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Response to MTSS Question from Senate Education Committee

March 29, 2022

Questions from the Senate Education Committee:

Q1: How long would training to use MTSS for SLD identification (vs. using the discrepancy model for identification, which Vermont is currently using) actually take?

Instead MTSS is a decision-making framework with the goal of measurably improving outcomes for ALL students, not just struggling students. MTSS includes:

a. A system of effective instruction and intervention:

Tier I: the school's core curriculum and instruction for all students as well as the first line of prevention and intervention.

Tier II is the second layer of intervention for some students (usually in small groups) who need increased intensity and additional instruction and remediation (which is adaptive to the findings of the assessment). The instruction is diagnostic and prescriptive based on assessments and instruction.

Tier III includes individual instruction, deeper assessment, and special-education services.

b. A comprehensive assessment system for all students, including universal screening, progress monitoring, and summative assessments to measure performance levels that, in real time, in order to immediately impact teachers' instruction.

c. Data-based decision making for differentiating instruction and moving students fluidly among the tiers of instruction.

There may be a misunderstanding of the purpose of MTSS. MTSS is not:

- a. A process for identifying students for special education
- b. A process for avoiding special education referrals or placement
- c. Intended only for struggling students
- d. A program or intervention
- e. About labeling students

Q2: What would the training involve?

Teachers and administrators have already been invited to many trainings offered by the VT-AOE in all aspects of MTSS. Many districts have held additional training in designing and administering formative and summative assessments, analyzing student performance data, and differentiating instruction. In addition, the VT-AOE has dozens of MTSS resources on its web pages.

For information released by the VT-AOE, please see the VT-mtss Field Guide from 2019. Please note that the first VT-mtss Field Guide was published eight years ago, in 2014.

https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-vtmtss-field-guide-2019_0.pdf

Q3: Would teachers and schools be prepared this summer to implement MTSS?

MTSS has been an expectation of all public schools in Vermont for many years. If a school or district needs additional training for its staff, then they can make arrangements with the VT-AOE or national experts in the area(s) of need, such as for establishing a “guaranteed and viable curriculum” (Marzano, 2003) based on the Common Core State Standards, creating an effective Response to Instruction/Intervention (RtI) system, and/or adopting a comprehensive screening and assessment program. Services were confirmed by Emily Simmons, General Counsel, VT-AOE, in which she stated they are “ready to help” during her March 18, 2022 testimony.

School districts struggling to implement MTSS may need to access the support offered by the VT-AOE. For example, they can attend the annual four-day [BEST/VTMTSS conference](#) in June 2022 at the Killington Resort. Conference registration and lodging fees could be funded by the State to ensure attendance. Hence, a waiver to delay implementation of MTSS would not be necessary.

For all these reasons, a waiver to delay implementation is not necessary and would continue to harm students.

Respectfully Submitted,

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