

**REPORT**

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

**SY2022-2023 Report**

**September 26, 2023**

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



## **Executive Summary**

### **Vermont Multi-tiered System of Supports (VTmtss)**

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

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

### **What is the VTmtss Survey?**

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

### **Response Rate**

Of the 292 public school principals who were sent the VTmtss Survey, 276 of them submitted responses, resulting in a 95 percent response rate across 52 Supervisory Unions and Supervisory Districts (SU/SD).

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## Table of Contents

VTmtss Survey Summary Purpose .....	4
Key Findings of the 2022-2023 School Year .....	5
VTmtss Survey Findings .....	6
Questions 1 - 7: Collaborative Development of System Expertise.....	6
Scheduling .....	6
Educational Support Teams (EST) .....	7
Questions 3 and 4: Educational Support Team (EST) Meeting Frequency .....	8
Questions 5 and 6: Responsive Decision Making - Academic and Social Emotional EST Plans.....	10
Questions 8 - 15: Educational Support Team (EST) Plan Indicators Questions .....	12
Questions 16 - 18: Student Supports.....	15
Questions 19 - 24: Climate, SEL, Mental Health Data Collection Increasing Capacity for the Collaborative Development of Collective Expertise .....	18
Questions 25 - 30: Increasing Capacity for the Collaborative Development of Collective Expertise .....	21
Conclusion.....	27
Appendix .....	28

## VTmtss Survey Summary Purpose



[Act 117 - VSA Title 16, Section 2904](#), requires that each superintendent shall annually provide the status of the educational support systems of each school within the supervisory union to the Vermont Secretary of Education. Out of the 292 principals surveyed in May 2023, 276 submitted a survey, and are included in the data below. This year's Survey measures how many leaders report using a systemic and comprehensive approach by incorporating elements of the Vermont Multi-tiered System of Supports (VTmtss) Framework in their schools.

The questions represent indicators of the Framework that show efforts being made to improve equitable access to high-quality instruction and support for all Vermont students. Most indicators in this year's survey are the same as the 2021-2022 Survey, though there were revisions made to many questions and a few new questions added. Leaders are encouraged to look for trends over time by comparing this year's data from SY2022-2023 to last year's Survey data.

It is important to note that the analysis within this report did not control for factors such as school size or grade band. Each question listed below is in the same order as the Survey questions and is followed by a summary of the importance of that indicator(s), a visual depiction of the data, and an analysis of the data to highlight its relevancy for leadership teams. These summaries intend to serve as a high-level snapshot of best practices happening in VT schools and should not be considered conclusive but rather a starting point for systems-level data discussions and investigations. The report also provides many recommendations and linked resources for leadership teams seeking to improve upon any of the Survey indicators.

Although this Survey summary highlights data that is indicative of current approaches utilized to develop comprehensive and cohesive support systems at the state level, this report can also be compared to the same measures at the district and school levels. Principals are encouraged to compare their own survey results to this report, and we recommend that superintendents request district-level data from the VTmtss Team by contacting [Caitlin.Chisholm@vermont.gov](mailto:Caitlin.Chisholm@vermont.gov).

## Key Findings of the 2022-2023 School Year

The VTmtss Survey data is used to facilitate priority setting and the support provided by the Vermont AOE VTmtss Team to the field.

The data informs areas of statewide improvement for the VTmtss Team such as necessary guidelines, resources, or clarifications. The VTmtss Team also uses data at the district level to plan for short- or long-term technical assistance. Similarly, school and district leaders are encouraged to review the best practices described within this report, in comparison to the state findings and their own school and district-level data, to identify and plan for broad focus areas of systemic improvement.

During the 2022-2023 school year, The VTmtss Team focused on these three topics in relation to the 2021-2022 Survey findings:

1. expanding and improving district-level EST oversight,
2. authentic inclusion of families in decisions impacting their students and school, and
3. developing cultures of effective collaboration that include and respects students' voices.

### The key findings for the 2022-2023 VTmtss Survey include:

1. There is an increased use of universal screening for social emotional, climate, and mental health well-being.
2. More than 65% of principals report the use of all recommended systemic and comprehensive approaches to enhance social emotional learning (SEL) supports for both educational support teams (EST) interventions and universally offered SEL supports.
3. Although there was an 18% increase in principals reporting that EST meets at least once per month, the percentage of those reporting the best practice of meeting twice per month has not changed.
4. Most principals did not report including all 8 elements of an EST plan in their plans or templates.
5. Although families continue to be involved in student-related decisions around support and progress, they're less involved in system-level decisions.
6. Although consideration for student voice to inform classroom practices has slightly increased, they remain the least involved in collaborative student support and systems-based decisions.

Based on this year's key findings, the VTmtss Team will focus on the following three objectives for this school year:

1. Provide guidelines for best practices to ensure all EST plans include the essential eight elements.
2. Develop school climates and cultures that embed universal approaches to restorative approaches into all aspects of the system.

3. Support LEA in designing intentional proactive engagement of students and families in decisions impacting the system.

## VTmtss Survey Findings

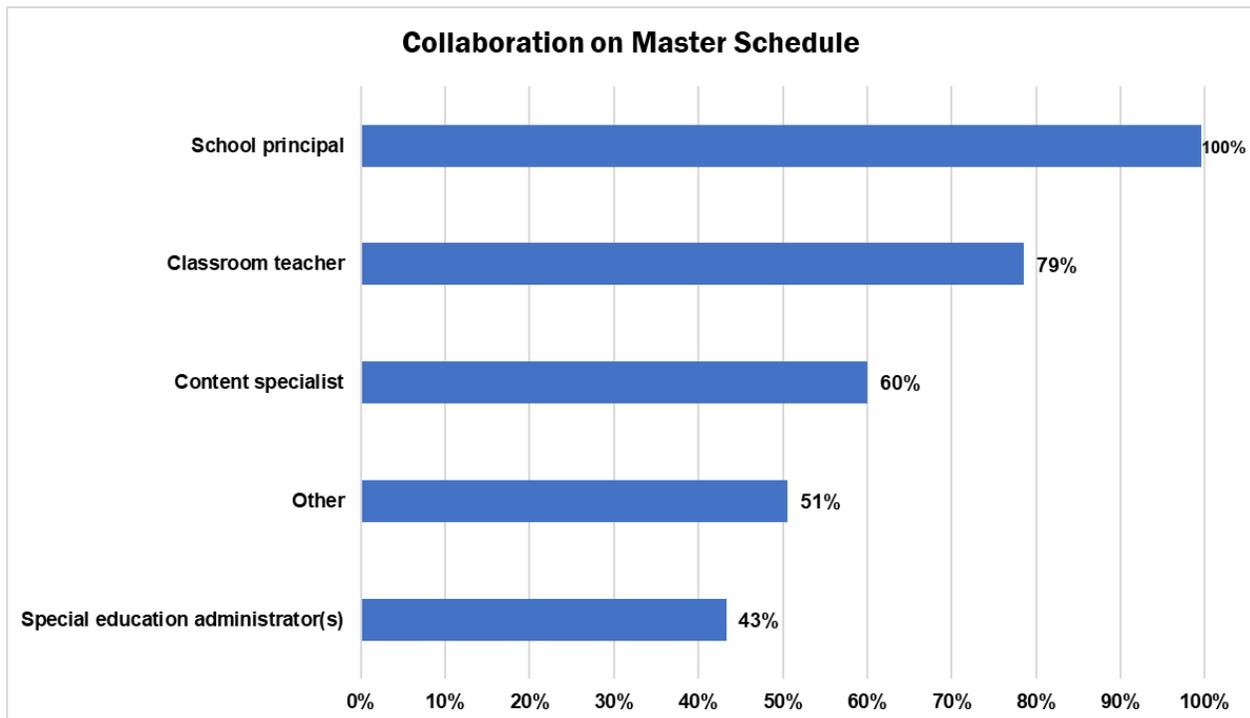
Questions A through J asked for the principal and superintendent's contact information, school name, total student population, and grade span of the school.

### Questions 1 - 7: Collaborative Development of System Expertise

#### Scheduling

##### **Question 1: Select all staff members who are involved with the creation of the school master schedule.**

A lack of strategic scheduling can contribute to educators feeling that there is not enough support for students' needs and that more staff are needed to do so. Collaborative and strategic scheduling can increase leaders' ability to intentionally use expertise within their system that may reduce the amount of 1:1 support taking place outside of core instruction. These outcomes are more likely to take place when the various experts within a school or district can inform leaders of their available time throughout the school year, ultimately improving students' access to high-quality supports and interventions (District Management Group: [Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports](#), p. 50). Designing systems for equity is transformational and requires new practices and a broader scope of how diverse talents and employees can inform system-based decisions. Leveraging effective collaboration and varied expertise when scheduling helps leaders define priorities and align staff around the school's vision ([Build Equity, Join Justice: A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), pp. 70 -71).



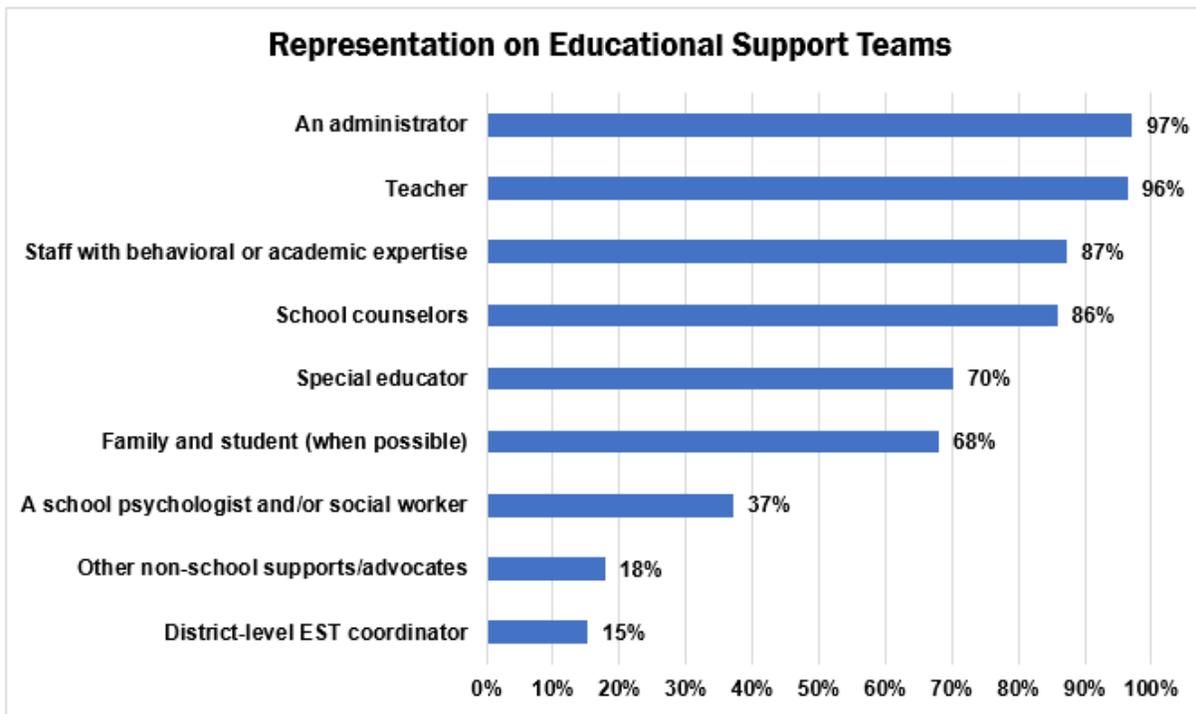
Although a variety of factors can influence staff availability, most principals report including at least one classroom teacher (79%) and one content specialist (60%) when creating the school master schedule. Approximately half reported use of another staff member, and even less reported collaborating with special education administrators (43%) (see Appendix, [table 1](#)).

Research suggests that special educator insight in the scheduling process is beneficial for reducing the amount of time students are pulled from core instruction, because they are aware of unique scheduling guidelines and their own availability to develop and attend effective intervention blocks ([District Management Group: Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports](#), p. 50). More information and resources can be found at [District Management Group and Agency of Education Elementary Scheduling Website](#) with resources about collaborative scheduling and professional learning opportunities.

## Educational Support Teams (EST)

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

Educational Support Team (EST) membership should always represent various voices during meetings. Ideally, EST includes an administrator(s), teachers, special educators, or other relevant staff such as behavioral or academic interventionists, counselors, and psychologists. Family, student, and student advocates' perspectives should also be included even when they are not able to be physically present. Doing so will increase the team's comprehensive understanding of any student need, inform high-quality short-term support plans, and reduce bias when reviewing Educational Support Team student referrals. Additionally, considering family, student and communities as partners, particularly for students needing support, increases universal "excitement and energy for success" by uplifting morale through creating high-quality relationships, improving problem-solving, predictability of expectations, and creating of a supportive culture of trust ([Build Equity Join Justice](#), p. 71).



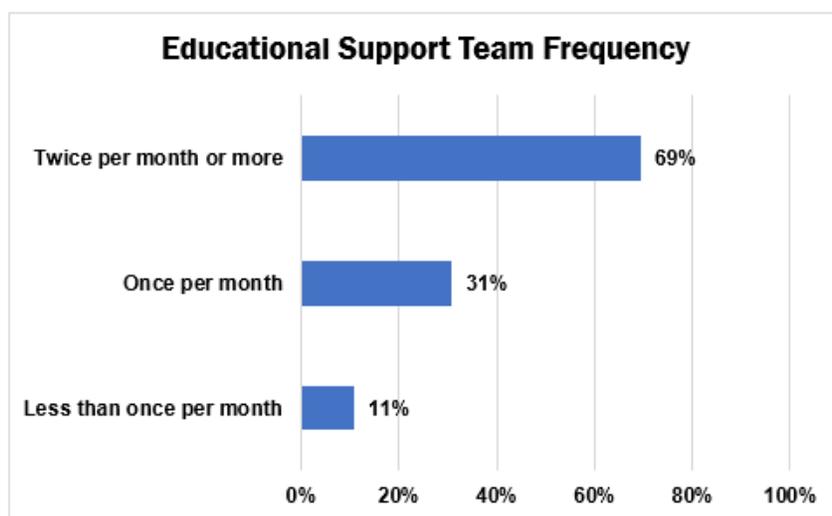
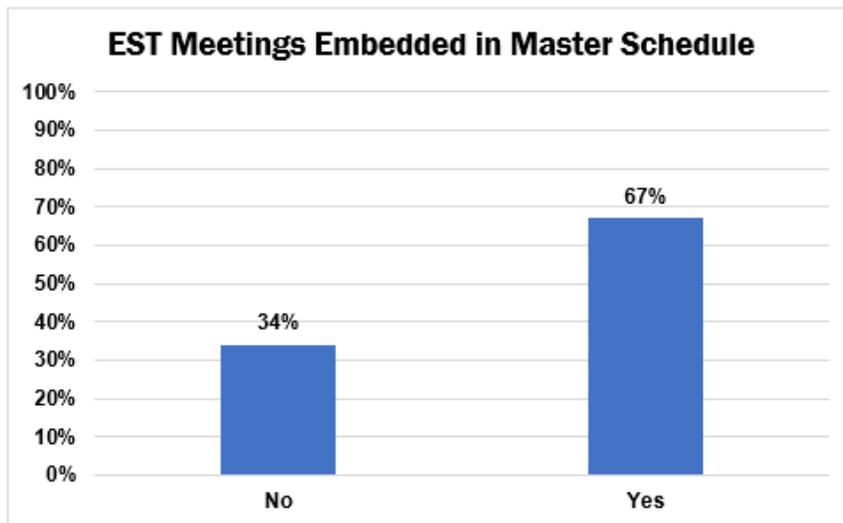
More than 85% of Vermont principals report that an administrator, teacher, a behavioral or academic expert, and/or a school counselor are consistently represented in EST meetings. Many reported a combination of these and other stakeholders as being included. Less reported consistently including special educators (70%), and even fewer the representation of families and students (68%). Ensuring families and students are considered primary stakeholders in decisions that impact student outcomes can result in better achievement, a culture of trust, positive behavioral interactions between students and staff, and increased social capital for students ([Family Engagement Toolkit and Self-Assessment](#), p. 4) The roles reported as the least represented were school psychologists and/or social workers (37%), other advocates (18%) or district-level EST coordinators (15%) (see Appendix, [table 2](#)). The [EST Plan Template Form](#) can help keep track of how families, students, and other staff are represented in EST meetings.

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

**Question 3: Is your school’s EST meetings schedule embedded within your school’s master schedule?**

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

The AOE recommends that Educational Support Teams (EST) meet at least twice per month to regularly assess students who are referred to EST in an efficient manner and to continuously review the progress of students who may already be on an EST plan. Frequently reviewing EST data allows the team to recognize any patterns arising from all student data that could identify systemic areas potentially in need of improvement and could inform the school or district’s continuous improvement plan (CIP).



Although 34% of leaders report that their EST is not part of their master schedule, it is useful to embed time for EST meetings within the schedule to avoid any time-related conflicts that may arise throughout the year (see Appendix, [table 3](#)).

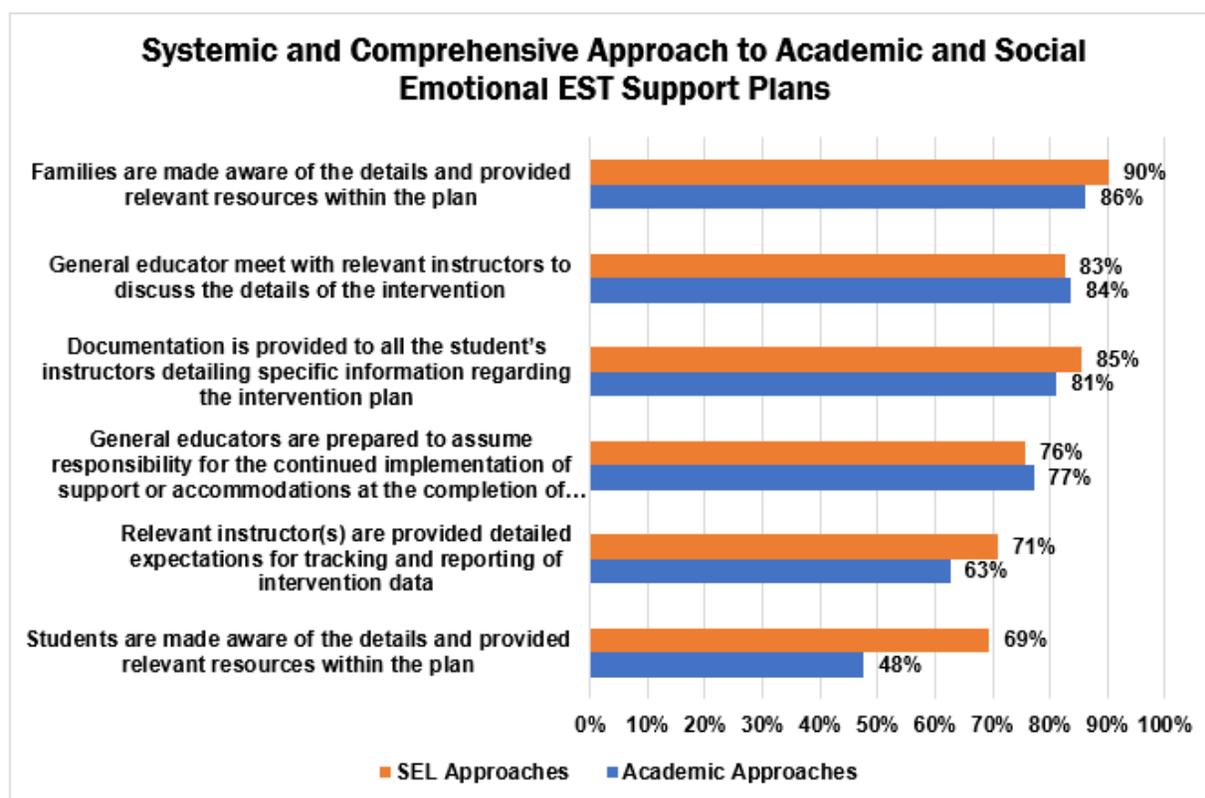
When asked about EST meeting frequency, most leaders report EST meetings are scheduled for at least twice per month (69%), whereas 31% reported at least once per month (31%) or even less frequently (11%) (see Appendix, [table 4](#)). This represents an increase of 18% of leaders reporting EST meets at least once per month compared to the SY2021-2022 Survey. The AOE encourages leaders to aim for an EST meeting frequency of at least twice per month and is able to offer direct support with establishing this and other best practices relating to EST. Leaders can use the [VTmtss Technical Assistance Form](#) to request support and should review the [Educational Support Team: A Deeper Look](#) guidance document to consider the characteristics and systemic characteristics of effective and efficient ESTs.

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

**Question 5: Select the systemic approaches that would always occur when an academic intervention plan has been developed for a student by your school's EST.**

**Question 6: Select the systemic approaches that would always occur when a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) support or behavioral intervention is developed by your school's EST.**

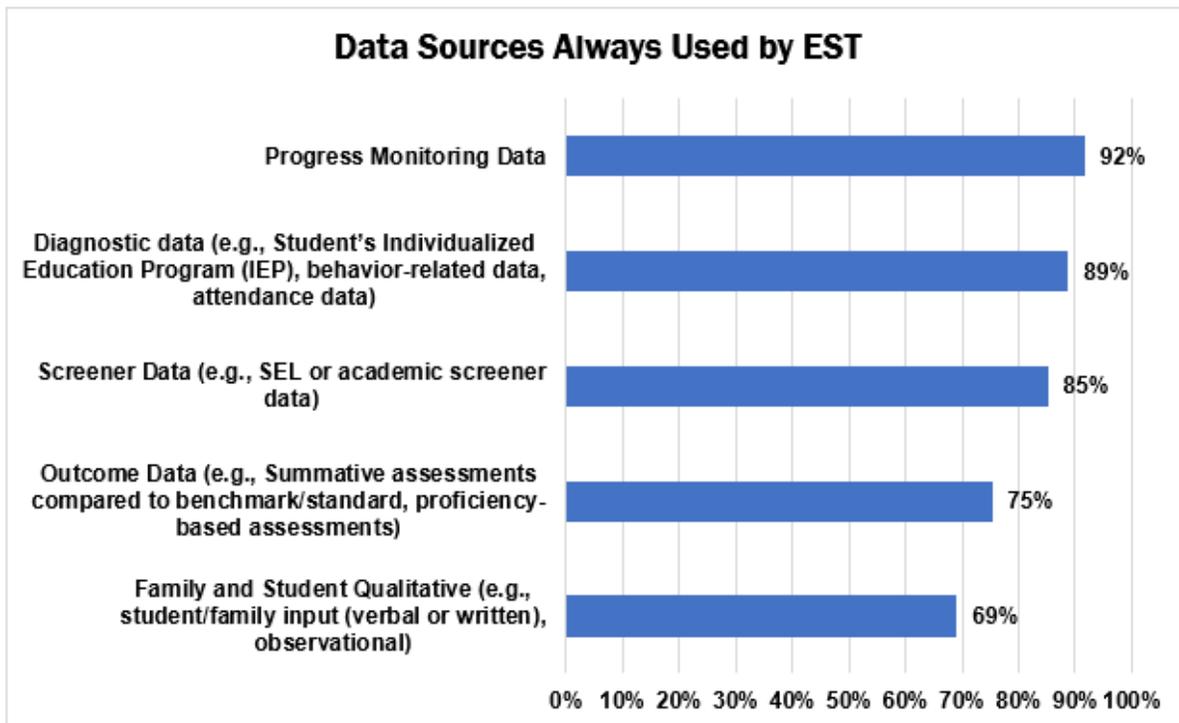
Although a school's Educational Support Team (EST) should review referrals regarding academic and social-emotional needs, this indicator was divided into two separate questions to measure any potential differences in systemic approaches to enhancing EST plans. Principle 8 of the [VTmtss Framework](#) states that the foundation for effective problem-solving and instructional decision making is a dynamic, positive, and productive collaboration among students, families, and professionals. Taking a systemic approach to decision making for excellence and equity within a culture of continuous improvement enhances the quality of EST because it allows for flexible service provision structures. Doing so can disrupt policies and traditional structures that separate and segregate students by providing coordinated needs-based interventions rather than fixating attention on disability characteristics and the physical location of services ([Build Equity, Join Justice](#), p. 63). Emphasizing strong partnerships between staff and students by valuing their unique voices as primary stakeholders through including them in decisions about their own goals or learning, creates a culture of trust ([VTmtss Field Guide](#), p. 18).



More than 60% of all principals report the use of at least one or more of all but one of the recommended systemic and comprehensive approaches to enhancing any social-emotional and academic EST assigned interventions. The only approach reported by fewer was “students being made aware of the details and relevant resources provided within the plan” specifically for academic interventions (see Appendix, [table 5](#)). Involving students to the extent possible in decisions concerning their needs and supports strengthens relationships, students’ sense of autonomy, and a culture of trust by promoting their active voice and choice in their learning ([VTmtss Field Guide](#), p. 32) Leaders interested in improving systemic supports to engage students in their interventions, the [Educational Support Team \(EST\) Practice Profile](#) offers a continuum of best practices for developing high quality academic and social emotional intervention plans.

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

The more consequential a decision is for a student, the more critical it is that Educational Support Teams (EST) have a comprehensive and balanced view of any student’s performance as well as a clear process for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting student data. Intentional monitoring of student progress by an EST improves decision making around instructional changes, intervention outcomes, or the need for more support. Maintaining a comprehensive data system allows for reliable, valid, and culturally responsive consideration of individual student needs as well as analytics that may inform the improvement needs of the school system. To reduce bias and further inform personalized needs of students, the use of qualitative student or family data is a critical aspect of EST processes and helps to build a culture of trust for family and students.



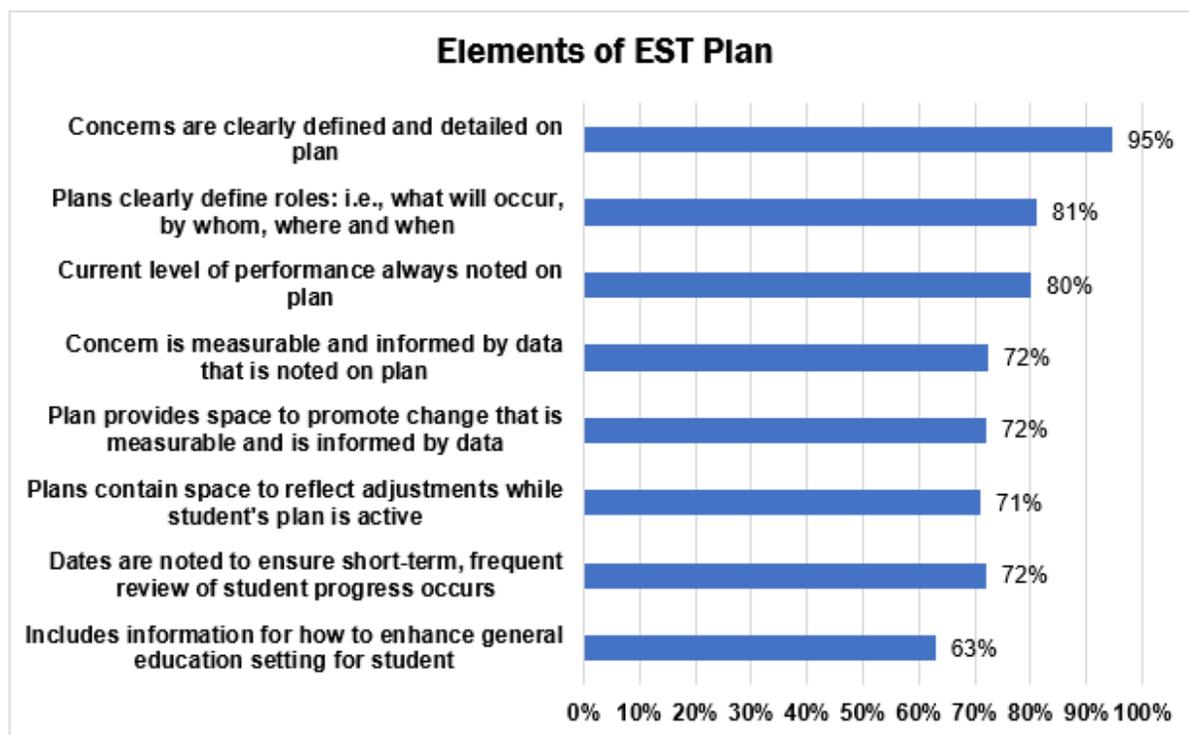
Most principals report that their EST often reviews a variety of data for decision making including different types of assessment data, progress monitoring data, diagnostic data, screener data and/or family related data. The source reported by fewest principals was “family and student qualitative” data (see Appendix, [table 6](#)).

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

## Questions 8 - 15: Educational Support Team (EST) Plan Indicators Questions

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

The AOE recommends that EST plans should be relatively short-term, data driven interventions with clear indicators of success. It is also recommended that ESTs use these plans to better understand individual students’ learning needs and that this understanding then is used to inform and support general classroom instruction. The options in the graph below are elements of an effective and comprehensive EST plan.



Responses indicate that almost all plans include a clearly defined concern (95%). Other elements that align with the AOE model seem less likely to be present. About 20% of principals report their EST plans do not seem to specify exactly what will be done, by whom, or state current levels of performance. Furthermore, nearly 30% do not include data when defining a concern or measuring change, and approximately 30% report that plans do not allow for adjustments to active plans or for frequent review of progress.

Finally, over one third of plans do not provide information to general ed classrooms that could improve instruction (see Appendix, [table 7](#)).

These results suggest that ESTs may be providing a sort of long-term case management for concerns as they arise, rather than creating specific, data-driven interventions. There are several concerns with this approach. Other case management models such as Special Education and Section 504 are based on entitlement through a documented disability and are governed by law and regulation. There is no comparable structure for EST. An EST case management model does not ensure equity of access, does not ensure student access to support or accommodations, and has no accountability or appeals process. LEA leaders can reach out to the VTmtss Team for additional support or consult the [Educational Support Team Plan Form](#) guidance document to learn more.

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

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

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

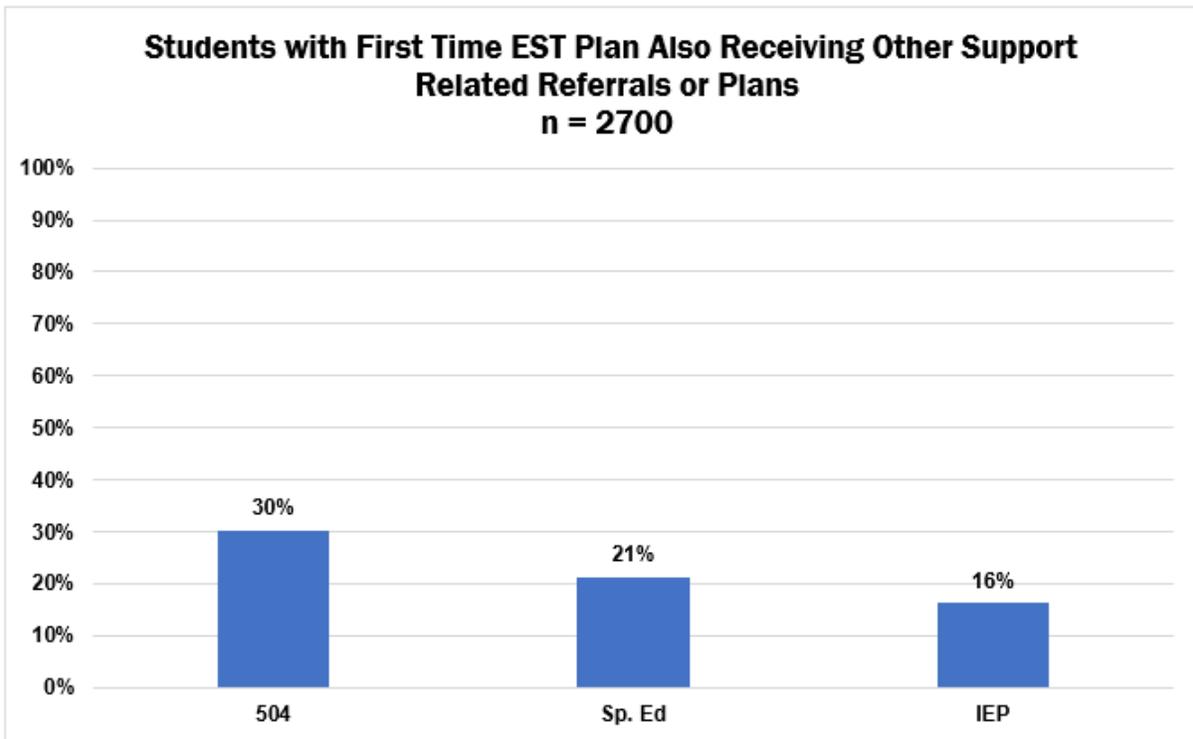
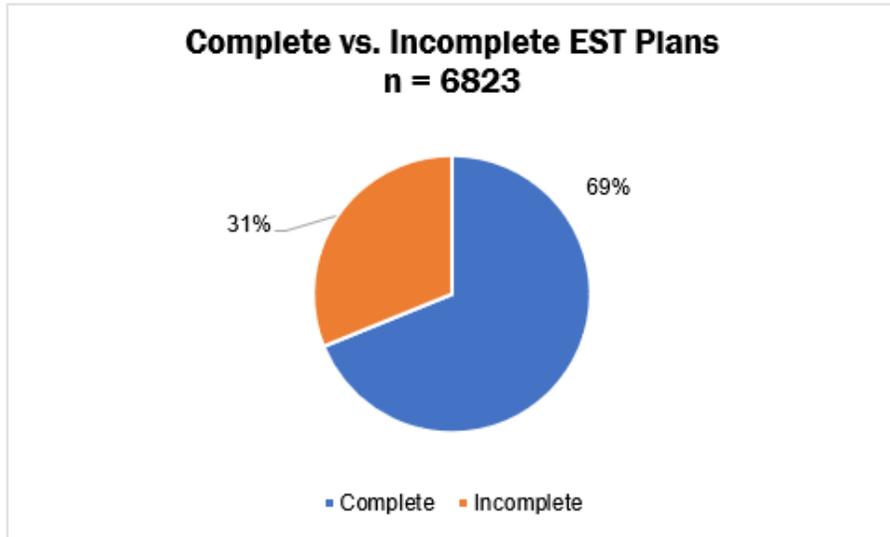
**Question 12: Of the students in question 11 who received an EST plan for the first time this year, how many had a Section 504 plan developed for the first time this year?**

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

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

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

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

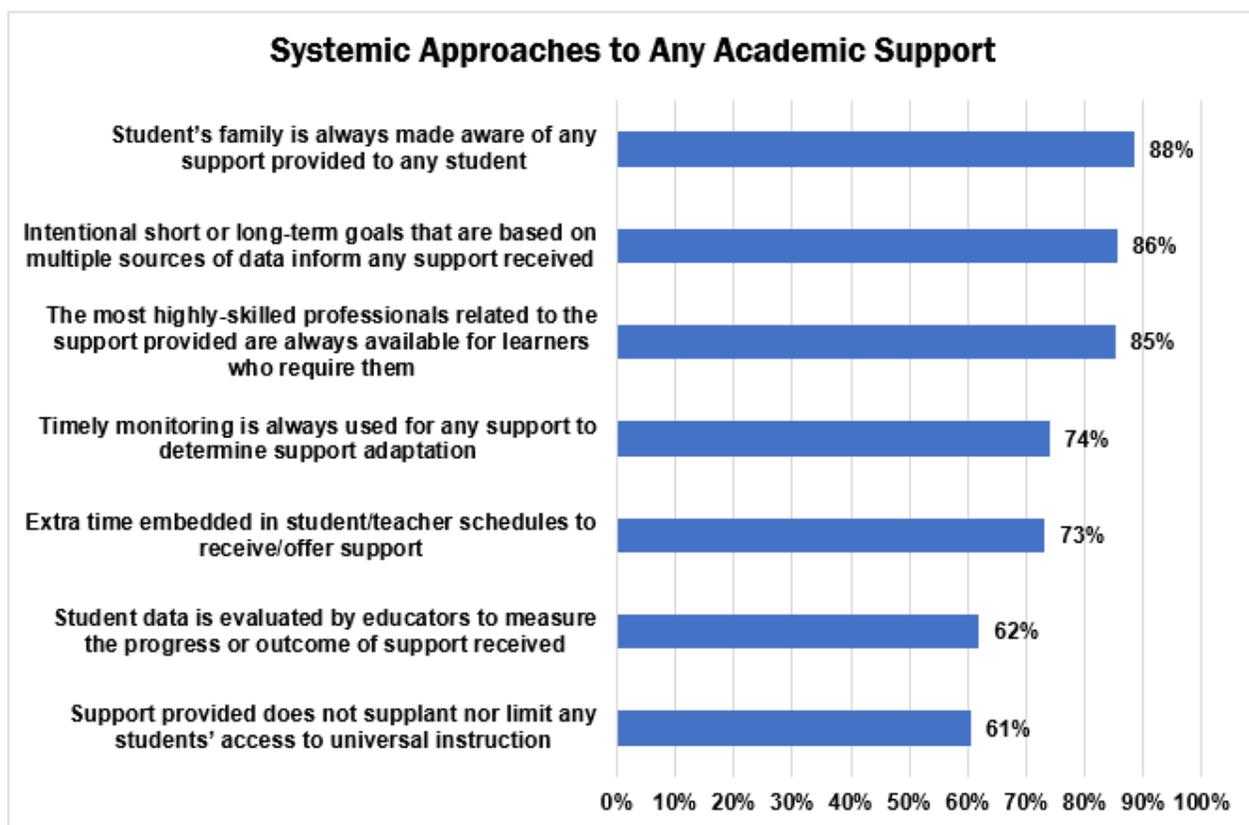


More than 30% of EST plans are incomplete, and presumably will be carried over to the next school year. This is another indicator that EST is sometimes used for long-term case management. This, combined with the data from question 8, raises the concern that there may not be any defined exit criteria for some EST plans. It is also a potential concern that the percentage of plans carried over nearly mirrors the percent of plans in question 8 that do not result in enhancements of instruction in the general education setting. The [Educational Support Team \(EST\) Practice Profile](#), which guides leaders with systemic capacity building for creating targeted plans that can be monitored in a collaborative and sustained manner.

## Questions 16 - 18: Student Supports

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

Aligning and coordinating instruction and interventions across all settings allows leaders to take a systemic approach to improving academic achievement equitably. Doing so enhances a school's ability to provide evidence-based and tailored instruction and support that considers students' unique background or personal goals. By aligning and coordinating efforts across the system, decisions are more likely to be determined by the highest-qualified experts, data-driven, reliable, monitored closely, and supplemental of core instruction rather than replacing or supplanting it.

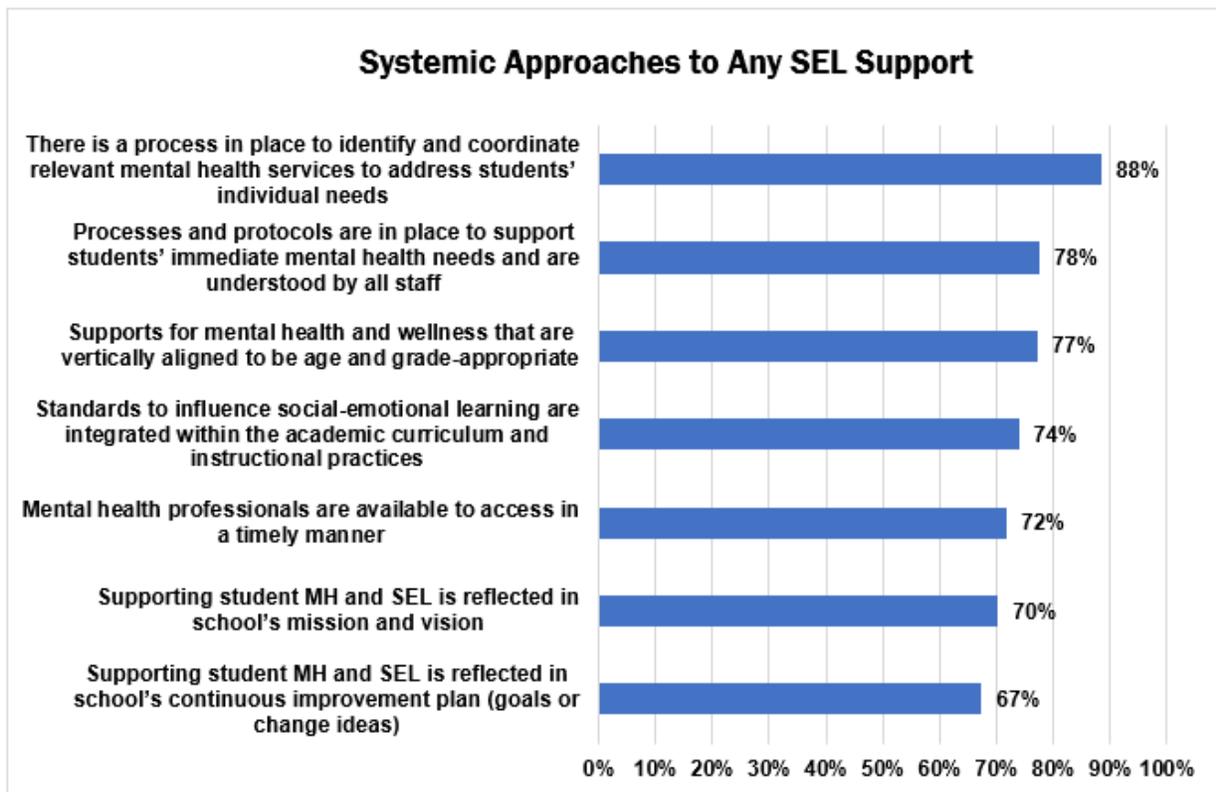


More than half of principals report the use of at least one of the listed approaches to systemically enhancing academic universal supports, with the majority reporting always making the family aware of the support (88%). Although most principals report using systemic approaches to enhancing academic supports, almost 25% did not choose using “timely monitoring to determine adaptation” or “embedding extra time in student/teacher schedules to receive or offer support.” Additionally, approximately 30% of principals did not report that educators “use data to inform progress of a support” or that supports supplement rather than supplant instruction (See Appendix, [table 10](#)). Leaders can read more about the impact of these specific systemic approaches and how to improve cohesive efforts by redesigning roles, restructuring schedules, and other strategies for using effective collaboration to improve universal access to high quality instruction on pages [19 - 30](#) of the [VTmtss Field Guide](#).

**Question 17: Select all systems-level approaches are in place to provide high-quality social-emotional (SEL) or mental health (MH) support to all students who may need them in your school.**

Providing inclusive interventions to support students’ social and behavioral functioning improves academic performance. Leveraging a culture of effective collaboration through utilizing the expertise of students, community members, family, and all staff promotes a respectful and caring community that can support *all* students ([District Management Group: Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports](#), p. 6) Research suggests

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

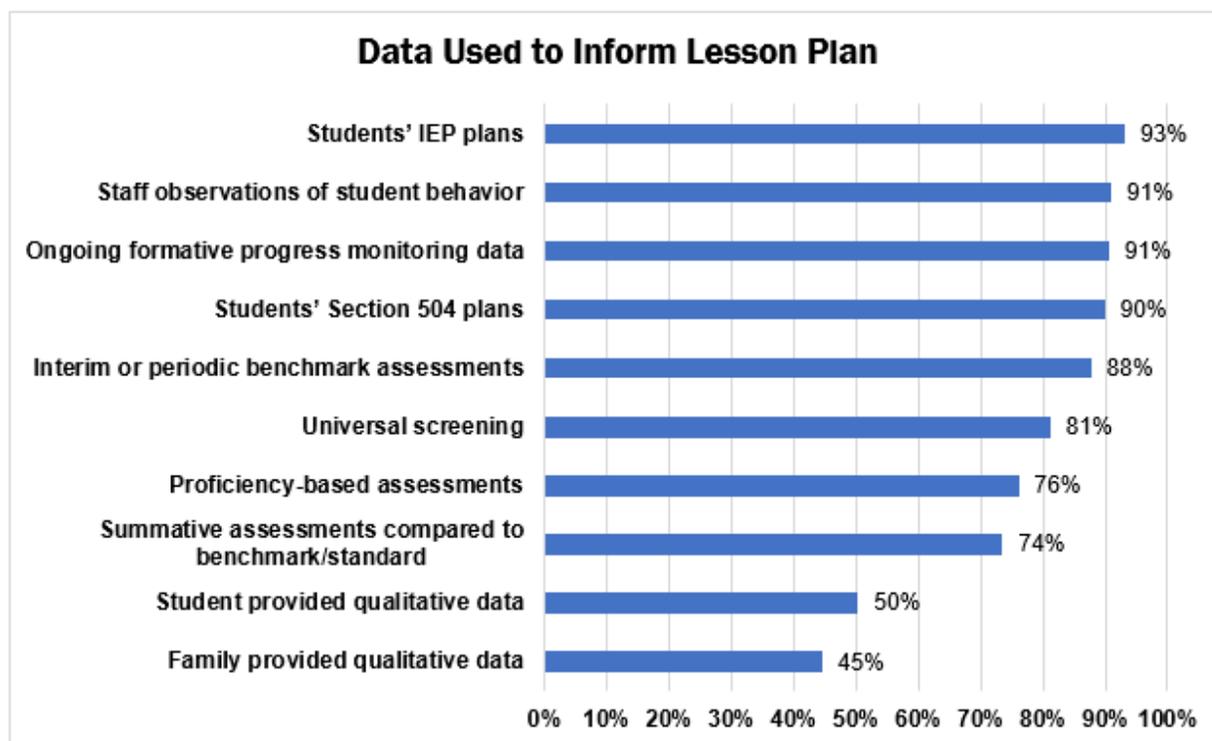


Although this indicator is similar to question 16, it focuses on several different approaches to systemically enhancing social-emotional (SEL) supports. More than 65% of principals report using at least one of these approaches, if not a combination of them (see Appendix, [table 11](#)). Most reported there being a “process to identify and coordinate relevant mental health services to address students’ individual needs” (88%), while the fewest principals reported mental health and SEL being reflected in their school’s mission and vision (70%), or continuous improvement plans (67%). Due to the profound impact these supports can have on students’ growth and achievement, it is beneficial to reflect on and improve upon systemic alignment and coordination of SEL

and mental health supports. The [VTmtss System Screener](#) and other [VTmtss Framework tools](#), prompt leadership teams to reflect on strengths and areas of opportunity within their LEA so that they can implement, improve, or expand universal supports that enhance students' social-emotional well-being.

**Question 18: Select any data sources general educators in your school review to inform their lesson planning.**

Multiple, varied, and recurring data sources enhance instructional planning and inform system improvement by capturing approaches to differentiated instruction, students' ongoing progress, or individual needs ([VTmtss Field Guide](#), p. 42). Instructors should work collaboratively with students and families to consider their individualized learning needs or goals to make culturally responsive decisions and to develop trusting relationships. ([VTmtss Field Guide](#), p. 40).



At least 70% or more principals report educators using many different data sources to inform their lessons, such as IEP plans (93%), student behavior observations (91%), universal screening (81%), proficiency-based assessments (76%), and others (See appendix, [table 12](#)). Fewer reported educators using family (50%) or student (45%) qualitative data. It is useful to seek input from these individuals so unique needs can be easily identified in a timely, reliable, culturally responsive, and sustained manner.

Informing educators of the different purposes of using various data sources to inform instruction can influence their ability and interest to do so. Pages 43-49 of the [VTmtss Field Guide](#) details the reasons for using different data sources, and the [Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems in School District Systems Act 173 Technical Guidance](#) aligns the elements of a LCAS with the VTmtss Framework components to support with system improvement efforts.

# Questions 19 - 24: Climate, SEL, Mental Health Data Collection Increasing Capacity for the Collaborative Development of Collective Expertise

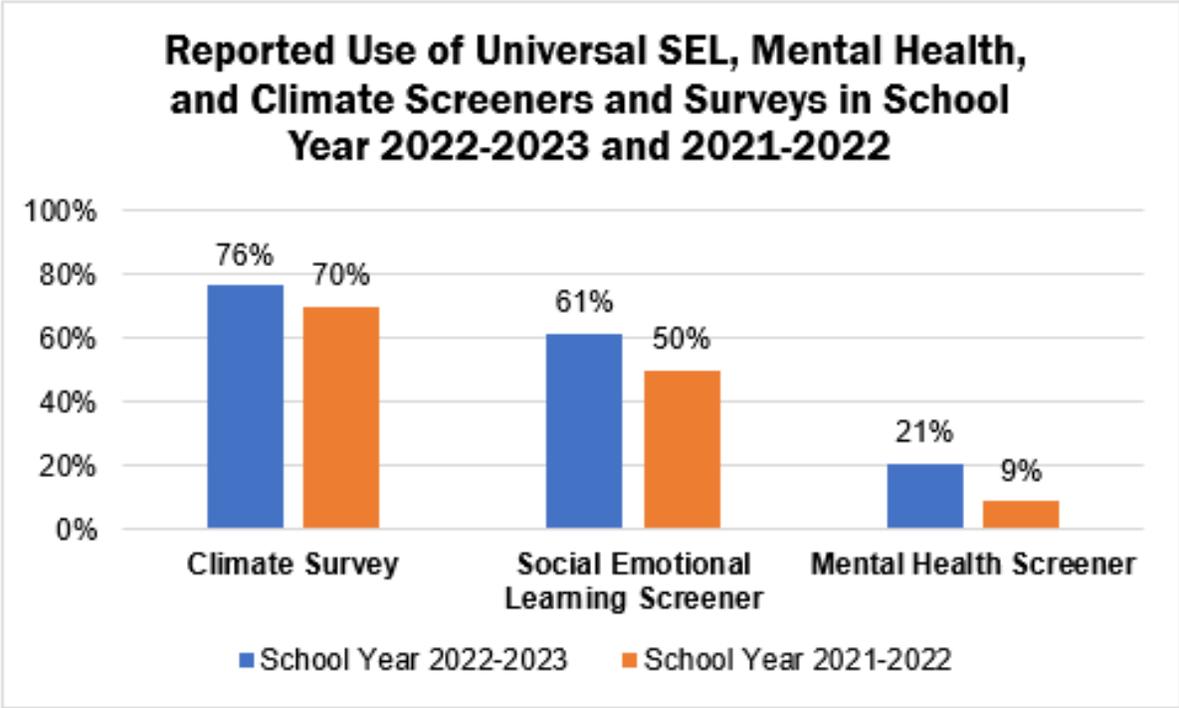
Questions 19: Does your school administer a universal SEL Screener?

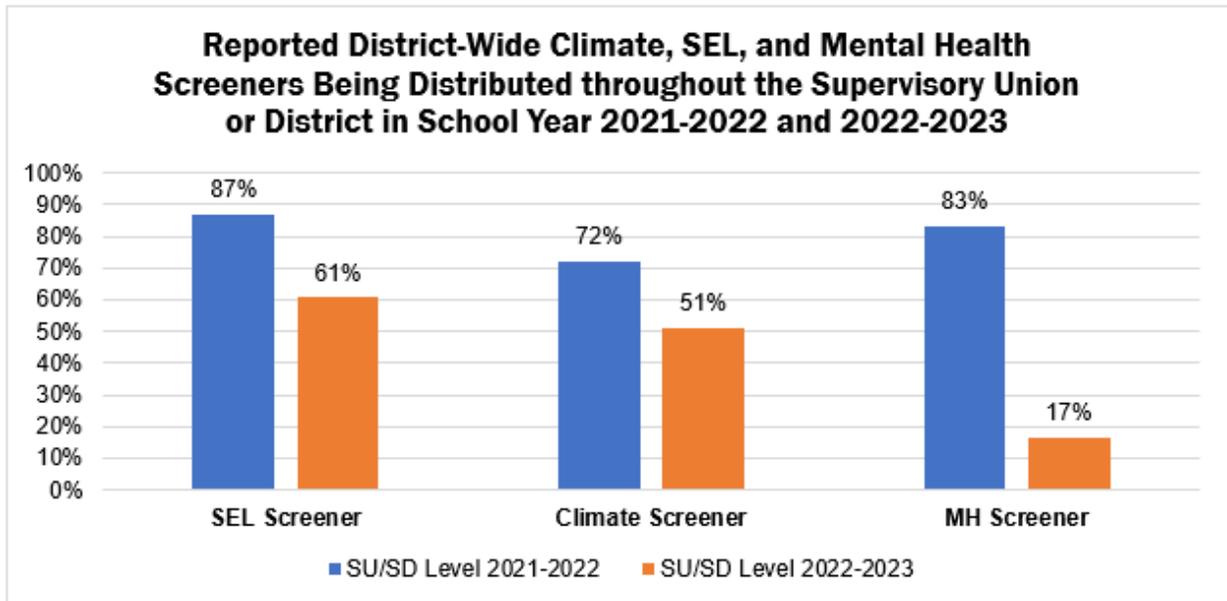
Question 20: Does your school administer a universal mental health screener?

Question 21: Does your school administer a universal climate survey?

Questions 19 - 21A: Are these universal data sources distributed at the school or supervisory union/district level?

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





Since the 2021-2022 school year, more principals reported using all the universal screener and climate survey options. The reported use of mental health screeners increased by 12%, the use of SEL screeners increased by 11%, and the use of climate surveys reportedly increased by 6%. Yet there was a decrease for all three in the number of principals reporting distribution at the supervisory union or district level. It is useful to collect standardized data that can be compared among schools within a district to allow for equitable decision making. Leaders can use this new [Universal Screening for Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs and Strengths in Vermont Schools](#) resource to learn more about the purpose of universal screening and what to consider when implementing one.

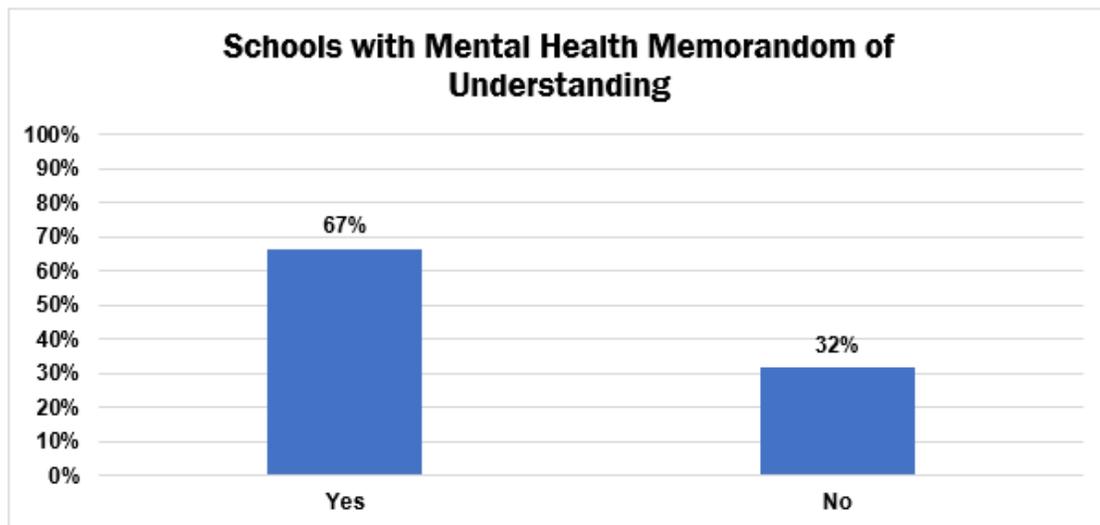
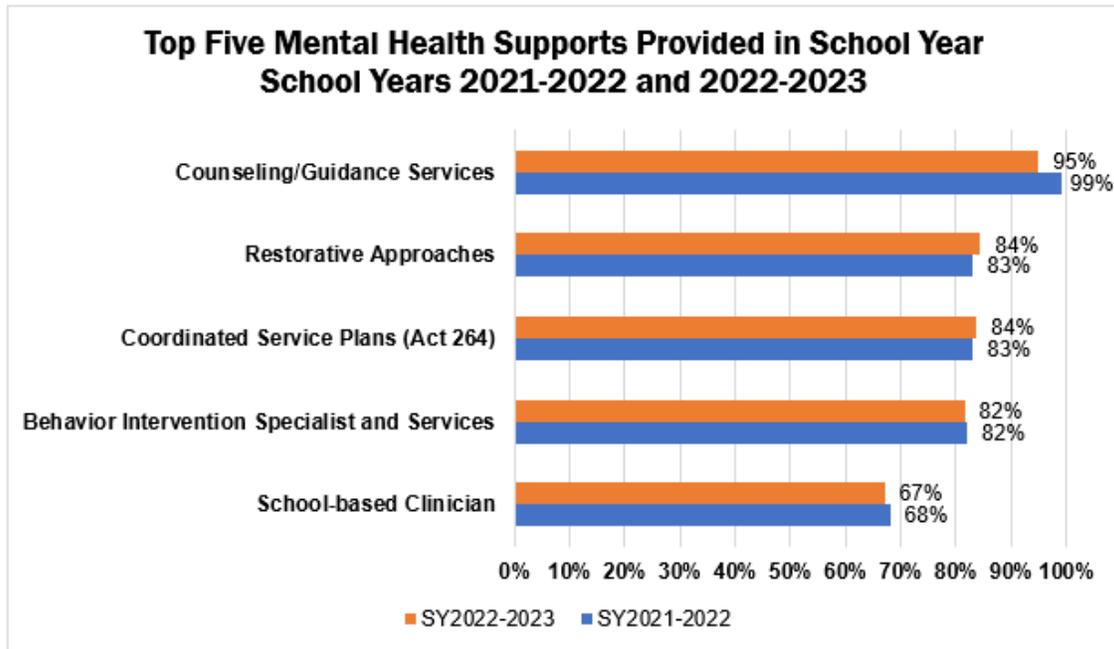
**Question 22: Which of the following Mental Health and Social Services and Supports are part of your school’s multi-tiered system of support?**

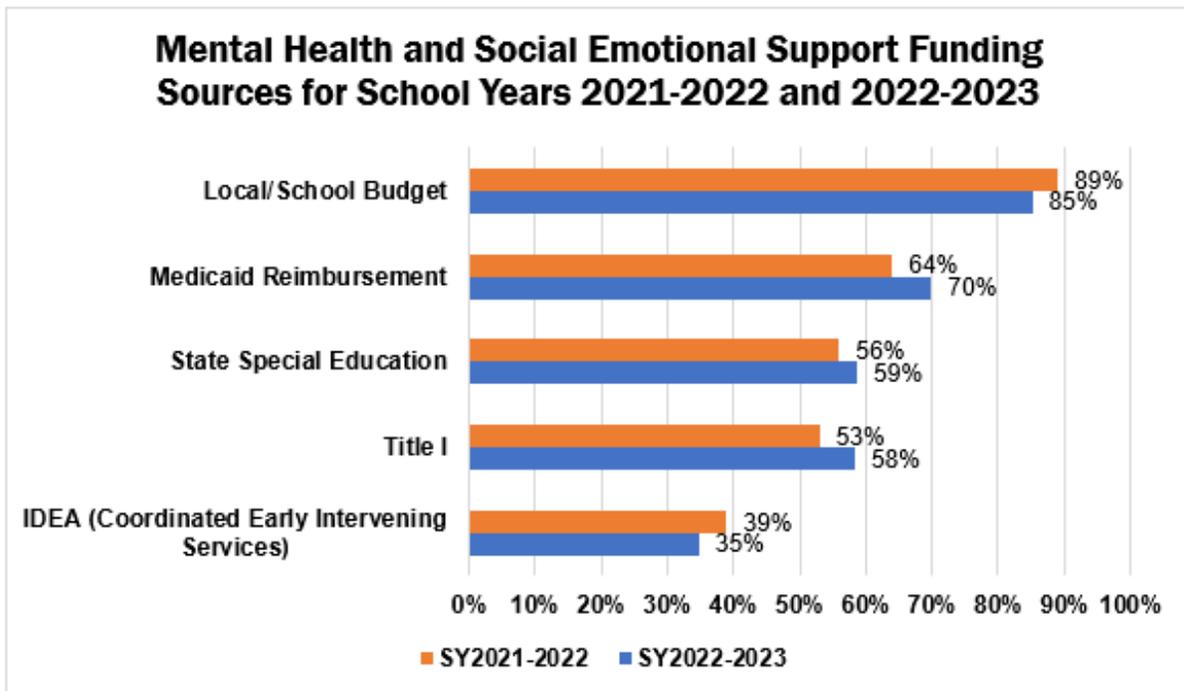
**Question 23: Does your school have a memorandum of understanding with your local designated mental health agency or other local health and mental agency providers?**

**Question 24: Select all funding sources for mental health and social services.**

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

challenges both as individuals and as a collective community ([Build Equity, Join Justice – A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), p. 91).





The top five mental health and social-emotional offerings and their funding sources remain the same from the 2021-2022 school year. Some of the SEL and mental health supports, and funding sources have seen a slight increase in their reported availability whereas others have remained the same or even decreased since last year (See appendix, [table 15](#)). The use of restorative approaches reported increased in SY2021-2022 by 9% but in SY2022-2023 increased by 1%.

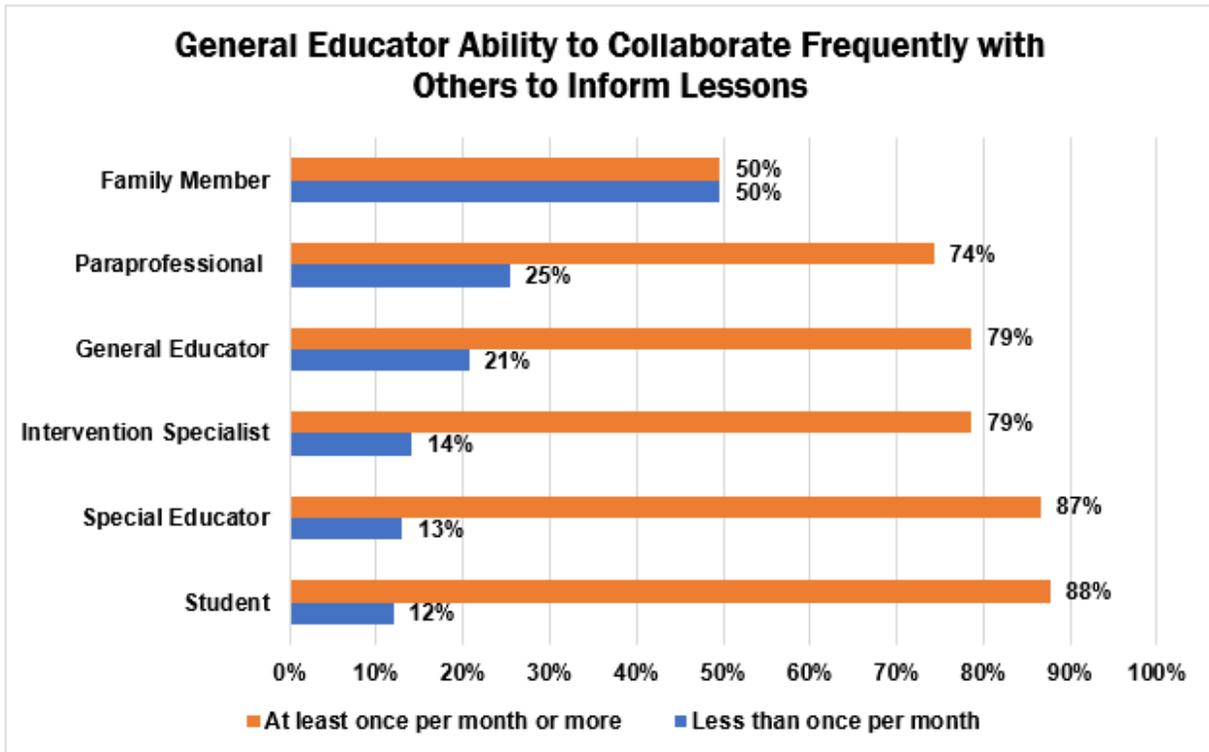
Leaders interested in improving models of restorative approaches in their schools or considering implementing Restorative Approaches (RA) should consult [the VT Restorative Approaches Collaborative website](#) for virtual resources and a directory of local experts. The [SELVT](#), [PBIS Vermont](#),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

## Questions 25 - 30: Increasing Capacity for the Collaborative Development of Collective Expertise

**Question 25: How frequently do general educators in your school have the time intentionally embedded in their schedule to do the following:**

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

Academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes are likely to improve for all students when diverse stakeholders collaborate purposefully around curriculum and instruction. Effective collaboration increases teachers' access to expanded resources, greater professional satisfaction, and an increase in positive interactions between students and teachers that increase student achievement and personal growth ([VTmtss Field Guide](#), p. 15). Teaching is complex and driven by individual core values. As teachers develop healthy partnerships while navigating their own value systems to collaborate on units, lessons, and progress monitoring, a Collective Identity built on communication, collaboration, problem solving, and decision making can begin to flourish. This ultimately strengthens a school culture that can cohesively supports all students ([Build Equity, Join Justice: A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), p. 100).

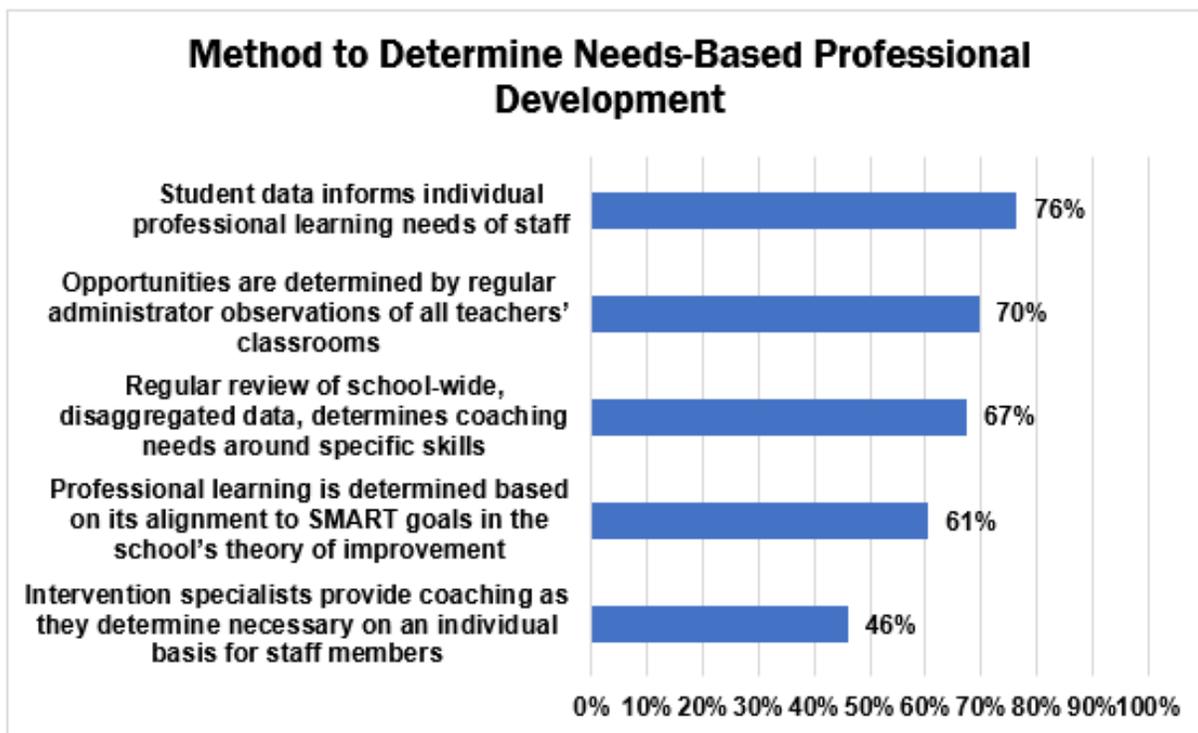


More than 70% of principals report that general educators meet frequently with at least one or some combination of various individuals to inform lessons Fewer principals report general educators' frequent collaboration with families to do so (50%) (see appendix, [table 18](#))

When schools engage with families by intentionally asking questions, listening, and providing opportunities for shared perspectives by co-designing, co-implementing, and co-involvement in assessments and solutions, then improvements in student achievement and positive changes in school systems are likely to increase ([Engaging Families to Transform Education by the Carnegie Corporation of NY](#), 2018). Core Principle 2 of the [Vermont Family Engagement Toolkit](#) involves building effective two-way collaboration with families so educators can efficiently access the families' expertise. Leaders are encouraged to use the assessment and informational tools of this and other Core Principles within the Vermont Family Engagement Toolkit to improve all staff members' ability to effectively collaborate and communicate with all families.

**Question 26: Select how needs-based professional learning is determined at your school.**

It is beneficial to develop a professional learning system where all staff can receive support from appropriate expertise as they need it. Necessary infrastructure and planning should be in place to promote collaborative learning to occur both inside and outside of school by first identifying aspects of a school's unique context that might create better conditions for increased expertise and then creating targeted action plans that can effectively meet the various needs of professional learning ([VTmtss Field Guide](#), p. 55).

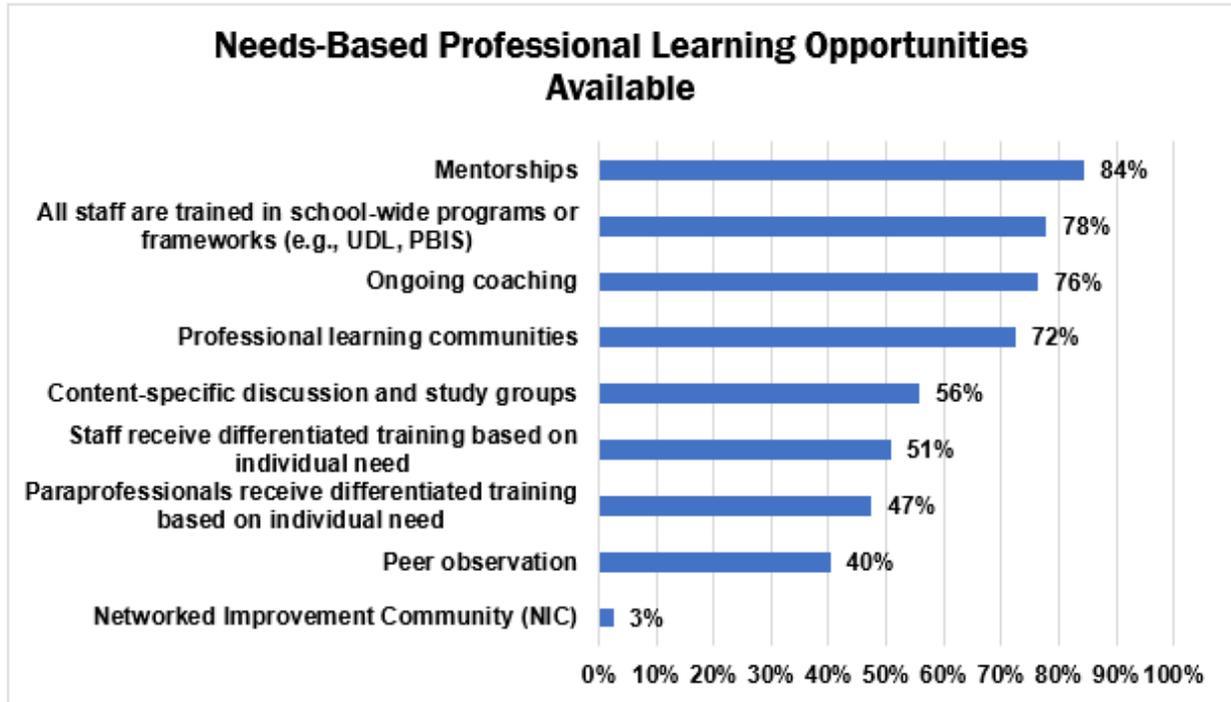


The method for determining professional learning needs reported by most principals was using student data (76%). Although many principals report regular observations of teachers, reviewing school-wide data, and determining PL needs-based on alignment with improvement plans, many did not report using these elements to determine professional learning. Fewer than 50% reported intervention specialists providing coaching determined on an individual basis (see appendix, [table 19](#)).

To review a list of context-specific considerations for creating a needs-based professional learning system see page 55 of the [VTmtss Field Guide](#). Leaders can use [The Act 173 Needs-based Professional Development: Making Connections with VTmtss](#) as a systems-level self-assessment to determine specific areas of their system that may need improvement in relation to critical elements of a needs-based professional development model.

**Question 27: Which of the following needs-based professional learning opportunities are available to staff in your school?**

Building a culture of expertise involves creating infrastructure and opportunities within a school system so that learning can happen continuously for all staff members within their daily work schedule. By embedding various learning opportunities where diverse experts, both inside and outside of school, regularly share their experiences and insights, leaders can better serve the learning needs of staff in a relevant, regular, and intentional manner. Research indicates that learning opportunities embedded within schools and targeted to serve different needs increased educators' abilities to improve or refine their skillsets ([VTmtss Field Guide](#), p. 55).



The needs-based professional learning opportunity reported by the most principals as available to their school staff was mentoring (84%), with almost as many reporting universal framework training, ongoing coaching, and professional learning communities (see appendix, [table 20](#)). Few leaders reported the use of content specific study groups (56%), differentiated training (51%), peer observation (40%), or networked improvement communities (3%). Educators working together to plan and teach within a student-focused partnership contribute to sustained systemic and equitable approaches to instruction by strengthening professional bonds and tying them to a schoolwide goal of student empowerment and well-being ([Build Equity, Join Justice: A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), p. 100). To learn more about needs-based professional learning development, the [Needs-Based Professional Development in School District Systems: Act 173 Technical Guidance](#) has additional information and resources for the improvement of this Act 173 lever to create high-quality and equitable learning opportunities for all students.

**Questions 28A: How many paraprofessionals are primarily assigned to support students who is assigned to them based on an Individualized Education Program?**

**Questions 28B: Support of an assigned student (Not designated by an Individualized Education Program)?**

**Questions 28C: Within core instruction whole class or small group support?**

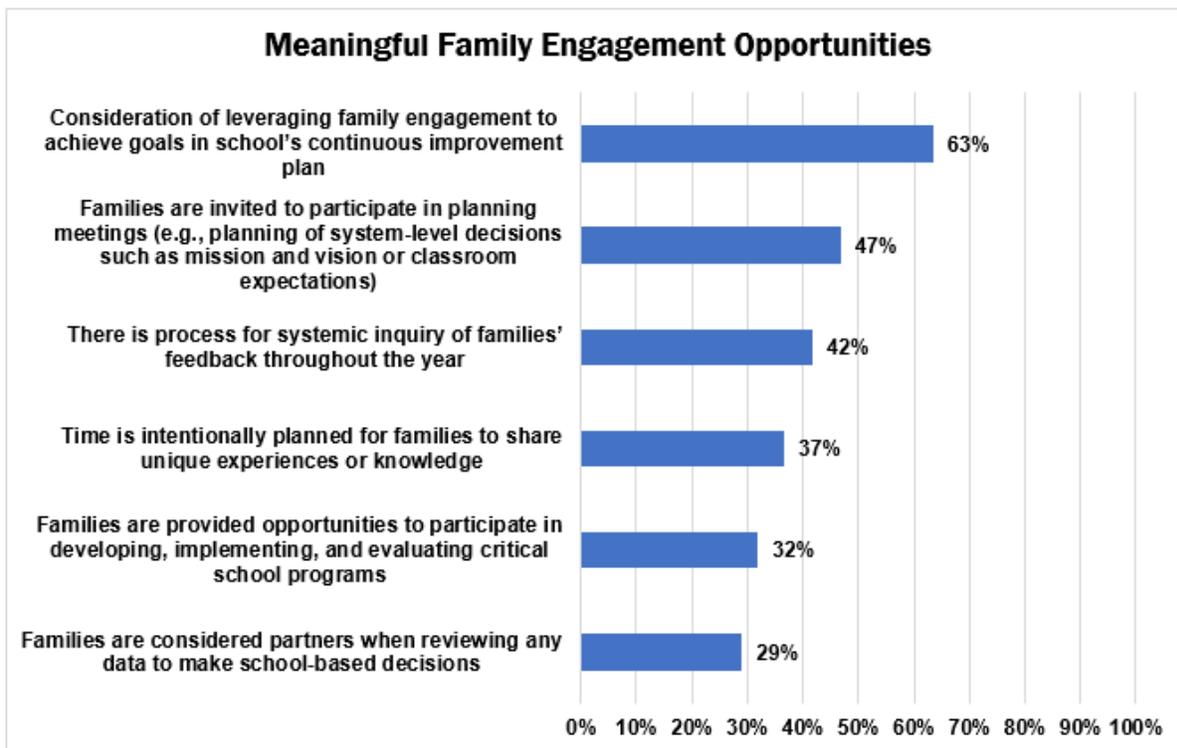
*For Questions 28 A-C: Do the paraprofessionals in these roles meet with a general educator weekly to discuss embedded supports?*

Research shows that students are more successful when authentically engaged in core learning activities with their peers and general educators. Reconsidering paraprofessional roles, or the amount of time available for them to collaborate with other staff, are steps toward increasing the amount of time any student can spend within universal school settings. Systems-wide coordination of general and special education efforts allows all staff to engage in a systemic approach, thus enhancing collaborative best practices ([District Management Group: Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports](#), p. 45-47). This coordination can replace categorical service delivery models with collaborative teaching in a fully integrated service delivery framework that matches resources to student need rather than an eligibility label, through developing communities of practice among all members of a school community, such as paraprofessionals, rather than individualized responsibilities or roles ([Build Equity, Join Justice – A Paradigm for School Belonging](#), p. 71).

**\*\*Note:** *Due to a technical error on the Survey submission form, we are not including the graph and analysis for this question (see [table 21](#)).*

**Questions 29: Select all of the opportunities has your school made available throughout the year for meaningfully engaging families in decisions regarding the school.**

Families who are considered decision-making partners with educators can be better advocates for their children and also provide useful information about students' needs or personal context ([Engaging Families to Transform Education by the Carnegie Corporation of NY](#), 2018). Shared power and responsibility mean that families, school staff, and community members are partners in school planning, leadership, and decision making. Students whose families are meaningfully and intentionally involved in their education, regardless of their income or background, were more likely to regularly attend school, improve grades and assessment outcomes, advance to the next class level, increase social skills and positive behaviors, and graduate from secondary and post-secondary education. Research shows that contributors to successful and sustained family engagement include activities that support learning and development and place an emphasis on participation, communication, collaboration, and empowerment for families ([VT Family Engagement Toolkit and Self-Assessment](#), p. 87).

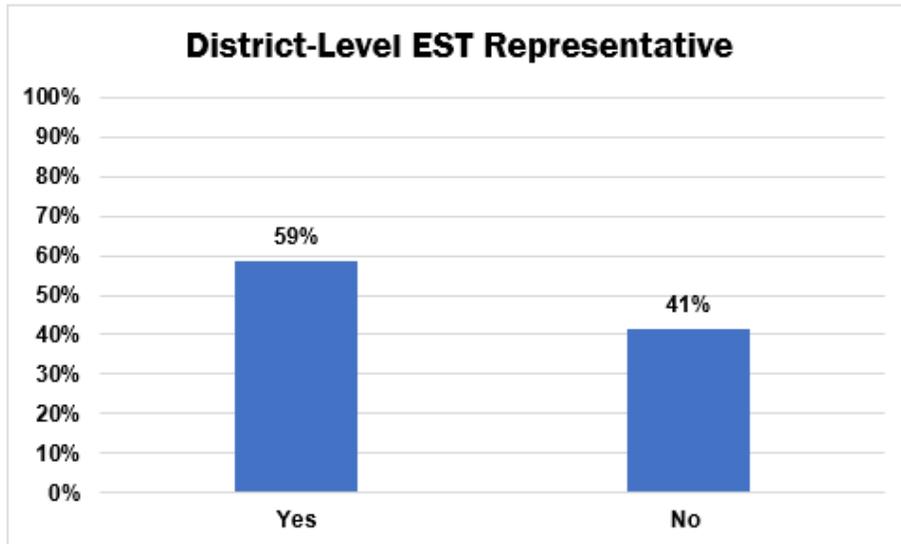


“The consideration of family engagement goals or change ideas within their continuous improvement plan (CIP),” was reported by most principals (63%), while all other meaningful family engagement opportunity options were reported to be used by less than half of all principals (see Appendix, table 22). Principals reporting that families “participate in developing or evaluating critical school programs” increased by 10% since the prior school year, but those reporting that families “participate in planning meetings” decreased (see Appendix, table 22).

Building capacity for relational trust and organizational conditions to improve the meaningful inclusion of families may involve professional activities for those that do not yet have capacity-building skills related to their new leadership role. The [VT Family Engagement Toolkit and Self-Assessment](#) includes various self-assessment tools, strategies, and action planning resources related to the Vermont Family Engagement Core Principles such as Principle 4, “sharing power and responsibility” and Principle 7, “ensuring sustainability,” and others that can support building capacity to engage families in meaningful and authentic ways.

**Question 30: Our school has at least one staff member represented on a district-level educational support team – Yes or No.**

This question was new to the Survey for this school year and is service as a baseline for our own data collection purposes. The AOE recommends that there is at least one district-level educational support team member that can be represented at school level EST meetings.



Although more than half of principals report a district-level representative on their EST, many principals (41%) do not. Additionally, in question 2 only 15% of principals reported that there is a district-level coordinator on their EST team in question 2, which indicates many of these district-level representatives are serving in roles other than that of an EST district-level coordinator.

### Conclusion

We are grateful to the large percentage of principals who responded to this survey as it offers a state perspective of efforts to expand and improve the delivery of services to K-12 students in Vermont.

The data compiled from this survey will inform future professional learning and technical assistance opportunities provided by the VTmtss Team, in collaboration with our colleagues, to support the SU and school leadership.

For more information about a multi-tiered system of supports, or to request assistance, please reference the [VTmtss webpage](#), or contact Caitlin Chisholm, VTmtss Project Coordinator at [caitlin.chisholm@vermont.gov](mailto:caitlin.chisholm@vermont.gov).

## Appendix

### Table 1

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

Stakeholder Options	Percentage of Principals
Students	18%
School psychologist	31%
Families	61%
Relevant behavior specialist	78%
Relevant academic specialist	88%
School administrator	96%
Classroom teacher	97%

### Table 2

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

Stakeholder Options	Percentage of Principals
District-level EST Coordinator	15%
Other non-school supports/advocates	18%
School psychologist or social worker	37%
Family and student (when possible)	68%
Special educator	70%
School counselors	86%
Staff with behavioral or academic expertise	87%
Classroom teacher	96%
School administrator	97%

### Table 3

**Question 3: Is your school's EST meetings schedule embedded within your school's master schedule?**

EST Meetings Embedded in Master Schedule	Percentage of Principals
No	34%
Yes	67%

**Table 4**

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

Frequency of Educational Support Team Meetings	Percentage of Principals
Less than once per month	13%
Once per month	17%
Twice per month or more	69%

**Table 5**

**Question 5: Select the systemic approaches that would always occur when an academic intervention plan has been developed for a student by your school’s EST.**

**Question 6: Select the systemic approaches that would always occur when a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) support or behavioral intervention is developed by your school’s EST.**

Best practices for enhancing educational support team academic and social emotional interventions systemically and comprehensively	Principals reporting for Academic Indicator	Principals reporting for SEL Indicator
Families are made aware of the details and provided relevant resources within the plan	86%	90%
General ed instructor(s) meets with relevant instructors to discuss the details of the intervention	84%	83%
Documentation is provided to all the student’s instructors detailing specific information regarding the intervention plan	81%	85%
General educators are prepared to assume responsibility for the continued implementation of support or accommodations at the completion of an intervention plan	77%	76%
Relevant instructor(s) are provided a documented timeline around expectations for tracking and reporting on intervention data	63%	71%
Students are made aware of the details and provided relevant resources within the plan	48%	69%

## Table 6

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

Type of Data Educational Support Teams Always Review	Percent of Principals
Family and Student Qualitative Data	69%
Outcome Data	75%
Screenener Data	85%
Diagnostic Data	89%
Progress Monitoring Data	92%

## Table 7

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

Elements of and EST Plan	Percent of Principals
Includes information for how to enhance general education setting for student	63%
Dates are noted to ensure short-term, frequent review of student progress occurs	72%
Plans contain space to reflect adjustments while student's plan is active	71%
Plan provides space to promote change that is measurable and is informed by data	72%
Concern is measurable and informed by data that is noted on plan	72%
Current level of performance always noted on plan	80%
Plans clearly define roles: i.e., what will occur, by whom, where and when	81%
Concerns are clearly defined and detailed on plan	95%

## Table 8

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

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

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

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

New Plans in SY22/23 and Plans Carried Over from SY21/22	Plans Completed SY2022/2023
Completed EST Plans	69%
Incomplete EST Plans	31%

## Table 9

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

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

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

Types of Student Support Plans	School Year 2022-2023
Initial EST Plan	77%
Initial 504 Plan	23%
Initial Special Education Evaluation	21%
Initial IEP	16%

**Table 10**

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

<b>Systemic Approaches to Academic Supports</b>	<b>Percent of Principals</b>
Support provided does not supplant nor limit any students' access to universal instruction	61%
Student data is evaluated by educators to measure the progress or outcome of support received	62%
Extra time embedded in student/teacher schedules to receive/offer support	73%
Timely monitoring is always used for any support to determine support adaptation	74%
The most highly-skilled professionals related to the support provided are always available for learners who require them	85%
Intentional short or long-term goals that are based on multiple sources of data inform any support received	86%
Student's family is always made aware of any support provided to any student	88%

**Table 11**

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

<b>Systemic and Comprehensive Approaches to Enhancing Social Emotional Related Supports or Interventions</b>	<b>Percent of Principals</b>
Supporting student MH and SEL is reflected in school's continuous improvement plan (goals or change ideas)	67%
Supporting student MH and SEL is reflected in school's mission and vision	70%
Mental health professionals are available to access in a timely manner	72%
Standards to influence social-emotional learning are integrated within the academic curriculum and instructional practices	74%
Supports for mental health and wellness that are vertically aligned to be age and grade-appropriate	77%
Processes and protocols are in place to support students' immediate mental health needs and are understood by all staff	78%
There is a process in place to identify and coordinate relevant mental health services to address students' individual needs	88%

**Table 12**

**Question 18: Select from the following data sources, which data general educators in your school often review to inform their lesson plans.**

Types of Data Used to Inform Lesson Plans	Percent of Principals
Family provided qualitative data	45%
Student provided qualitative data	50%
Summative assessments compared to benchmark/standard	74%
Proficiency-based assessments	76%
Universal screening	81%
Interim or periodic benchmark assessments	88%
Students' Section 504 plans	90%
Ongoing formative progress monitoring data	81%
Staff observations of student behavior	91%
Students' IEP plans	93%

**Table 13**

**Questions 19: Does your school administer a universal SEL Screener?**

**Question 20: Does your school administer a universal mental health screener?**

**Question 21: Does your school administer a universal climate survey?**

Reported Use of Universal Data Source by Principals	Climate Screeners SY2021-2022	Climate Screeners SY2022-2023	Social Emotional Learning Screeners SY2021-2022	Social Emotional Learning Screeners SY2022-2023	Mental Health Screeners SY2021-2022	Mental Health Screeners SY2022-2023
<b>Yes</b>	70%	76%	50%	61%	9%	21%
<b>No</b>	30%	24%	50%	39%	91%	79%

**Table 14**

**Questions 19A - 21A: Are these universal data sources (Climate Survey, SEL and Mental Health Screeners) distributed at the school or supervisory union/district level?**

Distribution Method of Screeners Reported by Principals	Climate Screeners SY2021-2022	Climate Screeners SY2022-2023	Social Emotional Learning Screeners SY2021-2022	Social Emotional Learning Screeners SY2022-2023	Mental Health Screeners SY2021-2022	Mental Health Screeners SY2022-2023
Only at School	28%	49%	28%	39%	17%	49%
Throughout SU/SD	72%	51%	87%	61%	83%	51%

**Table 15**

**Question 22: Which of the following Mental Health and Social Services and Supports are part of your school's multi-tiered system of support?**

Top Five Mental Health or Social Emotional Services Reported by Principals	School Year 2022-2023	School Year 2021-2022
School-based Clinician	67%	68%
Restorative Approaches	84%	83%
Behavior Intervention	82%	82%
Coordinated Service Plans	84%	83%
Counseling	95%	99%

**Table 16**

**Question 23: Does your school have a memorandum of understanding with your local designated mental health agency or other local health and mental agency providers?**

Principals reporting their school having a memorandum of understanding with local designated mental health agency or other local health and mental agency providers	Percent of Principals
No	32%
Yes	67%

## Table 17

### Question 24: Select all funding sources for mental health and social services

Top 5 Mental Health and SEL Funding Sources Reported by Principals	IDEA	Title 1	State Special Education	Medicaid	Local/School Budget
School Year 2022-2023	35%	58%	59%	70%	85%
School Year 2021-2022	39%	53%	56%	64%	89%

## Table 18

### Question 25: How frequently do general educators in your school have the time intentionally embedded in their schedule to do the following:

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

Individuals reported to collaborate with general educators on a weekly basis	Percent of Principals reporting at least one per month	Percent of Principals reporting less than once per month
Family	50%	50%
Paraprofessional	74%	25%
Another Teacher	79%	21%
Intervention Specialist	79%	14%
Student	88%	13%
Special Educator	87%	12%

**Table 19**

**Question 26: Select how needs-based professional learning is determined at your school.**

<b>Methods for determining needs-based professional learning opportunities</b>	<b>Percent of Principals</b>
Intervention specialists provide coaching as they determine necessary on an individual basis for staff members	46%
Professional Learning is determined based on its alignment to SMART goals in the school's theory of improvement such as Continuous Improvement goals, grant-based planning, etc.	61%
Regular review of school-wide, disaggregated data, determines coaching needs around specific skills	67%
Opportunities are determined by regular administrator observations of all teachers' classrooms	70%
Student data informs individual professional learning needs of staff	76%

**Table 20**

**Question 27: Which of the following needs-based professional learning opportunities are available to staff in your school?**

<b>Needs-based professional learning opportunities available in schools</b>	<b>Percent of Principals</b>
Networked Improvement Community	3%
Peer observation	40%
Paraprofessionals receive differentiated training based on individual need	47%
Staff receive differentiated training based on individual need	51%
Content-specific discussion and study groups	56%
Professional Learning Communities	72%
Ongoing coaching	76%
All staff are trained in school-wide programs or frameworks	78%
Mentorships	84%

**Table 21**

**Questions 28 - A: How many paraprofessionals are primarily assigned to support students who is assigned to them based on an Individualized Education Program?**

**Questions 28 - B: Support of an assigned student (Not designated by an Individualized Education Program)?**

**Questions 28 - C: Within core instruction whole class or small group support?**

Number of Paraprofessionals Assigned to Students with IEP in a school	Number of principals who report each number band option of paras assigned to students with IEPs	Percentage of paraprofessionals assigned to students with IEPs who meet weekly with general educator
0	9	33%
1 - 5	130	67%
6 - 10	49	61%
11 - 15	30	63%
16 +	23	72%

**Table 22**

**Questions 29: Select all of the opportunities has your school made available throughout the year for meaningfully engaging families in decisions regarding the school.**

Meaningful Family Engagement Opportunities	Percent of Principals
Families are considered partner when reviewing any data to make school-based decisions	29%
Families are provided opportunities to participate in developing, implementing, and evaluating critical school programs.	32%
Time is intentionally planned for families to share their unique experiences or knowledge	37%
There is a process for systemic inquiry of families' feedback throughout the year	42%
Families are invited to participate in planning meetings	47%
Consideration of family engagement goals or change ideas are included as part of Continuous Improvement Plan	63%

## Table 23

**Question 30: Our school has at least one staff member represented on a district-wide educational support team – Yes or No.**

District-wide staff representation on EST	Percent of Principals
Yes	59%
No	41%