

An Exploration of School Leaders' Perceptions of MTSS Implementation and Capacity

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Introduction

- ESSA (2015), provided guidance to state education agencies broadening the definition of "school success" to include positive academic and social, emotional, behavioral outcomes
- Systemic Barriers to meeting student needs (e.g., change school systems, staff beliefs and skills, initiative overload & competition, silos of implementation)
- Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) –integrated layered continuum of evidence based supports (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016)
- Implementation Capacity-systems, activities, and resources needed to adopt and sustain (Ward et al., 2018)

Objectives

1. Examine extent of statewide MTSS implementation in the absence of a state directive or mandate
2. Use the implementation driver framework to explore the relationship of capacity and:
 - a) Implementation stage
 - b) School building leaders' perceptions of benefits to MTSS implementation
3. Identify barriers and enablers that may account for variance in MTSS implementation.

Methods

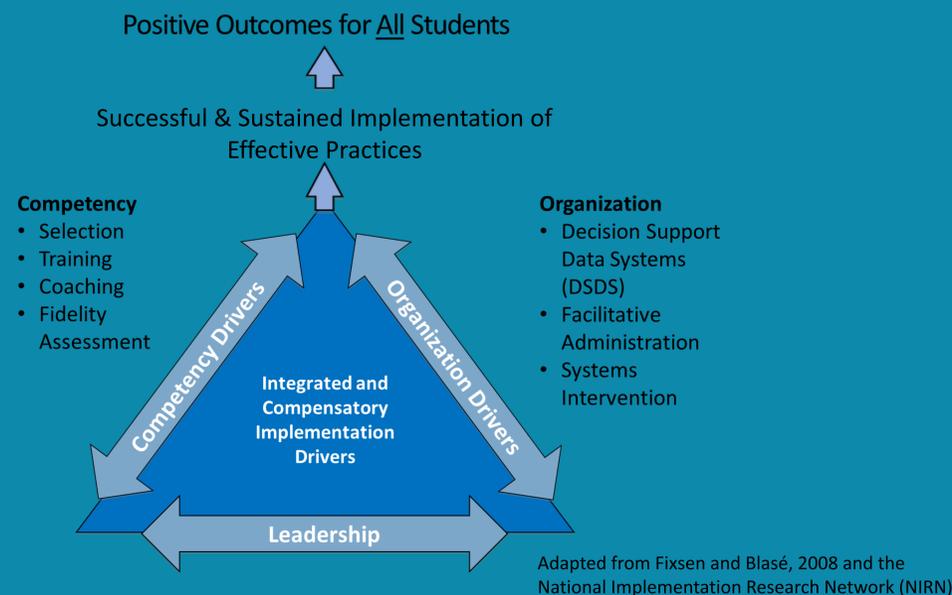
Quantitative, cross-sectional survey for school building leaders

Revised previous survey (Cavanagh, 2013 & Dillard, 2017) and the Driver's Best Practices Assessment for capacity questions (Ward et al., 2018)

Survey Items: school demographics, implementation stage, MTSS core practices, Implementation Drivers, perceptions of MTSS effectiveness, and barrier/enablers to implementation

School building leaders reporting higher MTSS implementation capacity were more likely to report:

- Later implementation stages
- MTSS implementation efforts were more effective at:
 - Promoting positive student academic and behavioral outcomes
 - Supporting students academically and behaviorally at-risk
 - Reducing referrals to special education services



Results

N = 108, 2.6% response rate, n = 85 currently implementing MTSS

1. **Extent of MTSS Implementation**
 - Only **24.7%** (n = 21) of respondents indicated their team included **multiple stakeholders** such as students, families, and community agency partners.
 - Schools were more likely to be engaged in MTSS core practices for **academics compared to behavior**
 - Overall, respondents who indicated **high engagement in MTSS core practices** (i.e. teaming, academics, and behavior) **were more likely to report their schools were in later stages of implementation.**
2. **Individual Driver Capacity:**
 - Lower capacity in Competency Drivers compared to Organization
 - Lowest capacity within the Coaching Driver.
 - Highest capacity in the DSDS and Facilitative Administration Drivers.

Respondents that reported **higher levels of capacity** were more likely to report their schools were **in later stages of MTSS**

Respondents indicated that **when their schools had higher capacity, they were more likely to indicate higher levels of perceived efficacy** in their MTSS implementation to achieve desired outcomes.

MTSS Implementation	
Influencers	Non-Influencers
Enablers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis and decision making • Support from district leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional supports • Family communication and supports • Community agency supports
Barrier: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State education department
*Training & Staff Buy-in **COVID-19 & Time	

Implications

Research
Implementation capacity per stage
Little studied drivers: facilitative administration, selection, systems intervention
Internal and external coaching systems

Policy
Cascade of implementation supports
Intentional state and regional infrastructure
Specific implementation guidance

Educational Practice
Pre-service and school leadership programs
Statewide and Regional Technical assistance
Establish and expand stakeholder relationships



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