

District-level Educational Support Team (EST) Oversight

Rationale:

[16 VSA §2902](#) and typical current practice locate the Educational Support Team (EST) at the individual school level. However, the statute also states that school boards “shall assign responsibility “to either the superintendent or the principal to develop and maintain the EST. So, the EST itself operates at the school level but is overseen at the district level. This document describes the core responsibilities and recommended practices for district-level EST oversight.

The Agency of Education (AOE) has identified several critical responsibilities that we recommend that SU/SD assume, as a part of their support of school-level EST work. These responsibilities can be assumed by a new team, or by an existing team of district staff and school administrators (see Recommended Practices below). For the purposes of this guidance, the AOE will be referring to the LEA team conducting this work as the “District EST Oversight Team” This document describes the core responsibilities and recommended practices for district-level EST oversight.

Core Responsibilities:

District-level oversight of the EST process in the schools serves several functions. Most importantly, it ensures that all students within the district have equitable access to the supports they need to succeed. To achieve this goal, district-level oversight ensures that all schools:

- have access to all the supports students need,
- provide equitable student access to these supports,
- develop effective and measurable support student plans, and
- use data in systemic planning about the need for supports.

The District-level EST Oversight Team is also responsible for:

- (1) regularly reviewing school and district-level data in order to identify patterns in student support needs,
- (2) ensuring that all students in the district are assured equitable access to the supports they need, and
- (3) establishing shared protocols for EST meeting procedures and staffing across schools.

EST scheduling is extremely important and should eliminate or minimize any interruption of instruction. At least one member of each school EST should be available for every school District-level EST Oversight Team meeting.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information please contact: Tom Faris, Student Support Services, at Thomas.Faris@vermont.gov.

School EST meetings may surface student concerns that are beyond the scope of an EST but require further investigation and/or supports. The District-level EST Oversight Team needs to ensure that EST have efficient means to document these concerns and reliable procedures to ensure consistent follow-up. These concerns could include mental health issues, substance use, inadequate shelter, and food insecurity.

The District-level EST Oversight Team should also consider whether data available to each school-level EST is sufficient and timely. The team may recommend improvements to the Local Comprehensive Data System (LCAS) including data about the EST itself. District-level data may also show a need for improvements in curriculum and instruction, as well as professional development.

Recommended Practices:

The District-level EST Oversight Team should be managed by an administrator whose contracted responsibilities include this duty. The team should meet at least quarterly and should include, at a minimum, the following staff:

- Lead administrator (Superintendent or MTSS/EST coordinator)
- One member of each school's standing EST (preferably a building administrator or EST coordinator)
- District curriculum director
- District special education director
- District administrator responsible for school counselors

The following roles should be represented and may require additional staff if these responsibilities are not represented by the staff above:

- District data management
- District liaison with local Designated Agency(s) for mental health
- District coordinator for family engagement

Meetings should include a regular review, at least annually, of data from school-level EST as well as additional data that allows the team to detect patterns across the district. Each meeting may examine a variety of data or may focus on a particular area such as the relative referral rates for academic vs behavioral concerns, data reflecting unmet needs, allocating resources across the district, or planning professional development based on data indicating specific areas of concern. Within these meetings, the District-level EST Oversight team will examine disaggregated demographic data about students referred to each school's EST to detect any over-representation of students by race, gender, economic status, and disability.

The District-level EST Oversight Team should give attention to the frequency and quality of family engagement with each school's EST. The team may develop specific EST procedures to improve family engagement or recommend systemic work on family engagement.