



Educational Support Team (EST): Making Connections with VTmtss

Purpose

This document is intended to be used by school systems that are reviewing and improving their EST model. It can be used independently as a diagnostic/needs assessment tool in conjunction with the [VTmtss Systems Screener](#), the [VTmtss Framework](#), and with the [VTmtss Driver Diagram](#) within a more comprehensive continuous improvement process.

What is an EST?

The Educational Support Team (EST) is a statutory requirement ([16 V.S.A. § 2902](#)) for all Vermont schools. An EST monitors student progress, and develops, implements, and tracks progress on the implementation of plans for students who need supports exceeding general education classroom capacity and less formal collaborative team activity (e.g., grade-level teams, content area teams, etc.). The EST may develop support plans to address academic, behavioral, and social-emotional/mental health concerns and, in general, should adopt a whole child lens when thinking of the supports each student needs for success. These support plans will be most effective when there is objective data to define the concern and evaluate the results of any interventions.

Additional AOE EST resources, including recommended best practices for EST implementation and maintenance, can be found on the [AOE's website](#).

NOTE: In the June 2022 guidance document, [District-wide EST Oversight](#), the AOE recommends all supervisory unions/districts create a District-level EST Oversight Team to support the required school-level EST. That oversight team should review and respond to this needs assessment.

Terms Within This Document

- **Performance Indicator (PI) Categories** are the essential elements representing what an effective EST should include.
- **Performance Indicators** begin to describe what a school system would want to realize within each PI category.
- **Effective Practices** are examples of some best practices within each Performance Indicator.
- **Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component Indicators** reference prompts within the VTmtss Driver Diagram that uniquely support a conversation about EST. Users seeking to have improvement conversations about EST through the VTmtss Driver Diagram are encouraged to use

these prompts to structure those discussions.

How to Use this Form as a Needs Assessment

Please use this [PDF](#) for individual responses in Step 2.

1. Assemble a team to complete this needs assessment. Although the composition of review teams will vary, we would strongly recommend that, at a minimum, your District-level EST Oversight team to include a lead administrator (Superintendent or district-level MTSS/EST coordinator), one representative from each school's standing EST (preferably a building administrator or EST coordinator), the district curriculum director, the district special education director, and 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

2. Each school's EST representative completes the needs assessment (pdf) with their school-level EST and brings their responses to the District-level EST Oversight team discussion (see Step 4).

3. The District-level EST Oversight team members convene to review and discuss the answers from each school's EST. Each effective practice that is in place for the entire school system counts for one point. An Effective Practice is only considered to be in place in the district if all schools' EST agree (with a "yes" answer) that it is currently being supported within their school.

4. The District-level EST Oversight team will use the total number of practices marked "Yes" from number 3 to inform the team's next step. There are a total of 29 Effective Practices listed for ESTs.

o **Low Need:** If your score is **23 or above (~80% or above)**, you likely don't need to prioritize systemic improvement of this systems lever at this time, although you may identify Effective Practices that you choose to target and improve upon.

o **Medium Need:** If your score is between **15 and 22 (~51%-79%)**, or if you get a 0-1 in any one category, the AOE recommends that you consider focusing on this systems lever in your improvement work. Emphasize improving categories and effective practices that you identify as being the most critical within your school system.

o **High Need:** If your score is **14 or below (below 50%)**, the AOE recommends that you focus on this systems lever in your improvement work. Emphasize improving categories and effective practices that you identify as being the most critical within your school system. The AOE also recommends that you contact the Agency's VTmtss team to discuss AOE technical assistance offerings.

5. After identifying a final score, the District-level EST Oversight Team has the option of submitting the team's self-assessment online to discuss VTmtss Team technical assistance offerings. Please use the

online form to submit this data.

Name of School:

Name of person completing this form:

Email

PI Category 1: The EST System is Coordinated at the SU/SD Level

Performance Indicator:

1. EST meetings are part of the master schedule.

Needs Assessment for Effective Practices:

a. EST meetings are scheduled consistently for the entire school year.

Yes No

b. The meeting schedule is frequent enough to address all referrals and follow-ups in a timely manner.

Yes No

c. Meetings follow established norms with assigned roles, including a facilitator, recorder and timekeeper.

Yes No

d. Norms and required roles are reviewed at least annually to consider whether they are followed or need modification.

Yes No

e. All EST members are scheduled to attend every meeting.

Yes No

f. The list of members considers AOE recommendations, but at a minimum includes a general educator, special educator, a school administrator, a school counselor, and other staff with academic and behavioral expertise as applicable.

Yes No

View the following resource online:

- [AOE recommendations](#)

g. At least one member is a member of a district level team that is charged with EST oversight.

Yes No

h. At least twice annually, team meetings include discussion of potential systemic improvements that could build capacity in the general education classrooms.

Yes No

i. All team meetings include a standing agenda item of who else needs to know about team decisions.

Yes No

j. All team actions and decisions are documented, including timelines and staff responsible.

Yes No

k. Agendas are shared prior to the meeting.

Yes No

Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component for Category 1 - Indicator 1:

Effective Collaboration:

(characteristic 2, indicator 2)

School structures support ongoing collaborative engagement focused on improving student outcomes in behavior, academics, and social-emotional learning.

Performance Indicator:

2. Distribution of personnel across the district's schools is equitable.

Needs Assessment for Effective Practices:

a. Admin reviews and approves all standing EST assignments.

Yes No

b. Other responsibilities do not conflict with attendance at EST meetings.

Yes No

c. All team members have an equal voice with the administrative voice largely being seen as facilitative, and not directive.

Yes No

d. A district level team that is charged with EST oversight uses EST data to equitably allocate resources to schools, in accordance with student needs.

Yes No

Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Component

for Category 1 - Indicator 2:

Expertise:

(characteristic 2, indicator 1)

The appropriate expertise is allocated and aligned to targeted areas of need.

Performance Indicator:

3. Interventions and supports are adequately funded.

Needs Assessment for Effective Practices:

a. District administration uses EST data and input to ensure that there is adequate funding for supports and interventions.

Yes No

b. District administrative teams uses EST data at least annually to determine needs and plan improvement.

Yes No

Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram Components for Category 1 - Indicator 3:

Systemic and Comprehensive Approach:

(characteristic 1, indicator 1)

The collective vision of growth and improvement is characterized through the structures and modes of operation.

Expertise:

(characteristic 2, indicator 2)

Programs, policies and resource allocation decisions allow access to the appropriate expertise.

"Yes" total:

0/17

PI Category 2: The EST System has Clear Structure and Protocols

Performance Indicator:

1. Documented team structure and norms.

Needs Assessment for Effective Practices:

a. Meetings follow established norms with assigned roles, including a facilitator, recorder and timekeeper.

Yes No

b. EST meetings follow consistent, district-identified meeting practices and norms.

Yes No

Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram for Component Category 2 - Indicator 1:

Effective Collaboration:

(characteristic 2, indicator 1)

There are purposeful collaborations formed to meet specific needs, have defined norms, roles, responsibilities, and processes.

Performance Indicator:

2. Documentation of communication protocols off/for the EST process for all stakeholders.

Needs Assessment for Effective Practices:

a. All team decisions are documented, including timelines and staff responsible.

Yes No

b. The school and district uses EST data about family engagement in their continuous improvement.

Yes No

View the following resource online:

- [Family Engagement](#)

Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram for Component Category 2 - Indicator 2:

Effective Collaboration:

(characteristic 2, indicator 3)

There are respectful school-family and school-community partnerships that include participation in decision making, input into improved student learning, and culturally responsive teaching.

Performance Indicator:

3. Resources and continual needs-based professional development.

Needs Assessment for Effective Practices:

a. There are at least two EST meetings each year that are dedicated to the discussion of potential systemic improvements that could build capacity in the general education classroom.

Yes No

Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram for Component Category 2 - Indicator 3:

Expertise:

(characteristic 3, indicator 2)

Expertise is used flexibly and efficiently to develop, maintain, and employ resources as needed to ensure success for all students.

(characteristic 1, indicator 1)

All educators, staff, family and community members view themselves as lifelong learners.

"Yes" total:

0/5

PI Category 3: The EST System Includes a Robust Data Collection and Visual Analysis

Performance Indicator:

1. Documented use of multiple student-level data sources to inform decision making and establish progress monitoring.

Needs Assessment for Effective Practices:

a. Team discussion always includes a review of data and an opportunity for clarifying questions.

Yes No

View the following resource online:

- [Review of data](#)

b. Data regularly reviewed by the EST includes academic data, as appropriate.

Yes No

c. Data regularly reviewed by the EST includes social-emotional and mental health data, as appropriate.

Yes No

d. Data reviewed by the EST includes behavioral data, as appropriate.

Yes No

e. Students are engaged in the development and review of their EST Plans at a developmentally appropriate level.

Yes No

f. Data is included from multiple assessments to develop professional learning for educators.

Yes No

Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram for Components Category 3 - Indicator 1:

Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System:

(characteristic 1, indicator 5)

A range of trustworthy and relevant data used to solve problems and make decisions.

High-Quality Instruction and Intervention:

(characteristic 3, indicator 4)

Intervention is tailored to specific student needs and uses progress monitoring and other high-quality assessment information to inform decisions.

Performance Indicator:

2. Documented evidence that trends in student needs feed CNA process.

Needs Assessment for Effective Practices:

a. District administration uses EST referral data when planning professional development and allocating resources.

Yes No

b. District administration examines disaggregated demographic data about students referred to the EST to detect any over-representation of students by race, gender, economic status, and disability.

Yes No

c. The EST makes time to review the referral process and the fidelity of implementation.

Yes No

d. The EST uses data about the causes and sources of EST referrals to inform revisions to the EST referral process.

Yes No

e. EST data is shared with school and district teams to inform CIP goal identification.

Yes No

Relevant VTmtss Driver Diagram for Component Category 3 - Indicator 2:

Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System:

(characteristic 1, indicator 3)

A shared focus on using assessment information to improve instructional practices and outcomes.

"Yes" total:

0/11

Total "Yes" across categories:

"Yes" total:

0/33

Refer to "How to Use this Form as a Needs Assessment" section of this form for recommended next steps.

Contact Tom Faris at Thomas.Faris@vermont.gov with questions.