durability. See the What Works Clearinghouse to assist in selecting EBPs.

Fidelity - Fidelity refers to the degree in which an intervention or practice is delivered as intended. Fidelity can be measured and compared to previous or future efforts to deliver the intervention or practice.

Local Education Agency (LEA) - A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties as are recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) - The practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched

to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions (Batsche et al., 2005). An integrated MTSS is the integration of several MTSSs into one coherent strategically combined system meant to address multiple domains in content areas in education (McIntosh and Goodman, 2016).

Outcomes - Academic and behavior targets or indicators that are specified, endorsed, emphasized, and monitored because of their social and education significance.

Partners - Any individuals who will be affected by or make decisions regarding implementation within an organization. These vary by context (state, district, school) but typically include (but not limited to) students, families, educators, administrators, community groups, and agencies.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) - An evidence-based multi-tiered framework for implementing evidence-based practices to support improved social, emotional, behavioral (SEB), and academic outcomes for all student groups through systems and data-based decision making.

Process - The Process section reports the actions taken to support the PBIS initiative during the evaluation period.

Professional Learning/ Professional Development (PD) - A systematic process of support for all staff that

can include face-to-face training, observation, coaching, resource banks of materials, communication plans, or virtual supports to help educators establish and sustain evidence-based practices.

Reach - Reach questions are intended to identify who is participating in PBIS and are affected by it.

Restorative Approaches - Restorative approaches build healthy school climates by creating space for people to understand one another and develop relationships. When things go wrong, restorative approaches create space to address needs, repair relationships, and heal.

School Climate Survey (SCS) - The School Climate Survey Suite is a set of four multidimensional surveys to measure student, teacher, administrator, faculty, and family/caregiver perceptions of school climate.

School District (SD) - Town school districts, union school districts, interstate school districts, city school districts, unified union districts, and incorporated school districts, each of which is governed by a publicly elected board.

School Year (SY) - A school year is a specific period of time during which educational institutions, such as elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and universities, organize and conduct their academic activities.

Schoolwide - Refers to extending support to all students and adults in all settings in a school or organization (e.g., agency). A schoolwide approach is also referred to as providing a full continuum of support (Tiers 1, 2, 3).

Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) - The survey examines the status and need for improvement of four behavior support systems: (a) school-wide discipline systems, (b) non-classroom management systems (e.g., cafeteria, hallway, playground), (c) classroom management systems, and (d) systems for individual students engaging in chronic problem behaviors.

Supervisory Union (SU) - A Supervisory Union is an entity that oversees and administers Vermont's public schools. Supervisory Unions provide essential services to schools, including developing curriculum, providing special education, and administering school meals programs. Supervisory Unions also provide financial administration and data management for public schools.

Systems - Support infrastructure that is needed to enable the accurate and durable implementation of practices, efficient use of data, and achievement of outcomes. Technical Assistance/TA Providers - Process of providing support to an organization with an identified problem or need. TA providers are available to help Supervisory unions and schools navigate the process of exploring, implementing, and sustaining VTPBIS. Support is available through technology (i.e., online meetings) and up to two site visits per year.

Tier 1 (Universal) - Preventing the development of new cases (incidence) of unwanted behaviors by establishing a core foundation of high-quality learning environments for all students and staff and across all settings (i.e., schoolwide, classroom, and non-classroom).

Tier 2 (Targeted) - Reducing the number of existing cases (prevalence) of unwanted

behaviors that are presenting high-risk behaviors and/or not responsive to primary intervention practices by providing more focused, intensive, and frequent small group-oriented responses in situations where unwanted behavior is likely.

Tier 3 (Intensive) - Reducing the intensity and/or complexity of existing cases (severity) of unwanted behavior that are resistant to and/or unlikely to be addressed by primary and secondary prevention efforts by providing the most individualized responses to situations where unwanted behavior is likely.

Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) - An assessment that provides a valid, reliable, and efficient measure of the extent to which school personnel are applying the core features of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS).

Vermont Multi-Tiered System of Support (VTmtss) - VTmtss is a systemic approach to decision-making for excellence and equity within a culture of continuous improvement that focuses on successful outcomes for all students. VTmtss is Vermont's approach to unifying a progressive system of supports, personalization, flexible pathways, and proficiencies.



The BEST Project

receives funding from the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) and is supported by the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion (CDCI) at the University of Vermont (UVM).

go.uvm.edu/thebestproject

State Team Members (as of June 2025)

- **BEST:** Anne Dubie, Cassandra Townshend, Amy Wheeler-Sutton
- **AOE:** Laura Greenwood, Tracy Harris, Josh Souliere, Meg Porcella, Tracy Watterson
- **BEST TA Providers & Coaches:** Ken Kramberg, Sherry Schoenberg, Chantelle Albin, Kym Asam, Amanda Babcock, Kristin Beswick, Lauralee Keach, Jon Kidde, Rebecca Lallier, Jeremy Tretiak, Gregg Stoller
- **DMH:** Marianna Donnally
- **UVM:** Winnie Looby

All photos used in this report were used with the permission of the photographer.



College of Education and Social Services
Center on Disability and Community Inclusion



VTPBIS in VT

PBIS is in 155 Vermont schools as of June 30, 2025.

****Albany Community School
Alburgh Community Ed Center
**Allen Brook School
Bakersfield Elementary School
**Barnet Elementary School
Barre Town Middle & Elementary School
**Barstow Memorial School
****Barton Graded School
Beeman Elementary
Bennington Elementary School
***Benson Village School
*Berkshire Elementary School
Berlin Elementary School
BFA Fairfax
Blue Mountain School
Braintree Elementary School
Brewster Pierce Elementary School
Brighton Elementary School
Bristol Elementary
Brookfield Elementary School
**Brookside Primary School
Brownington Central School
Burke Town School
Cabot School
Calais Elementary School
Canaan Schools
**Castleton Elementary School
Champlain Elementary
***Charleston Elementary
**Charlotte Central School
Chester-Andover Elementary
Clarendon Elementary School
Concord School
Coventry Village School
**Craftsbury Schools
Currier Memorial School
***Danville School
***Derby Elementary School
****Dothan Brook School
East Montpelier Elementary School
Eden Central School
Edmunds Elementary School
****Fair Haven Grade School
Fair Haven Union High School
Fairfield Center School
Ferrisburgh Central School

****First Branch Elementary
****First Branch Middle
Fletcher Elementary School
***Flood Brook School
Folsom Education & Community Center
Founders Memorial School
Georgia Elementary & Middle School
***Gertrude Chamberlin School
**Grafton Elementary School
Grand Isle School
Green Street School
Guilford Central School
**Hardwick Elementary School
Highgate Elementary
Hinesburg Community School
Hyde Park Elementary School
Integrated Arts Academy
Irasburg Village School
J.J. Flynn Elementary
Jericho Elementary
****JFK Elementary
**Johnson Elementary
***Killington Elementary
***Kurn Hattin Home and School
**Lakeview Elementary School
Lincoln Community School
**Lothrop Elementary School
**Lowell Graded School
Lyndon Town School
Malletts Bay School
Manchester Elementary School
Marion Cross School
Middletown Springs Elementary School
Millers Run School
Molly Stark Elementary School
**Monkton Central School
Monument Elementary School
Morristown Elementary School
Mt. Abraham Union Middle/High School
Mt. Anthony Union High School
Mt. Anthony Union Middle School
Neshobe Elementary School
Newark Street School
***NewBrook Elementary
Newport Town School
North Country UJHS
North Hero
Northeast Primary
Northfield Elementary School
Northfield Middle High School
Northwest Primary School
Oak Grove School
Orange Center School

Orchard School
Orleans Elementary
Orwell Village School
Ottawaquechee School
**Otter Creek Academy (Leicester, Sudbury, Whiting)
**Otter Valley Union HS
Peacham Elementary School
**Peoples Academy Middle Level
Porters Point School
Poultney Elementary School
Pownal Elementary
Randolph Elementary School
Reading Elementary
Richmond Elementary
**Rick Marcotte Central School
***Riverside Middle School
Robinson Elementary School
Rochester Stockbridge Unified District
**Rutland Intermediate School
Shaftsbury Elementary
Sharon Elementary
Shelburne Community School
****Sheldon Elementary School
*St. Albans City
St. Albans Town Educational Center
Stowe Elementary School
Summit Street School
Sunderland Elementary School
Sutton Village School
***Swanton School
****Thetford Elementary School
Thomas Fleming School
Townshend Elementary
Twinfield Union School
Union Elementary School
Union Memorial School
**Vergennes Union Elementary School
Vernon Elementary
**Waitsfield School
Walden School
Wardsboro Elementary School
Washington Village School
Waterville Elementary School

Wells Village School
Westford School
**Westminster Center School
***White River Valley Elem - Bethel Campus
***White River Valley Elem - South Royalton Campus
****White River Valley High School
White River Valley Middle School
Williamstown Elementary School
Williamstown Middle/High School
Williston Central School
**Wolcott Elementary School
**Woodbury Elementary School
***Woodstock Elementary School

Key

* New VTPBIS Schools

** Bronze-Level:
Solid PBIS fidelity,
some partner
engagement,
participated in recent
training or coaching

*** Silver-Level:
Strong PBIS fidelity,
most partners
engaged, showing
positive behavioral
outcomes while
building toward full
implementation

**** Gold-Level:
High-fidelity
implementation, full
partner engagement,
focus on equity and/
or mental health,
strong academic and
behavioral outcomes