INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 152
School Board Work Session
MAPS Operations Center Board Room 600
1313 30th Avenue South
Moorhead, Minnesota

July 18, 2022
4:00 PM

Live Stream Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lblH4i6EFW8

MISSION STATEMENT: To develop the maximum potential of every learner to thrive in a changing world.

BOARD MEMBERS:	Cassidy Bjorklund, Vice-Chair	Rachel Stone, Treasurer
	Melissa Burgard, Chair	Matt Valan, Director
	Kara Gloe, Clerk	Keith Vogt, Director
	Scott Steffes, Director	Dr. Brandon Lunak, Superintendent of Schools

AGENDA PACKET

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Preview of Agenda – Dr. Brandon M. Lunak

D. Approval of Agenda

E. Public Forum

The Public Forum will be open up to thirty (30) minutes for public comment on an agenda item at the School Board Work Session. Individuals who wish to speak during the Public Forum have submitted a written request by 1:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. The School Board Chair will call speakers to the microphone and will recognize one speaker at a time. Each speaker is permitted to speak for up to three (3) minutes total. Public

Comment sessions will not be recorded or live streamed.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. **Multi-Tiered System of Supports Report:** Duane Borgeson

Suggested Resolution: Presentation

B. **K-4 Literacy Evaluation Review:** Dr. Jeremy Larson

Suggested Resolution: Presentation

C. **2022-2023 Teaching & Learning Goals and Staff Development Plan:** Dr. Jeremy Larson

Suggested Resolution: Presentation

D. **Minnesota Student Data Privacy Law:** Dan Markert

Suggested Resolution: Presentation

3. SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES

4. ADJOURNMENT

Suggested Resolution: Move to approve adjournment of the July 18, 2022 School Board Work Session at ____ p.m.

Moved by:
Seconded:
Comments:

MOORHEAD AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Special Services

Memo EDOSS.23.001R

TO: Dr. Brandon M. Lunak, Superintendent

FROM: Duane Borgeson, Executive Director of Special Services

DATE: 07/12/2022

RE: Multi-Tiered System of Supports Report

Representatives from the University of Minnesota Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) will present the results of the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Mental Health studies that were completed over the course of the 2021-2022 school year. The results of the studies will help shape the development of a District-wide comprehensive system of student support for academics and mental health.

Suggested Resolution: Presentation

DB:dmb

ATTACHMENTS:
Presentation

Center for
Applied Research and
Educational Improvement
University of Minnesota
Driven to Discover®

REVIEW OF MOORHEAD AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS AND SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

July 2022

Prepared by:
Madeline Larson, Ph.D.
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Research, Development, and Engagement to Improve Education

How to Cite this Report

Larson, M., Richardson, R., Potter, L., Knewitz, D., & Schantz, J. (2022). *Review of Moorhead public schools multi-tiered system of supports and school mental health services.* Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary **6**
Introduction 6
Summarized Findings and Recommendations 6
Multi-Tiered System of Supports Framework 6
School Mental Health Services (within an MTSS Framework) 10

Introduction **11**
Purpose of the Review 11
Moorhead Area Public Schools 11
Why Focus on MTSS? 11
Why Focus on School Mental Health? 12
Evaluation Questions 13
Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework 13
School Mental Health Services (within an MTSS Framework) 13
Project Team 14

Methods **15**
Group Interviews 15
MTSS Group Interviews 15
School Mental Health Group Interviews 15
Surveys 16
Extant Student Data 16
Enrollment and Attendance Data 16
Student Achievement Data 16
Special Education Child Count Data 16
Minnesota Student Survey Data 16
District Documentation 17
Staff Utilization Data 17
District Documents 17

Findings and Recommendations **18**
Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) 18
<u>Evaluation Question 1:</u> To what extent are all buildings in the school district implementing an aligned (PreK-12) MTSS framework that addresses students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs? **18**
Findings 18
MTSS Group Interviews 18
Domain 1: Assessments 20

Domain 2: Data-Based Decision-Making (DBDM) 21
Domain 3: Multi-Level Instruction 23
Domain 4: Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms 27
Domain 5: Fidelity and Evaluation 29
Hopes for System Improvement 29
MTSS Self-Evaluation Survey 31
District Assessment Inventory 33
District Professional Development Inventory: Application to MTSS 34
Strengths, Opportunities, and Recommendations 35
Evaluation Question 2: To what extent do teachers and staff support implementation of an MTSS framework? 45
Findings 45
MTSS Group Interviews 45
MTSS Beliefs Survey 45
MTSS Perceptions Survey 47
Beliefs about Behavior Survey 50
Strengths, Opportunities, and Recommendations 55
Evaluation Question 3: What is the relationship between implementation of the MTSS framework and student achievement and social, emotional, behavioral outcomes? 58
Findings 58
Student Graduation Rates and College Readiness 58
Student Attendance 60
Student High School Failure Rates 61
Student Discipline Data 62
Minnesota Student Survey Data 62
Student Academic Data 64
ACT Results 64
Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment 65
Universal Screening Data: Reading 68
Screening in Elementary School: AimswebPlus 68
Screening in Middle and High School: NWEA-MAP 70
Strengths, Opportunities, and Recommendations 72
Evaluation Question 4: What is the impact of the MTSS framework on special education child count? 76
Findings 76
Special Education Child Count Data 76
School Mental Health Services 79
Evaluation Question 5: How effective is the district at identifying and serving students in need of school mental health services based on best practice research? 79

Findings 79
School Mental Health Group Interviews 79
Evaluation Question 6: To what extent does the district have sufficient services/supports in place to serve all students? 86
Findings 86
Staff Utilization Data 86
District Professional Development Inventory: Application to School Mental Health 90
Strengths, Opportunities, and Recommendations 90
Evaluation Question 7: How effective is the coordination of services with outside agencies and between buildings within the district? 93
Findings 93
Interagency School Mental Health Survey 93
Types of Collaboration 93
Influences on Collaboration 94
Perceived Benefits of Collaboration 95
Strengths, Opportunities, and Recommendations 96
Conclusion 99
References 100

Executive Summary

Introduction

Moorhead Area Public Schools (Moorhead) have been implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS; previously referred to as Response to Intervention) framework for a number of years and have more recently committed to supporting student mental health throughout the district, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. District leaders recently requested a comprehensive review from theCenter for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota of its district-wide implementation of an MTSS framework, with a focus on the extent to which this framework was being implemented in support of School Mental Health (SMH) services and programming.

Seven evaluation questions guided this review in the categories of Multi-Tiered System of Supports Framework and School Mental Health. The first four questions concern the degree to which the primary components of an MTSS framework are in place throughout the district, the perceptions and beliefs that educators have about this framework, and the student outcomes that Moorhead's MTSS framework is generating. The next three questions pertain to a specific application of the MTSS framework: Comprehensive School Mental Health Services. These mental health questions ask about the degree to which student needs are identified and addressed as well as district capacity to meet identified needs through staffing, coordination, professional development, and communication. Information for the review was collected during the months of October 2021 - May 2022 through group interviews, staff surveys, student/family surveys, review of extant student data, review of staffing data, and review of district data and documentation (e.g., discipline policies). Abbreviated key findings and recommendations identified through this review are summarized below. More detailed information is found in the body of the full report.

Summarized Findings and Recommendations

Multi-Tiered System of Supports Framework

A clear majority of Moorhead staff support implementation and are eager to learn more and improve their MTSS practice; however, their current working knowledge of MTSS is limited, and MTSS application is piecemeal, which affects implementation success and subsequent impact on student outcomes.

- On surveys, the majority of interviewed staff expressed that they were looking forward to learning more and improving MTSS implementation in the district.
- Approximately 99% of staff generally value positive relationship building, proactive/preventative strategies to address SEB needs, and providing positive reinforcement for desired student behavior.
- A majority of district administrators and instructional coaches (84-91% across MTSS domains on the MTSS Beliefs scale) hold supportive beliefs with regard to the academic ability of students with disabilities, data-based decision-making, and functions of core and supplemental instruction.

Staff indicated that they need more support and training in MTSS.

- Only 53% of staff surveyed reported needing little support or being highly skilled at MTSS activities related to academic instruction and intervention. Only 34% of staff surveyed reported being highly skilled and requiring minimal support to carry out MTSS activities related to social-emotional learning (SEL).
    - Recommendation: As part of any district-wide MTSS 101 training, focus more attention/time on how to apply an MTSS framework within the areas of academics, behavior, and mental health (including social, emotional, and behavioral health). In addition, plan to provide follow-up training or coaching in this area where staff reported the lowest level of self-efficacy across both domains (~30% in each; see Table 11 below).
- Only 43% of staff surveyed reported being highly skilled and needing minimal support or so highly skilled that they could train others in MTSS activities related to data manipulation and technology use.
    - Recommendation: Through professional development and follow-up implementation supports and strategies, develop staff competence in technology and data manipulation (e.g., how to navigate online student information systems, creating graphs in Excel or Google sheets, use data to inform precision practice).
- In interviews, staff indicated that, presently, expectations of staff members are not clearly defined which makes fidelity of implementation difficult to measure. As a result, it is difficult to clarify what practices need to be improved. The most prominent theme identified by staff when asked what they hope will result from this review process was a need for uniformity and alignment in the district's MTSS framework from preschool to grade 12.
    - Recommendation: Establish a comprehensive and detailed MTSS implementation guide tailored to expectations specific to educators in Moorhead. CAREI can help with the creation of such a process guide.

While many components of MTSS are in place and few are fully in place, these components are not optimally working together to promote continuous improvement cycles in which student outcome data are used in conjunction with instructional/intervention fidelity data to make important organizational and educational decisions that will improve practice.

- Buildings are not yet collecting any form of fidelity data on most of their intervention or assessment practices.
    - Recommendation: Develop a system and measures to monitor the fidelity of implementation of core, supplemental, and intensive interventions as well as screening and progress monitoring processes.
- School leadership teams agreed that professional development targeted at helping all staff understand and get on the same page about MTSS is an important next step.
    - Recommendations: Provide "MTSS 101" training to all staff that includes definitions of the core components in general and articulation of what these look like (or the goal for what they will look like) at each building.
    - Develop a comprehensive district-wide training plan aligned with the MTSS process guide (handbook that reflects current expectations for practice). Identify personnel who will be in charge of delivering follow-up implementation support

(i.e., coaching and PLC work) and monitoring of fidelity and results of implementation.
    - When documenting information about professional development offered by the district, apply a more detailed coding scheme to identify the content being addressed in each session (e.g., assessment, collaborative teaming) so that professional development trends can be more closely examined and responded to over time.
- Moorhead has considerable diversity within its student population (cultural, economic, and linguistic; see Appendix A). Based on relatively large gaps between various student White students and students of color on outcomes such as graduation rates, chronic absenteeism rates, course failure rates, and performance on standardized academic testing, concern exists regarding the degree to which Moorhead is successfully engaging and considering the unique needs of students and families of color (see the section on research evaluation question 3 in the current report). Perhaps due to concerted efforts of Moorhead educators, these gaps have been shrinking over the last three years; however they remain large. One of Moorhead staff's greatest wishes expressed in the group interviews is to have an explicit, district-wide focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion that includes training and active follow-up implementation support in evidence-based strategies to close opportunity and achievement gaps and equitably improve outcomes across all schools, classrooms, and policies/procedures.
    - Recommendations: Evaluate recent efforts to engage staff in cultural competency professional development sessions (11% of training offerings in the past two school years). Review of recent training can include an overview of data on participation levels, whether sessions were required or optional, which staff the trainings were offered to, and any feedback gathered on each session. Although trainings have been *offered*, it may be that staff are seeking a more comprehensive, district-wide approach to engaging in cultural competency work.
    - Moving forward, engage in intentional, district-wide work to address cultural competence and cultural humility as a district, grounding this work in a desire for every student to experience high levels of learning and belonging across the system while identifying and eliminating barriers that may prevent students from learning at their highest potential.
    - Ensure that cultural and linguistic responsiveness is a criterion that is addressed as part of the district's periodic curriculum review process as well as when adopting intervention curricula as a school or district.
    - Incorporate expectations regarding cultural and linguistic responsiveness in the district's MTSS process guide.
- Staff across grade-levels could use more support and coaching on how to use data literacy. This is especially true at middle and high school levels, where the NWEA-MAP test is being administered but results are not being fully utilized. Middle school staff currently do not believe that this testing is a good use of time as they do not find the resulting data useful.

    - Recommendation: Either more training and support are required to help educators use these data instructionally, or other screening options should be considered that better meet secondary school needs.
    - Recommendation: Consider using office referral data across buildings as a screening tool to help inform improvement to behavioral systems.
- The use of progress monitoring practices is inconsistent across levels in elementary and secondary schools, so that response to intervention can be measured and interventions can be adjusted to reflect conditions that best promote student success. This is true across reading, math, and SEBH content areas. Staff may need clarity with regard to differences between screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessment and the processes required to effectively carry out these tasks.
    - Recommendation: Use aimswebPlus system for progress monitoring in both reading and math and use other strategies such as Direct Behavior Ratings and Daily Behavior Report Cards to progress monitor behavioral interventions
- MTSS implementation is less apparent in the high school, where data sources are currently not widely used for problem solving and continuous improvement of educational programming including decisions about student social, emotional, and behavioral health (SEBH) needs.
    - Recommendation: Consider investing in the implementation of an Early Warning System (e.g., MEIRS) to use existing data such as attendance and student grades to make decisions about both interventions for individual students as well for improving instruction for groups of students.
- Screening for SEBH is being done in the middle school but not system-wide.
    - Recommendation: Consider adopting an SEBH screener that can be used consistently across grade levels.
- Staff reported a need for improving data systems for tracking interventions that would not rely on self-created tools.
    - Recommendation: Consider evaluating and streamlining data systems with functions similar to eduCLIMBER, and ensure that staff can optimally use the data analysis tools that they have such as the aimswebPlus platform.
- Staff reported that support for differentiated instruction was needed, as the current curricula and resources available did not lend themselves well to reaching students above, below, and, in some instances, at grade level. Moreover, staff are uncertain how to differentiate instruction beyond the use of forming small groups.
    - Recommendation: Staff should be trained in differentiated instruction, including its central tenets, best practices, and efficiencies. The district should then provide supports and best practice coaching support (including audit and feedback, prompts, and reminders).
- While some Tier 2 resources exist for literacy, no formal, evidence-based Tier 2 interventions exist for SEB or math. The interventions that are being utilized have a poor to mixed evidence base.
    - Develop an inventory of evidence-based intervention resources and programs for the most frequent student difficulties and train interventionists in how to use these resources and programs effectively.

School Mental Health Services (within an MTSS Framework)

The mental health needs of students currently outstrips the district's capacity to deliver these services.

- Mental health staff express frustration that student need for mental health services outstrips the current district capacity
    - Recommendation: Find opportunities for collaboration between contracted agencies, school social workers, school counselors, families, and teachers to magnify supports across more students
    - Explore opportunities to hire more professionals with mental health expertise (school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists) to bring ratios up to Nationally recommended levels.
- Staff indicated that they need clear guidance on provision of services and measurement of progress in SEBH.
    - Recommendation: Consider hiring someone in a district leadership position who has a background in mental health service delivery. This will help coordinate efforts to increase capacity and show that the district team is committed to making changes, listening to the voices of SEBH support staff, and being responsive to the mental health needs of students.
- Data suggest an uneven level of services and positive outcomes from contracted mental health service agencies. It is currently unclear whether services provided by Lakeland Mental Health are effective in addressing students' mental health needs.
    - Recommendation: The district should collect more data and make decisions regarding where the best return on investment is with these agencies in terms of quality of services and student outcomes before future contracts are signed.

Introduction

Purpose of the Review

In the spring of 2021, Moorhead requested a comprehensive review of its districtwide implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework, with a focus on the extent to which this framework was being implemented in support of School Mental Health (SMH) services and programming. CAREI evaluators conducted the review summarized in this report to help the district prioritize, plan, and implement the MTSS framework and SMH services with fidelity to improve student outcomes.

The review described in this report was conducted under the framework of a continuous improvement model. As such, its aim is to illuminate possible routes toward improved outcomes, rather than to judge current practices. This process acknowledges that all systems can improve and that opportunities for improvement are built upon the district's current strengths, history, structure, and resources.

Moorhead Area Public Schools

The Moorhead Area Public School District is located in Moorhead, Minnesota within Clay County approximately 230 miles northwest of Minneapolis. The district serves approximately 7,000 students speaking 42 different home languages. Students are served in grades PK-12 at the Early Learning Center (PK), Dorothy Dodds, Ellen Hopkins, Robert ASp, and S.G. Reinertsen Elementary Schools (Grades K-4), Horizon Middle School (Grades 5-8), and Moorhead High School and Moorhead Alternative Learning Center (MWHS; Grades 9-12). The schools serve students living in Moorhead, Sabin, and Georgetown. District enrollment and student demographics for school year (SY) 2021-2022 are provided in Appendix A.

Why Focus on MTSS?

Educators are charged with meeting student needs that are variable across individuals and change over time as students progress. A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework provides a structure to organize best practices, allocate resources efficiently and deliver a continuum of support across academic, behavioral, and social-emotional domains. Districts and schools use this framework to assist educators to work together to more effectively and efficiently address the needs and build on strengths of all learners, so they achieve Minnesota's rigorous academic standards and to flourish socially, emotionally, and behaviorally.

When implemented with fidelity, the MTSS framework has been shown to have a large impact on student outcomes (effect size of 1.29; Hattie, 2017). The MTSS framework includes the following components:

- Consistent practice of universal screening of all students for academic and social-emotional needs
- Collaborative decision making that uses data, including screening and progress monitoring, to inform instruction and interventions
- Evidence-based universal curriculum aligned to standards that addresses the needs of all students including students with disabilities

- Tiered evidence-based instructional supports for all students, including students who are at risk academically, socially and emotionally, as well as students excelling above grade level expectations
- Frequent progress monitoring of instruction and interventions to facilitate any needed adjustments and data-based decision-making
- Infrastructure and support mechanisms that include knowledge, resources, and organizational structures necessary to operationalize all components of MTSS in a unified system to meet the established goals
- System for collecting and analyzing data to measure fidelity of implementation of the essential components and effectiveness of the school district's MTSS model
- Equity-centered decision-making that honors student and community knowledge and voices, and integrates culturally and linguistically responsive and relevant practices

Moorhead Area Public Schools have been implementing an MTSS (previously called RTI, or Response to Intervention) framework for a number of years. Moorhead is interested in (1) building MTSS alignment across the district and promoting the consistent use of evidence-based practices, and (2) examining the extent to which their MTSS framework effectively identifies students with mental health needs and supports delivery of mental health services.

Why Focus on School Mental Health?

Mental health represents "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (World Health Organization, 2018). There is widespread consensus that mental health is essential for students' healthy development and academic success. Studies suggest that 15-33% of school-age students exhibit severe enough symptoms that impair aspects of daily functioning to warrant a diagnosable mental illness (Danielson et al., 2020). Furthermore, teacher-reported screening data suggest that approximately one in every three students are classified as high-risk for a mental illness (Danielson et al., 2020). These estimates are similar to those reported in prior studies of nationally representative samples of students (e.g., Merikangas et al., 2010) and findings from the Minnesota Student Survey (see Minnesota Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Division, 2020). Many students also have a history of trauma (e.g., physical abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, and natural disasters) that results in symptoms that manifest in school and impair students' social and academic functioning (Chafouleas et al., 2016).

In addition, there is widespread recognition across Minnesota (Parr et al., 2022: Safe Learning Survey Results) and the country (YouthTruth, 2021) that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the mental health of a large proportion of youth and adults. This indicates a need for a strategic and unprecedented approach to providing a range of mental health services to youth, ideally in settings where children naturally exist, such as schools. This review addresses the provision of school mental health services within the framework of an MTSS model because (1) the framework is an effective resource-allocation model for finding the conditions that result in success for all students, even when a large proportion of students

demonstrate needs, and (2) Moorhead already has MTSS infrastructure in place, which can be leveraged to address this growing need for mental health services in the community.

Evaluation Questions

The causal theory for this review is that quality implementation framework of MTSS in academic domains as well as in the domains associated with a comprehensive system of mental health will result in adult actions that lead to socially significant, desirable student outcomes (Figure 1). Answering the first question involves evaluating the five main components of MTSS: infrastructure to assist teachers to be successful, multi-level instruction to help meet the needs of all students, reliable and valid assessment to inform decisions, robust data-based decision making supports for continuous improvement, and a process to support fidelity to ensure quality implementation. The second question is important because it informs the likelihood that MTSS will be implemented with fidelity. When educators do not understand how to implement the components of MTSS or do not believe that implementing these components is important, they are unlikely to engage in quality implementation and engage in the actions required to foster optimal student outcomes. The third and fourth questions pertain to student outcomes that result from the actions taken by educators. It is the systems that enable the actions of educators that, in turn, create the student experiences that lead to student learning. This in turn will be reflected in measures of student outcomes such as graduation rates, attendance, student perceptions of belonging and engagement, classroom success, and academic test results. The final three evaluation questions concern the capacity of the district to provide an effective comprehensive mental health system that promotes social, emotional, and behavioral well being for all students.

This review addresses the following review questions using systematic data collection and analysis processes.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework

1. To what extent are all buildings in the school district implementing an aligned (PreK-12) MTSS framework that addresses students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs?
2. To what extent do teachers and staff support implementation of an MTSS framework?
3. What is the relationship between implementation of the MTSS framework and student achievement and social, emotional, behavioral outcomes?
4. What is the impact of the MTSS framework on special education child count?

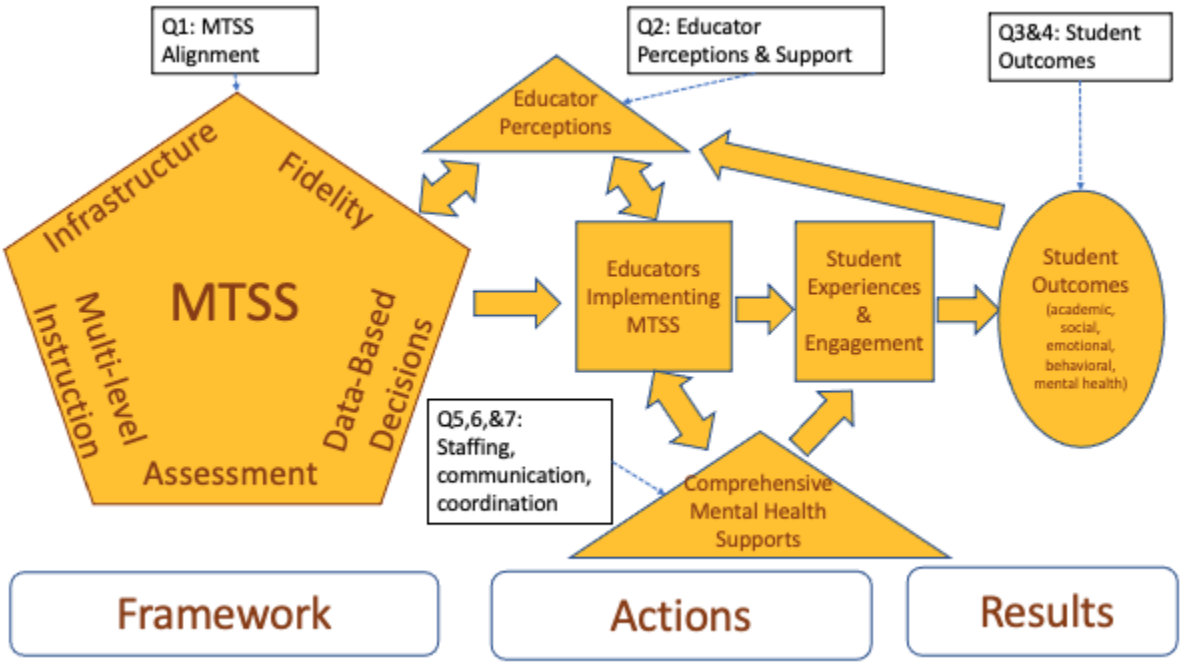
School Mental Health Services (within an MTSS Framework)

5. How effective is the district at identifying and serving students in need of school mental health services based on best practice research?
6. To what extent does the district have sufficient services/supports in place to serve all students?
    a. To what extent does the district have appropriate staff to lead and support a multi-tiered social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) framework?
    b. What are the resources available for staff to help meet the SEB needs of all students?

7. How effective is the coordination of services with outside agencies and between buildings within the district?

Figure 1

Causal Relationship Diagram of Evaluation Questions



Project Team

The project was led by Kim Gibbons, Ph.D., Director of CAREI and Madeline Larson, Ph.D., Research Associate at CAREI. Dr. Gibbons has over 25 years of experience in education including 15 years overseeing special education programming at the St. Croix River Education District (SCRED). In addition, she has extensive experience implementing and evaluating a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework and has authored several books on MTSS. Dr. Larson, who managed the day-to-day operations and details of the project, has extensive experience as a program evaluator as well as working in schools to support implementation of MTSS and school mental health services. Additional support was provided by a variety of CAREI staff, including Dr. Rob Richardson, Associate Director of Effective Practice, Dr. Laura Potter, Associate Director of Evaluation Services, Dr. Michelle Marchant-Wood, MTSS Technical Assistance Provider, and Joseph Schantz, Graduate Research Assistant.

Methods

Information for the review was collected during the months of October 2021 - May 2022 through group interviews, staff surveys, student/family surveys, review of extant student data, review of staffing data, and review of district data and documentation (e.g., discipline policies). This section describes the methods used for data collection.

Group Interviews

Two types of group interviews were conducted, with one round of interviews focused on MTSS and the other focused on school mental health.

MTSS Group Interviews

Semi-structured group interviews were conducted via Zoom with building leadership teams from each of the primary schools, the middle school, and the high school, as well as with a district leadership team, early learning center staff, and student service providers (school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors). The evaluators used the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Fidelity of Implementation Rubric published by the Center on MTSS at the American Institutes for Research (Center on MTSS, 2021) to guide each interview, which lasted from 60-90 minutes. Responses were scored using the rubric to obtain an estimate of current levels of implementation. However, due to the unique programming in early childhood settings, responses collected during this interview were not officially scored. Likewise, interviews with district leaders and student support staff were not scored, but rather provided supplemental information in addition to that which was provided by building teams.

The rubric is aligned with the essential components of MTSS and assesses implementation in five areas necessary for successful implementation: Assessments, Data-Based Decision-Making, Multi-Level Instruction, Infrastructure, and Fidelity and Evaluation. The rubric scores range from 1 (*No Implementation*) to 5 (*Full Implementation*), with a score of 3 indicating partial implementation. A rating of 2 or 4 was assigned if the response met the criteria somewhere between the rubric descriptions shown below. All interviews were scored by two raters. Differences in scores between raters were resolved through discussion that resulted in an agreed upon final score. Interviews were conducted in November - December 2021. See Appendix B for a copy of the rubric that guided these interviews.

School Mental Health Group Interviews

Semi-structured group interviews were conducted via Zoom with two groups of mental health providers who serve Moorhead students: school-employed staff (school social workers, school counselors, and school psychologists) and staff employed through outside providers who serve Moorhead students within the schools (specifically, those employed through Solutions Behavioral Healthcare Professionals and Lakeland Mental Health Center). Each group was interviewed separately for 90 minutes and was asked questions about teaming/coordination among staff; identifying and matching students to supports; social, emotional, behavioral and mental health services provided to students; and general strengths and challenges experienced in their roles. See Appendix B for the protocols used to guide these interviews.

Surveys

Four surveys were administered to school staff and administrators. Detailed information on each survey and procedures for administration and analysis can be found in Appendix B.

Table 1

Overview of Surveys Administered

What measure?	Who participated?	What was assessed?	When was it administered?
MTSS Beliefs & Perceptions Survey	All administrators and licensed staff	Beliefs about MTSS, Perceived MTSS Skills	Oct 2021
MTSS Self-Evaluation Survey	Building leadership team members	Levels of MTSS implementation	Oct 2021
Beliefs About Behavior Survey (BABS)	All staff (licensed and unlicensed)	Extent to which staff endorse supportive beliefs about student behavior	Nov 2021
Interagency School Mental Health Survey	Licensed mental health providers (school-employed and contracted)	Collaboration among school staff and contracted mental health providers	Jan 2022

Extant Student Data

Enrollment and Attendance Data

Attendance and enrollment data were obtained from the Minnesota Report Card Database.

Student Achievement Data

Several sources of student achievement data were collected for the past 3 school years (SY 19-20, 20-21, and 21-22): ACT data, Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment of Reading and Mathematics (MCA), screening data from aimswebPlus and NWEA-MAP test, and high school course grades. Detailed information on the description of each source of achievement data and analysis procedures can be found in Appendix B.

Special Education Child Count Data

Moorhead's special education child count data were obtained via the Minnesota Department of Education's data center for the past five school years. Data for the 2021-22 school year were compared to state averages across disability categories. Trends in percentages of students within each disability category were also examined over the past five school years.

Minnesota Student Survey Data

Data from the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) were obtained for 2019 (the latest iteration of the survey in which data are publicly available, though the survey was recently administered in winter 2022) from CAREI's Minnesota Student Survey Dashboard. All public school districts in Minnesota are invited to participate in the MSS every three years, though participation is optional. In 2019, Minnesota students in 5th, 8th, 9th and 11th grades were invited to take the

survey. The MSS includes questions about a wide variety of youth behaviors, including risk behaviors such as alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, violence and sexual activity, as well as positive behaviors and connection to family, school and community.

District Documentation

Staff Utilization Data

The district provided building-level staffing data for the purpose of examining staffing and system capacity related to implementation of MTSS and effective school mental health supports. This included building enrollment as well as FTEs of licensed special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, student services staff (i.e., counselors, social workers, psychologists), and interventionists.

District Documents

Key district documents were also reviewed and summarized. The documents included:

- District discipline policies
- The current school year's assessment calendar
- A list of all district-provided professional development in school years 2020-21 and 2021-22

Findings and Recommendations

The following section provides a summary of results related to each of the nine evaluation questions that guided this review in the following areas: Multi-Tiered System of Support, School Mental Health Services, and Positive School Climate. Each question was addressed using multiple sources of data, which are outlined after each question. The most salient, relevant data are summarized within the body of this report, but more detailed information can be accessed by clicking the hyperlink attached to the name of each source. Following each set of results, there are summarized strengths and opportunities for improvement that aim to address

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

Evaluation Question 1: To what extent are all buildings in the school district implementing an aligned (PreK-12) MTSS framework that addresses students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs?

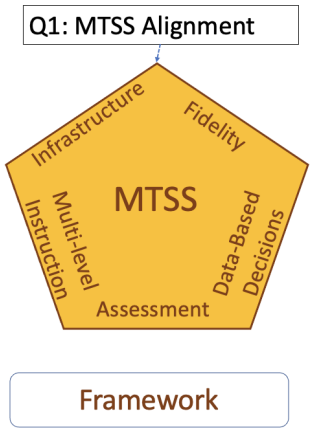
Data Sources:

- MTSS Group Interviews
- MTSS Self-Evaluation Survey
- District Assessment Inventory
- District Professional Development Inventory: Application to MTSS

Findings

MTSS Group Interviews

The evaluators used the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Fidelity of Implementation Rubric published by the Center on MTSS at the American Institutes for Research (Center on MTSS, 2021) during interviews with building teams to assess implementation of MTSS in five broad domains (see below).



1. **Assessments:** Screening, progress monitoring, and other supporting assessments are used to inform data-based decision-making.
2. **Data Based Decision-Making:** Data based decision-making processes are used to inform instruction, movement within the multi-level system and disability identification.
3. **Multilevel Instruction:** The MTSS framework includes a school-wide, multilevel system of instruction and interventions for preventing school failure.
4. **Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms:** Knowledge, resources, and organizational structures necessary to operationalize all components of MTSS in a unified system to meet the established goals.
5. **Fidelity and Evaluation:** System for collecting and analyzing data to measure fidelity

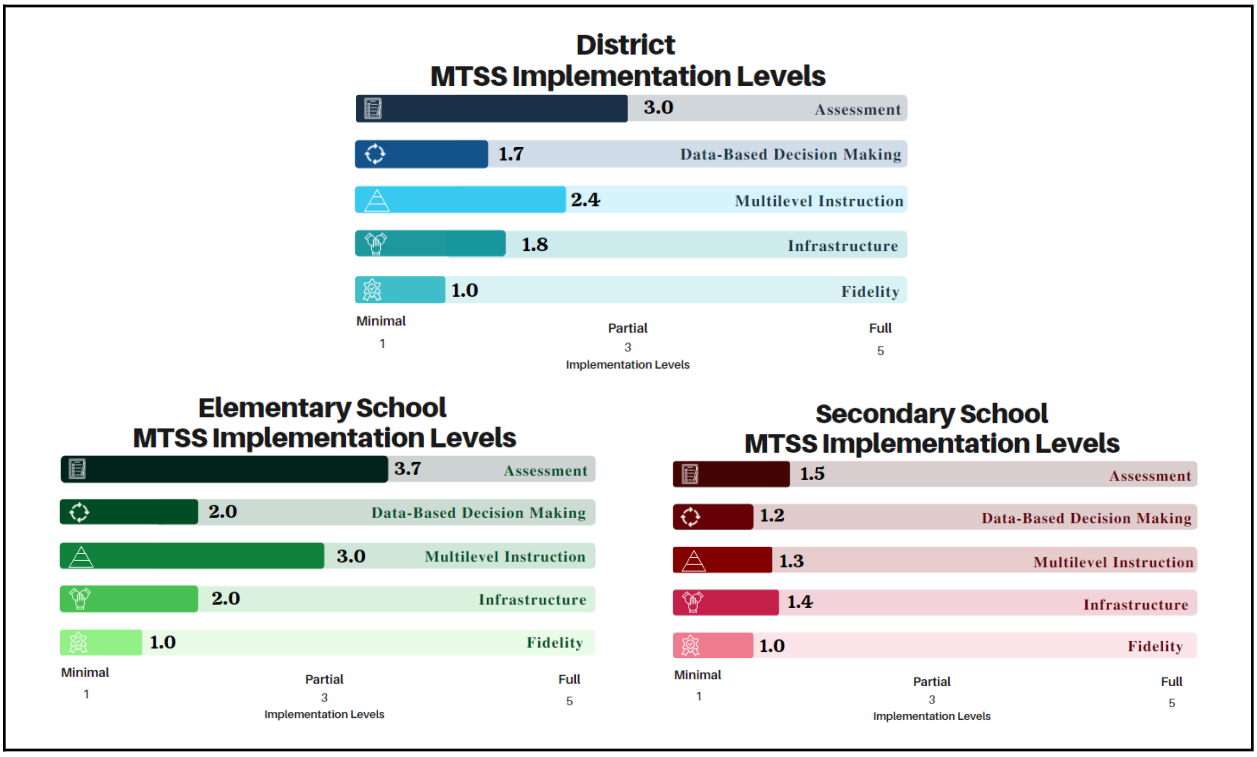
of implementation of the essential components and effectiveness of the school district's MTSS model.

The rubric included descriptions of practices on a five-point rating scale: 1 (*Not in Place*), 3 (*Partial Implementation*), or 5 (*Full Implementation*). Figure 2 displays summary scores for the district, as well as the elementary and secondary school levels, across MTSS domains.

In reviewing all relevant data sources, MTSS implementation practices in Moorhead Area Public Schools fall in the *Partial Implementation* range with the highest levels of implementation in the area of assessment (an average of 3.0 across the district) and the lowest level observed in the area of Fidelity and Evaluation (an average of 1.0). In general, higher levels of implementation were observed at the elementary school level compared to the secondary school level, especially in the domains of Assessment and Multilevel Instruction.

Figure 2

MTSS Implementation Levels



In addition to this overview, Table 2 provides school-level averages in each domain. School scores on this measure are comparable to the district averages with little variation. A more detailed table of ratings for each school is available in Appendix C.

Table 2

Group Interview Results, by School and Domain

Schools	Assessments	Data-Based Decision Making	Multilevel Instruction	Infrastructure	Fidelity and Evaluation

District Average	**3.0**	**1.7**	**2.4**	**1.8**	**1.0**
S. G. Reinertsen	3.8	2.0	3.4	1.9	1.0
Hopkins	4.0	3.5	2.8	2.3	1.0
Dorothy Dodds	3.2	1.7	2.5	1.4	1.0
Asp	3.9	1.2	3.3	2.4	1.0
Primary Average	**3.7**	**2.0**	**3.0**	**2.0**	**1.0**
Horizon Middle	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.0
MAHS	1.4	1.0	1.4	1.7	1.0
Secondary Average	**1.5**	**1.2**	**1.3**	**1.4**	**1.0**

Note. Scale: 1 (*Not in Place*), 3 (*Partial Implementation*), or 5 (*Full Implementation*).

The following section provides a descriptive overview of group interview results by domain. Notably, evaluators did not officially score any of the Early Childhood team's group interview responses given that the AIR MTSS Rubric was designed for K-12, but information related to each domain for Early Childhood is instead described narratively below.

Domain 1: Assessments

This domain included items related to screening, progress monitoring, other supporting assessments, and the processes used to inform data-based decision-making. Five subdomains comprise this area: screening tools, universal screening, data points to verify risk, progress monitoring tools, and progress monitoring process. The district average in this domain was 3.0 (*Partial Implementation*), with primary school averaging a 3.7 score and secondary averaging a score of 1.5.

Universal Screening. The Assessments domain was an area of relative strength for Moorhead. The district assessment calendar and group interviews indicated that K-5 students are administered reliable and valid universal screeners (i.e., aimswebPlus) in reading and math in the fall, winter, and spring every year. Students in grades 5-9 are administered NWEA-MAP reading and math screeners in the fall and spring. No academic screening is completed in grades 10-12, and instead, teachers assess risk based on informal assessment using observation of skills and student engagement or participation. Moreover, districtwide, screening is not currently conducted in a consistent manner to assess risk for social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) development or functioning; however, Horizon Middle School staff noted they have developed and use a Google form to assess students' social-emotional learning. Overall, it was noted that staff generally do not see much value in screening, as they feel it does not give them any additional knowledge beyond what they already know about their students. Thus, staff interviewed indicated there is a need to educate teachers on the value of universal screening and help train staff how to use the data to make decisions so that it feels worth the time invested to complete.

Data Points to Verify Risk. Elementary school teams also described a process for using additional data to verify risk levels indicated by these screening tools. For example, Add+VantageMR (AVMR; math) and Words Their Way (literacy) are used as a diagnostic assessment to inform instruction and intervention planning only with students who are identified as at risk on aimswebPlus screeners. All elementary school students also receive text level

assessments, Fountas and Pinnell, following screening to inform small group instruction in reading. Elementary schools also noted using Fountas & Pinnell norms for growth to verify risk.

Progress Monitoring Tools and Process. Regarding progress monitoring tools and processes, elementary schools described inconsistent processes for monitoring student progress in reading and literacy. While some schools described using aimswebPlus assessments to monitor student progress every week or every other week and having a process for identifying which progress monitoring tool is most appropriate given current and expected student performance, other schools described using text-level assessments to monitor progress. It was noted that this text-level assessment practice was scattered based on the teacher and their level of training in progress monitoring tools. This year is Moorhead's first year engaging in systematic screening of math and, thus, formal progress monitoring processes have not been established or implemented for math. While some schools monitor behavior interventions weekly and are currently working on ways to consistently graph behavior monitoring data, no progress monitoring tools for student SEB development or functioning have been identified and adopted district wide; the majority of schools develop their own tools for monitoring SEB progress. Moreover, no process or data systems have been put in place to support the sustainable implementation of SEB progress monitoring. At the secondary level, no schoolwide tools or processes were identified for progress monitoring.

Early Childhood Assessments. Early childhood staff noted using a range of screeners, including the Brigance, Ages and Stages Questionnaire - Social-Emotional Scale, and vision and health screeners. Moreover, they noted partnering with Native American education staff to identify students and families who may benefit from screening. For universal screening, early childhood staff complete the Teaching Strategies-Gold (TS-Gold) assessment in the fall and spring for all four-year-olds. They have completed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate data sharing for students in Head Start programs and the district. Early childhood educators also complete the COR Advantage curriculum assessment for all students in fall, winter, and spring. Additional measures used for screening and/or progress monitoring include the Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) and Preschool Early Literacy Indicators (PELI).

Domain 2: Data-Based Decision-Making (DBDM)

DBDM involves using processes to inform instruction, movement within the multilevel system, and disability identification. The district average in this domain was 1.7 (between *Not in Place* and *Partial Implementation*), with a score of 2.0 at the primary level and 1.2 at the secondary level. DBDM is composed of three subdomains: Decision-Making Process, Data Systems, and Responsiveness to Interventions.

Decision Making Process. The AIR MTSS Rubric indicates that schools benefit from using a clearly defined decision-making process, including decision rules and criteria for movement between tiers of support. While all buildings reported that they have a team (e.g., Student Assistance Team) that meets to discuss students demonstrating academic or SEB needs, the process for referral and guidelines or decision-making criteria for moving students between tiers was lacking. Most schools noted that there was no formal or data-based process in place to

make decisions about intervention intensity. Additionally, the composition of the team (even within buildings during one school year) varied across schools. For example, one school noted that the composition of the team discussing students is contingent on who is available as well as who has expertise in the teacher reported area of need. At the secondary level, middle school staff are attempting to mimic the risk review team model to make decisions about student intervention need; however, they struggle with what to do with the data they have (e.g., attendance, grades) and lack interventions to match student needs to any type of systematic additional support. High school staff lack the data, teaming, and decision-making infrastructure to engage in DBDM. Thus, all schools were rated between *Not in Place* and *Partial Implementation* this component due to a lack of operationalized processes (including clearly defined decision-making rules) to guide movement between tiers or interventions.

Data Systems. The data system needed for an effective MTSS framework should allow data to be entered in a timely manner, allow all users to document and access individual student level data, document instructional decisions, track progress, set and evaluate goals, and graph data at the student and system level. All interviewed teams described use of DARS and Powerschool, and some described use of school-designed tools (e.g., some elementary schools use text-leveling data that are accessible to staff and collected regularly to develop and view growth graphs). Schools were rated based on their use of and staff access to these systems, which were mostly a rating of 1 at the elementary and secondary schools (where staff reported uncertainty about which tools staff had access to and were using) to a 4 at one of the elementary schools, Hopkins Elementary (where the interviewees could describe the use of their self-created tool for tracking student data).

Responsiveness to Secondary and Intensive Levels of Intervention. Most schools struggled to identify processes related to responsiveness to intervention, which includes the regular use of valid and reliable progress monitoring data that reflect the slope of progress toward a goal. Such decisions should be implemented accurately and consistently across the district. Interviewed staff indicated that they all have difficulty collecting progress monitoring data on a regular basis and would benefit from districtwide tools, processes, and decision-making rules to inform movement between tiers or interventions. Moreover, schools could use support developing a functional team infrastructure that supports processes related to responsiveness to intervention.

Early Childhood Data-Based Decision Making. Early childhood staff noted a consistent process for decision-making. Interviewed staff stated that teachers receive the results of assessments and start intervening in their classrooms with students who are identified as having high or some risk. Teachers and staff work 1-on-1 with students or in small groups based on intensity of need. Groups are based on similar skill and level. Following intervention and data collection in classrooms, teams meet to discuss data and make decisions. The team consists of ECSE teachers, Jump Start staff, and general education teachers as well as an occupational therapist, speech therapist, and physical therapist. Following the team meeting, classroom teams meet to review plans and discuss implementation. Staff interviewed noted that these teams meet weekly to review data, discuss student needs, and develop plans for intervening. To manage data,

early childhood staff use the CORE online program and access some data from Powerschool. Largely, staff use data to make decisions about responsiveness to intervention.

Domain 3: Multi-Level Instruction

The MTSS framework includes a school-wide, multi-level system of instruction and interventions for preventing school failure. Multi-level instruction involves universal/core instruction (Tier 1), secondary level instruction (Tier 2), and intensive instruction (Tier 3). Table 3 displays implementation ratings for the three tiers of instruction.

Table 3

Ratings for Instructional Tiers, by Building

Building Name	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
District Average	**3.0**	**1.7**	**1.5**
S. G. Reinertsen	3.4	3.3	3.5
Hopkins	2.7	3.0	1.0
Dorothy Dodds	2.6	3.5	1.0
Robert Asp	3.4	3.8	2.4
Primary Average	**3.1**	**3.4**	**2.4**
Horizon MS	1.4	1.3	1.1
MAHS	2.0	1.0	1.0
Secondary Average	**1.7**	**1.1**	**1.0**

Note. Scale: 1 (*Not in Place*), 3 (*Partial Implementation*), or 5 (*Full Implementation*).

Universal Instruction (Tier 1). Universal instruction (Tier 1), which is synonymous with core instruction, is the curriculum and instruction that all students receive. When evaluating implementation of universal instruction, the following areas are considered: research-based curriculum materials; articulation of teaching and learning in and across grade levels; differentiated instruction; standards-based instruction; exceeding benchmark; and social, emotional, and behavioral supports.

K-5 schools indicated using Benchmark curriculum for literacy instruction. According to EdReports (https://www.edreports.org/; a website offering free, high-quality reports that help evaluate instructional materials), Benchmark only partially meets standards for alignment (i.e., degree to which materials meet expectations for alignment, including that all standards are present and treated with the appropriate depth to support students in learning the skills and knowledge that they need to be ready for college and career). Most teachers supplement the Benchmark curriculum with Heggerty resources. In the elementary schools, writing is taught using Handwriting Without Tears, which is supplemented by Units of Study lessons from Lucy Calkins; however, staff noted that these supplemental resources are outdated and need to be revisited or reconsidered. Evidence on the effectiveness of Handwriting Without Tears is mixed. Regarding math, elementary school staff described using the Bridges curriculum. According to EdReports, Bridges meets standards for both alignment and usability (i.e., degree to which

materials are consistent with effective practices for use and design, teacher planning and learning, assessment, and differentiated instruction). Most teachers supplement Bridges with resources from Number Corner.

Regarding social-emotional learning, grades K-6 receive some lessons from Second Step; however, implementation is inconsistent within and across schools. For the secondary level, Grades 6-8 are instructed using common units and assessments developed by the ELA department, but the content changes every year. Both reading and math instruction for grades 6-12 are standards based. The high school also uses Reading Plus for reading enhancement. Beyond 6th grade, students receive social-emotional learning through I-Time; there is no consistent program or curriculum used during this time beyond some use of BARR at the high school level. At the early childhood level, staff noted using curriculum such as High Scope across classrooms, the HELP as a guide for ages 0-3, EQUIP, and Pyramid Model.

At the elementary level, staff described district-wide work on articulating and aligning teaching and learning in and across grade levels that occurred several years ago, which has now largely shifted to work within PLCs. While PLCs are being used across the district, little is known about what happens during PLC time as it is largely left up to teachers to structure themselves. While some schools feel this process is working for them with regard to articulation and alignment of standards, it could be improved (particularly at the secondary level). Differentiated instruction was also identified as an area of need for Tier 1 relative to other subcategories. Staff across the district had difficulty describing structures for appropriate and effective differentiated instruction. The majority of schools, particularly at the primary level, use small groups to address varying student needs.

Social, Emotional, & Behavioral Expectations & Supports. Because the AIR MTSS Rubric focuses mostly on academics in this area, CAREI added an additional domain: Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Expectations and Supports. Buildings that rate highly in this area are expected to have: 3-5 school-wide behavioral expectations have been established, posted, and are taught on a regular basis by all teachers; a coordinated system for reinforcing expected behaviors; and a process for directly teaching students about social, emotional, and behavioral topics on a regular basis throughout the school year. The majority of schools fell in the *Partial Implementation* range for the SEB domain. Schools varied in their approach to supporting student SEB development, but all articulated some supports in place to prevent behavior problems from occurring and address student SEB needs. Most staff indicated that while staff were trained in SW-PBIS years ago, few of them are actively implementing this model and none with fidelity. Moreover, no schools could articulate evidence-based strategies for proactively and positively addressing student behavior problems within the classroom. The majority of elementary schools indicated that they use Second Step to explicitly teach about social, emotional, and behavioral topics; however, implementation varied greatly across schools. At the secondary level, schools identified using BARR but not with all grades and it was unclear whether all parts of the BARR program were implemented with fidelity to yield an effect. This may be an area for improvement across the district alongside a more comprehensive and consistent approach to supporting student SEB development.

Secondary Level Intervention (Tier 2). Secondary level intervention(Tier 2), also known as supplemental intervention, includes the curriculum and instruction provided to some students who are below grade-level proficiency standards. Tier 2 interventions may also be provided to students who exceed grade level standards and need advanced differentiation. When evaluating implementation of secondary instruction, the following four areas are considered: evidence-based intervention, compliments core instruction, instructional characteristics, and addition to universal instruction.

For Tier 2, ratings indicated a relatively clear split between primary and secondary schools ratings, with primary schools generally scoring higher (m = 3.4) in the four areas of secondary instruction than secondary schools (m = 1.1); however, all schools in the district fell at or below the *Partial Implementation* range. Within elementary schools, some Tier 2 interventions are evidence based across content areas and grade levels. Tier 2 interventions identified by staff as being used for literacy include: Level Literacy Intervention (LLI), Balanced Literacy approach from LETRS, and Heggerty. Elementary schools also use Reading Corps and Title 1 resources as Tier 2 interventions. Currently, there are no Tier 2 interventions for math, although some staff noted using the Bridges intervention kit.

For SEB at the primary school level, some professionals identified using Zones of Regulation, which has a mixed to poor evidence-base regarding effectiveness on student outcomes, and Check-In/Check-Out, which, while effective, does not effectively or efficiently target all root causes of student needs and should not be used in an indiscriminate manner. Staff noted that, because there is no systematic data collection, process, or suite of intervention choices, there tends to be a large focus on intervening on externalizing behaviors (e.g., aggression, bullying) and not much work done with students who exhibit internalizing needs (e.g., withdrawal, inactivity). This is problematic as staff in secondary schools report more serious and crystalized concerns regarding student internalizing difficulties (e.g., major depression, suicidal ideation and self harm, school avoidance/truancy, substance misuse) that impact student engagement in learning, which could be prevented with more systematic SEB work in formative developmental periods (i.e., preschool and elementary ages).

At the secondary level, no formal Tier 2 interventions were identified for any content area (i.e., literacy, writing, math, SEB). Accordingly, staff identified Tier 2 interventions as currently lacking and an area of need. In addition to lacking intervention or curricula to support Tier 2, there was no evidence of a formal matching process or guidelines to ensure students were delivered an intervention that accurately matched their needs across schools within the district. Regarding whether Tier 2 interventions replace or supplement core instruction, primary schools make every effort to schedule interventions around core instruction, but pulling students from core is occasionally unavoidable.

The early childhood team reported that they use Reading Core to supplement instruction and strategies from the Pyramid Model to teach SEB content in large and small groups. Staff do not typically use specific curricula to provide official Tier 2 support, but rather tailor classroom

curricula and expectations to student needs in a more fluid fashion. ECSE staff might benefit from similar standardization and structure to support students' academic needs at a Tier 2 level.

Intensive Instruction (Tier 3). Intensive instruction (Tier 3) is additional instruction that is provided to a small number of students, highly individualized, and well-matched to student needs. When evaluating implementation of intensive instruction, the following three areas are considered: data-based interventions adapted based on student need, instructional characteristics, and relationship to universal instruction. The district average in this area was 1.7 (between *Not in Place* and *Partial Implementation*) and the lowest of ratings across MTSS tier scores (See Table 4).

Majority of staff described their Tier 3 services as synonymous with special education services. Special education teachers interviewed noted that some teachers use Flyleaf for reading instruction and find the curriculum acceptable and usable; however, few teachers have been trained so student access to this curriculum is inequitable. When asked about the extent to which they could provide intensive supports for students outside of what is available through special education, all buildings noted that their capacity for Tier 3 was extremely limited and that they were "doing the best with what they had." One staff member noted, "No students who are not IEP eligible get additional support beyond small group instruction in their class." As such, most buildings received lower scores in this domain.

At the early childhood and primary school level, staff noted that the contract with Solutions Behavioral Healthcare provides resources from the Incredible Years program as well as individual skills training to students with intensive needs based on their treatment plan. Most, if not all, students served through this program are accessing special educational services through an IEP.

In terms of the utility and fruitfulness of the contracted mental health services provided through Solutions and Lakeland overall, staff noted that they see only a small fraction of students who have indicated needs. Solutions offers a broad range of high-impact, evidence-based practices and programs to the students who they do see and, as a program, have a desire to use their skills to support internal capacity of support staff at the elementary level to acquire skills so they can serve students who may not meet their qualification criteria.

Most staff note that families are satisfied with Solutions services and families with multiple students in different grade levels would like to see Solutions expand their services to secondary grades to streamline service delivery for multiple students in one family. Lakeland lacks the breadth of evidence-based practices and programs that Solutions offers and staff working with both external organizations note significantly lower satisfaction with Lakeland services, collaboration, and coordination. Special education teachers also use Zones of Regulation in their classrooms; however, evidence on its effectiveness is poor to mixed so it is recommended that review of the program be completed.

Domain 4: Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms

This domain captures information regarding the knowledge, resources, and organizational structures necessary to operationalize all components of MTSS in a unified system to meet the established goals. Subdomains include: prevention focused, professional development, schedules, resources, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, communication with parents, communication with staff, and MTSS teams. The overall district rating for Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms is 1.8 (*Not in Place*). The primary (2.0) and secondary level (1.4) ratings are similar to the district's average.

Overall, infrastructure to support implementation of MTSS needs to be prioritized for practice to follow. Majority of scores across subdomains remain in the *Not in Place* to *Partial Implementation* range, as with many other areas of MTSS implementation described above. While not scored, early child staff's perceptions of infrastructure to support MTSS at this point in time are generally aligned with primary and secondary schools' staff.

Prevention. When asked about familiarity with MTSS, interviewees noted that the majority of staff would be unfamiliar with MTSS as a framework to prevent achievement deficits for all students (including students with disabilities). The few staff interviewed who were familiar with MTSS indicated that this approach did not align with how professionals within the district function, nor how the district supports or describes educational practice. Moreover, staff noted that decisions and actions by school and district leaders are inconsistent or only somewhat supportive of the essential components of the MTSS framework at the school.

Professional Development, Resources, & Schedules. Leadership personnel interviewed indicated that they did not feel they had the resources or knowledge to support an MTSS framework in their school. Similarly, staff noted that while some forms of school-based professional development are available, but most are not consistent or job embedded to ensure continuous improvement in instructional practice, data-based decision making, and delivery of interventions. In addition, schedules and resources remain an area needing attention to ensure staff have the opportunity and capacity to implement the full range of services and supports through an MTSS framework.

It was also clear that staff felt it essential for the district leadership team to include an administrator whose sole purpose was to coordinate SEB and mental health services and initiatives in Moorhead. Staff noted that the lack of district administrators with training, licensure, and significant practical experience delivering and coordinating SEB and mental health services (e.g., SEL curricula, therapeutic services in schools) was a major barrier to sustainable and acceptable SEB and mental health programming in Moorhead. This is a point of improvement that should be heavily considered by the district MTSS team.

Cultural & Linguistic Responsiveness. The lowest scoring subdomain in the Infrastructure domain included cultural and linguistic responsiveness. Nearly all schools rated this domain as *Not in Place*. Staff interviewed noted that the district is currently undergoing an equity audit with Cultural Alliance. One staff member indicated that their plan for professional

development last year included culturally relevant teaching which led to identifying gaps in the curriculum and what to bring in to fill these gaps. While the district and some schools appear to be trying to make an effort in this area, staff cannot articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting culturally and linguistically relevant instructional practices, assessments, and intervention programs. Thus, with regard to cultural and linguistic responsiveness, there is a need to improve staff capacity to articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting culturally and linguistically relevant instructional practices, assessments, and intervention programs. The exception to this is Moorhead's early childhood program, which was described as conducting home visits with interpreters, employing paraprofessionals from diverse cultures who could act as cultural liaisons and trusted school partners to families, utilizing multicultural texts, and sending out family surveys to understand family backgrounds and tailor educational activities to family cultures and backgrounds.

Communication with and Involvement of Parents & Staff. Communication with and Involvement of Parents and Staff is also an area of need, particularly with regard to ensuring there is: (1) a description of the school's essential components of MTSS and data-based decision-making process shared with caregivers and staff; (2) a coherent mechanism implemented for updating caregivers and teachers on the progress of their student who is receiving secondary or intensive interventions; and (3) collaborative teams that meet frequently and include parents/caregivers. Although the district has included the act of sharing progress on interventions on their assessment schedule, progress monitoring updates and screening results are not systematically shared with caregivers or students at this time. The exception to this feedback was the early childhood program, which was noted as having very strong communication and involvement of parents and caregivers through their programming.

MTSS Teams. Lastly, each building needs to allocate, protect, and prioritize a formal MTSS team that meets regularly (i.e., ideally weekly) and is equipped with clear processes and guides for decision making. While schools discussed the use of teams, they rarely articulated clear processes and guides for decision making. Moreover, their composition, purpose and use, and meeting frequency varied greatly. Thus, it is presently unclear how different elements of the MTSS framework are discussed and evaluated by teams. Table 4 outlines best practice teams to support implementing and sustaining MTSS. This information can be used as a guide to establish consistency in foundational teaming structures across the district.

Table 4

Best Practice Teams to Support Implementing and Sustaining MTSS

District MTSS Team	School-Based MTSS Leadership Team	Teacher Teams (Grade Level, PLCs, etc.)	Individual Student Problem-Solving Team
Lead, implement, monitor, and evaluate *district-level* organizational change. This includes the	Lead, implement, monitor, and evaluate *school-wide* organizational changes consistent with the	Lead, monitor, and evaluate core instructional practices and changes for grade levels or content areas.	Lead, monitor, and evaluate interventions for individuals and/or groups of students.

development, implementation, and refinement of the MTSS framework as well as data-informed resource allocation.	district MTSS framework. This includes using data-informed practices to make adjustments based on the local context.

Domain 5: Fidelity and Evaluation

Fidelity and evaluation involve having a system for collecting and analyzing data to measure fidelity and effectiveness of the district's MTSS framework. The district average, as well as each building's average in this domain, was 1.0. There do not appear to be systems in place to monitor fidelity of implementation of universal, secondary, and intensive instruction, or for assessment practices; however, staff shared anecdotes indicating that very few interventions or curricula implemented throughout the district are delivered with sufficient fidelity to yield an effect on student outcomes. Additionally, there does not appear to be a clear process for specifically evaluating the effectiveness of the district's MTSS framework or its components (though the present review will contribute significantly in this area).

Hopes for System Improvement

At the conclusion of each group interview, teams were asked about what they hoped would result from the current review. Table 5 summarizes themes identified in these hopes for system improvement.

Table 5

Areas of Improvement Identified in MTSS Group Interviews

Theme	Details
SEB prevention and intervention	● In general, more/improved/standardized SEB supports for students that are evidence-based ● Social, emotional, and mental health supports for caregivers and staff ● Information and support for families who want to enhance SEB support at home ● Behavior prevention and promotion strategies across all grade levels ● Provide specialized, job-embedded training for all staff dependent on their role definition and MTSS responsibilities. ● Increase internal capacity of school counselors and school social workers to deliver SEB Tier 2 and 3 services (and coach teachers on Tier 1 strategies and curricula) to ensure all students have access to higher levels of support and teachers have active implementation support following training to improve sustainability and commitment. ● Hire a district administrator who has training, licensure, and practical experience delivering and coordinating SEB and mental health services to provide mental health staff representation within the district leadership team.

Staffing	● More staff who can provide social, emotional, and behavioral supports (both school-based and contracted staff) ● Role clarification (and reduction of non-SEB support tasks) for student support staff, especially at the high school ○ Specific recommendations at the high school included hiring a social worker dedicated to supporting general education and hiring a staff member to take on duties related to testing coordination and master scheduling ● Equity in staffing and resources across buildings ● Hire a district administrator who has training, licensure, and practical experience delivering and coordinating SEB and mental health services to provide mental health staff representation within the district leadership team.
Tier 2 and 3 academic Interventions	● Improved Tier 2 and 3 academic supports that are evidence-based across system ● Time, staff, space, and schedules to allow for Tier 2 and 3 interventions to occur at all buildings ● Better training on delivery of evidence-based Tier 2 and 3 interventions ● Better data tracking system for interventions (currently using google docs) ● Training on interpretation and use of data ● Process for data-based decision-making at Tier 2 and 3 ● MTSS coordinator
Evidence-based Tier 1 programs and supports	● Training and coaching on practical strategies to implement high quality differentiated instruction in all grade levels across content areas (i.e., academic & SEB) ● Active follow-up coaching and consultative support that is not optional for teachers (all teachers receive this support as routine part of training in a new program, concept, or practice) ● Improved Tier 1 so reduce continued Tier 2 and 3 load across content areas (i.e., academic & SEB)
Training, Coaching & TA	● Training on MTSS needs to be followed up by high quality coaching for all teachers on each trained-upon practice and/or assessment. ● Training content needs to be revisited often (e.g., through structured PLCs, follow-up trainings) ● Training and coaching needs to be differentiated based on role (e.g., support staff may need training on different programs than teaching staff)
Equity & Diversity focus	● Training and active follow-up implementation support on evidence-based equity- and diversity-explicit strategies and programs to promote diversity and equity in all classrooms, schools, and at the district level (e.g., policies and procedures) ○ Include strategies for intersectional identities such as LGBTQIA2S+ ● Hire or collaborate with more cultural brokers at the K-12 level
Consistency & Longevity	● Increased uniformity in implementing MTSS framework across buildings (“getting on the same page” and “speaking the same language”)

	● Academic and SEB supports provided and aligned PK-12 ● Aligned MTSS and SEB framework and language across buildings will improve transitions between primary, middle, and high schools ● Need training on MTSS that remains a continued focus by the district (ensure that new staff are trained as well)
Collaboration	● Time for more collaboration between teachers ● More time for interventionists to consult with teachers ● More time for MTSS teams to collaborate (i.e., schedules facilitative of MTSS tenets) ● More engagement from and collaboration with families who are not already closely connected to their children's schools
Impact and Outcomes	● More robust and consistent evaluation of growth ● Focus on all students making gains in all areas of academics and SEB development ● Training and active follow-up implementation supports for all staff on data literacy ● Routinely look at and utilize data to monitor progress ● Use data to adapt educational programming to expedite improvements

MTSS Self-Evaluation Survey

A total of 21 staff from building leadership teams throughout the district responded to the MTSS Self-Evaluation Survey, which was used to supplement group interview data to illustrate the extent to which schools are implementing components of an MTSS framework with fidelity. Staff ratings were averaged at the district level for each of the eight domains and displayed in Table 6 below. Scores on this scale are as follows: 1 = *not in place,* 2 = *Limited Implementation,* 3 = *Partial Implementation,* 4 = *Established Implementation,* and a *Don't Know* option (not included in descriptive statistics).

Averages across domains centered around *Limited Implementation*, with little variation in level of implementation across domains. The domain with the highest district average was Parental Involvement (2.66 out of 4). The highest areas of need were observed in the domains of Curriculum and Instruction: Intensive/Tier 3 (2.09); Curriculum and Instruction: Strategic/Tier 2 (2.12); School Leadership, Climate, and Infrastructure (2.28); and Problem-Solving Process (2.34). Overall, scores suggest that there is limited implementation of MTSS practices across the district, though Tier 2 and 3 supports are most in need of improvement. These data align closely to information shared in group interviews in these domains.

Table 6

MTSS Self-Assessment District-wide Survey Results: Domain Comparison

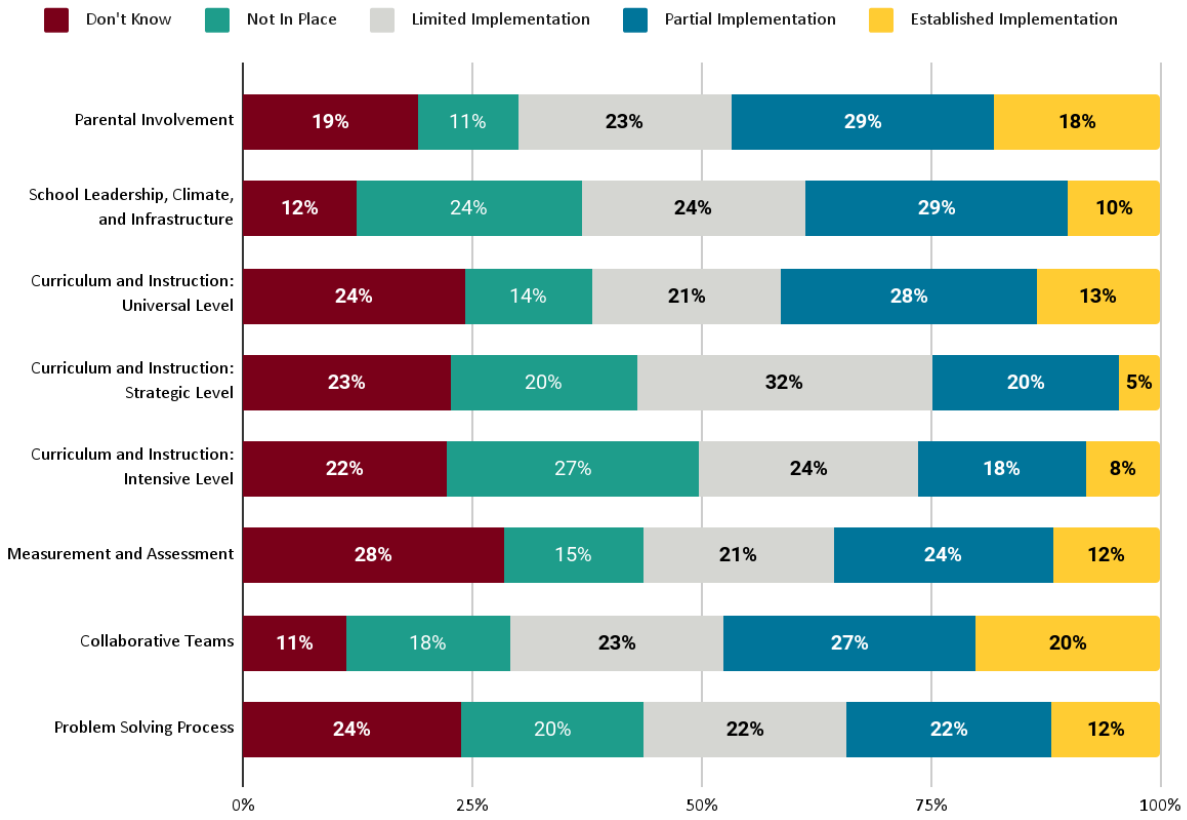
Domain	Average Score	Standard Deviation
Parental Involvement	2.66	0.97
School Leadership, Climate, and	2.28	1.00

Infrastructure		
Curriculum and Instruction: Universal Level	2.54	0.99
Curriculum and Instruction: Strategic Level	2.12	0.87
Curriculum and Instruction: Intensive Level	2.09	1.00
Measurement & Assessment	2.45	0.99
Collaborative Teams	2.56	1.05
Problem Solving Process	2.34	1.03

Figure 3 below provides additional insight into how each domain was rated by building leadership teams across the district. In addition to further illustrating strengths, this graph also indicates the percent of staff who were not sure how to answer questions within each domain (a rating of *Don't Know*). Domains with high levels of *Don't Know* ratings (e.g., Measurement and Assessment; 28%) may indicate a need for district and building teams to better define current MTSS practices and/or improve communication around these practices.

Figure 3

MTSS Self -Assessment District-wide Results: Domain Comparison



Note. NP= Not in place: The practice has not been implemented; LP =Limited implementation: The practice is implemented less than 25% of the time; PI= Partial Implementation: The practice is implemented about half the time; EI= Established Implementation: The practice is implemented more than 75% of the time; DK= Don't Know: I'm not sure if this practice is being implemented.

Lastly, Table 7 includes school/program-level MTSS Self-Evaluation Survey results. Note that the sample size for each school is small (apart from Dorothy Dodds Elementary), thus findings should be interpreted with caution as the perceptions presented may not reflect the entirety of

each leadership team. Survey results indicate that building leadership teams provided relatively low ratings across MTSS domains, with the lowest ratings occurring at the middle school level. As noted above, while low ratings may indicate lower levels of implementation in a building/program, they may also indicate a need for staff to create or be provided with more information about what implementation of each domain looks like in their setting (i.e., the language used in the survey may not have aligned with how staff think about services/programming at their site).

Table 7

MTSS Self-Assessment School-level Survey Results: Domain Comparison

Domain	Dorothy Dodds Elementary *(n=10)*	S.G. Reinertsen Elementary *(n=3)*	Ellen Hopkins Elementary *(n=4)*	Horizon East MS *(n=3)*	Horizon West MS *(n=2)*
Parental Involvement	2.66 (0.95)	2.86 (1.06)	2.48 (0.94)	2.35 (1.03)	3.19 (0.83)
School Leadership, Climate, & Infrastructure	2.45 (0.93)	2.8 (0.9)	1.85 (0.91)	1.89 (0.82)	2.45 (1.21)
Curriculum and Instruction: Universal Level	2.51 (1.02)	2.88 (0.89)	2.43 (0.9)	2.38 (1.02)	2.47 (1.02)
Curriculum and Instruction: Strategic Level	2.03 (0.82)	2.67 (0.78)	2.29 (0.78)	1.47 (0.62)	2.09 (0.94)
Curriculum and Instruction: Intensive Level	2.22 (0.94)	2.79 (0.89)	2.44 (0.92)	1 (0)	1.43 (0.76)
Measurement & Assessment	2.4 (0.91)	2.88 (0.9)	3 (0.86)	1.30 (0.55)	2.26 (1.05)
Collaborative Teams	2.79 (1)	3.07 (0.71)	1.94 (0.96)	2.41 (1.04)	2.69 (1.22)
Problem Solving Process	2.48 (0.98)	2.6 (1.07)	2.28 (0.99)	2 (1.04)	2.24 (1.1)

District Assessment Inventory

The district's testing calendar for 2021-22 was shared with evaluators to provide an inventory of assessments given widely throughout the district. Universal screening tools administered to all students in a grade or grades include:

- Reading & Math, Grades K-4: aimswebPlus (Fall, Winter, Spring), Text Level Assessments (Fall, Winter; optional in Spring), Bridges Unit Assessments (Fall, Winter, Spring)
- Spelling, Grades K-5: Words Their Way (Fall, Winter; optional in Spring)
- Reading & Math, Grades 5-9: NWEA MAP (Fall, Spring)
- Grades 6-9: MCA, ACT
- Grades 9-12: No routine screening completed
- Grades K-12: No SEB screening completed

Diagnostic assessments include:

- Math K-4: AVMR Assessments

This list indicates that the district lacks universal screening tools/procedures in the following areas: SEB for all grades, any screening assessments for grades 9-12. The inventory also included state-required assessment for all students (MCA) and Spanish immersion students (Spanish aimswebPlus), as well as optional tests (ACT). It is unclear which measures are used to track progress from the district assessment inventory, which was noted as an area of need in the group interviews (i.e., district guidance on progress monitoring tools, processes, and procedures). As noted in the group interviews, this list indicates that no universal screening tools for SEB are administered on a district-wide basis. While the district includes diagnostic measures to be used following screening on some part of their assessment inventory, it may be helpful to articulate the specific measures used for (1) screening, (2) diagnostic assessment; and (3) progress monitoring, as group interviews showed that there may be a difference in how staff and district administrators conceptualize these types of assessments. Training on data literacy could support clarity and shared understanding of these concepts as well as support adherence to assessment administration procedures in the future.

District Professional Development Inventory: Application to MTSS

Moorhead leadership shared a list of professional development sessions that have been offered to district staff during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years coded by continuing education re-licensure requirement categories. Although many of the listed sessions were optional and some were only offered to specific schools within the district, a broad analysis outlined in Table 8 provides one indicator of the district's professional development priorities across the two school years. These data indicate that most professional development sessions were categorized as "general," encompassing a wide range of topics to support teaching and learning in the district (e.g., PLC time, vertical alignment across grades, test administration, data use). Other categories that the district used to organize professional development opportunities included Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (PBIS; 16.4% of the total across two years) and cultural competency (11.1%), but few dedicated specifically to mental illness (1.3%), suicide prevention (0.8%), and English Learners (0.6%).

This summary indicates that Moorhead has dedicated a significant amount of resources to providing professional development to its staff (1,103.2 hours total). Although MTSS was not expliciting mentioned in any session titles (though "Tier 1 instruction" was included in the description of a few sessions), many of these trainings appear likely to support and/or are in alignment with MTSS and its core components (e.g., NWEA "data digs," "Standards Implementation"). Notably, the district would likely benefit from breaking its "general" category into smaller subcategories (e.g., assessment, collaborative teaming) to aid in future analyses and tracking of trends in professional development emphases across school years.

Table 8

Summary of District-Provided Professional Development, 2020-21 and 2021-22

Topic	2020-21 Hours	2020-21 Percent of Total	2021-22 Hours	2021-22 Percent of Total	*Percent Overall*
1. Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies	80.3	15.6%	101.0	17.1%	*16.4%*
2. Reading Requirement	32.8	6.4%	55.8	9.4%	*8.0%*
3. Suicide Prevention	1.0	0.2%	8.0	1.4%	*0.8%*
4. Mental Illness	13.5	2.6%	1.3	0.2%	*1.3%*
5. English Language Learners	4.0	0.8%	2.3	0.4%	*0.6%*
6. Cultural Competency	67.0	13.2%	55.5	9.4%	*11.1%*
7. General (Teaching & Learning)	237.5	46.3%	350.2	59.4%	*55.3%*
8. Accommodations, modifications and adaptations of curriculum	77.0	15.0%	16.3	2.8%	*8.5%*
Total hours	**513.0**		**590.2**		**1,103.2**

Note. Topics were provided by the district as they are used to organize offerings internally.

Strengths, Opportunities, and Recommendations

This section summarizes strengths, opportunities for improvement, and specific recommendations related to ***Evaluation Question 1: To what extent are all buildings in the school district implementing an aligned (PreK-12) MTSS framework that addresses students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs?*** Due to the complex nature of this question, this section is organized by the MTSS domains that were used to guide the group interviews: Assessment, Data-Based Decision Making, Multi-Level Instruction, Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms, and Fidelity and Evaluation.

Assessment	
Strengths	
● Elementary schools follow screening procedures set forth by the district by implementing aimswebPlus assessments for reading and math in fall, winter, and spring. ● Most schools use other sources of data to verify risk levels indicated by screening tools. ● Majority of staff recognize that a consistent diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring process is an area of need. ● Early childhood uses a range of screening assessments that are designed to proactively identify student needs.	
Opportunities for Improvement	***Recommendations***
There is no screening or system for collecting routine data in place for grades 9-12.	● Review screening practices and expectations in place for secondary school. Discuss

	supports that are needed to ensure routine screening is completed and data is utilized to support intervention planning and resource allocation at secondary level.
No SEB screener exists district-wide to identify students at risk for SEB needs.	● Identify and adopt an SEB screener that can be used consistently across grade levels. Gather information on staff's perceived appropriateness, acceptability, and feasibility of candidate screeners to support adoption and sustained use.
The use of progress monitoring tools is inconsistent across the district. There is no district wide plan or process to guide building-level use of progress-monitoring assessments. Further, there is no clear process for diagnostic assessments for those students with an identified area of need. Staff may need clarity with regard to differences between screening, diagnostic assessment, and progress monitoring tools and processes to effectively carry out these tasks with adherence in practice.	● To the extent possible, clarify and align progress monitoring tools and practices (e.g., frequency of data collection, data review processes) across buildings. ● To the extent possible, clarify and align diagnostic assessment tools and practices (e.g., specific tools, diagnostic assessment data collection process, data review processes) across buildings. ● Refine district wide assessment inventories or develop or another resource that includes more information about diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring. Include in this resource tools and practices to be used as well as procedures such as frequency of progress monitoring aligned with best practice (i.e., every other week to monthly for Tier 2; weekly for Tier 3).
Schools reported examining screening data and consulting/collecting other data sources to verify risk, but it was often not clear who did this, when it was done, or how often it occurred. ○ Some staff noted that they might benefit from more structure around examining and responding to screening data.	● Buildings should establish clear schedules and meeting agendas that specify who examines screening data and exactly which additional data are collected/reviewed each school year. CAREI can provide standardized schedules/agendas to use or adapt as needed.

Data-Based Decision-Making
Strengths
● When lacking an efficient and useful district wide data system (i.e., Powerschool), some schools have developed their one spreadsheets to monitor student progress and make data accessible to key educational partners.

● Each school has some sort of team established that discusses student needs that is separate from grade-level teams.	
Opportunities for Improvement	***Recommendations***
Some staff lacked familiarity with basic assessment terminology (e.g., the difference between screening, diagnostic assessment, and progress monitoring).	● Consider providing professional development to build staff data literacy, including an overview of key terms
Similar to the examination of screening data, it was not always clear from talking to building leadership teams who reviews diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring data and how often. ○ Student Assistance Teams also do not appear to be using clear, established decision rules to determine movement between tiers or interventions (and sometimes reported that even when they collected progress monitoring data, they were not relying on it to make decisions about interventions).	● Develop a comprehensive MTSS process guide that provides: (a) clear definition of tiers, (b) decision-making rules for movement between tiers, (c) procedures for screening and progress monitoring in academic and social-emotional domains, (d) procedures for matching intervention to student need, (e) procedures for evaluating intervention effects (who does this and when?), (f) procedures for assessing fidelity, and (g) procedures for documentation of problem solving efforts. CAREI can provide a process guide template that would facilitate this effort.
Staff reported a need for improved data systems for tracking interventions that would not rely on self-created tools (which are not streamlined and make transitions between schools more challenging).	● Consider evaluating and streamlining data systems. Considerations should be made for a data warehouse that functions similar to eduCLIMBER (which has features that facilitate documenting and monitoring progress for interventions).
At the secondary level, students are often placed in intervention classes and remain there throughout the year even if data might indicate a need for a change. Further, there is no formal process or guidance on how staff determine whether students at any grade level meet criteria to move between tiers.	● Develop processes for using progress monitoring and screening data to move students into and out of interventions or intervention classes at frequent times points (e.g., the quarter or semester mark). To facilitate this, consider scheduling intervention courses that only last one quarter or a brief period of time before re-evaluating the plan.

Multi-Level Instruction	
Tier 1	
Strengths	
• At the elementary level, teachers utilize district-identified curriculum for academic content, some of which is evidence-based. • At the elementary level, staff described district-wide work on articulating and aligning teaching and learning in and across grade levels that occurred several years ago. • Teachers attempt to differentiate instruction; however, resources to support high-quality differentiation and training on how to differentiate effectively and efficiently is lacking. • Time was taken during the pandemic to articulate and align teaching and learning in and across grade levels for Tier 1.	
Areas Needing Improvement	***Recommendations***
The district may consider revisiting work to align and articulate teaching and learning in and across grade levels and monitor the progress of this continued work within PLCs.	• The district could engage in routine training to articulate teaching and learning across and within grade levels and monitor the alignment of curricula within and across grades and with state standards.
While K-5 has an identified curriculum for math and reading, only some of these are evidence-based. The middle and high schools lack evidence-based curricula to guide instruction. This results in most teachers doing something different within and across grades	• The district should review all curricula for their evidence-base as well as their usability and make adjustments as necessary. Evidence-based curricula should be adopted and implemented in secondary schools. Curricula should be aligned across and in grades across the system.
While some classrooms utilize pieces of Second Step at the elementary level and BARR at the middle and high schools level, the district has not adopted a district-wide approach to SEL curriculum or invested in training teachers in proactive classroom management strategies. PBIS implementation has also been lacking and is not implemented with adherence.	• Staff should be retrained in PBIS and the district should adopt additional evidence-based Tier 1 SEB supports (e.g., SEL program and proactive classroom management program) to cultivate a strong Tier 1 that facilitates engagement in learning and healthy development.
Staff indicated that support for differentiated instruction was needed, as the current curriculum and resources available did not lend themselves well to reaching students above, below, and, even in some instances, at grade level. Moreover, staff are uncertain how to differentiate instruction beyond the use of forming small groups.	• Staff should be trained in differentiated instruction, including its central tenets, best practices, and efficiencies. The district should then provide supports and best practice coaching support (i.e., includes audit and feedback, prompts, and reminders).

Tier 2	
Strengths	
● Many Tier 2 supports in the district (especially academic) are at least partially funded through Title 1. Several staff noted that this funding has been a significant help and that, in general, they feel this finding is being used very strategically and efficiently. ● Staff support the idea of engaging in proactive Tier 2 support and hope to grow their capacity to deliver Tier 2 interventions through the district MTSS initiative.	
Areas Needing Improvement	***Recommendations***
Regarding whether Tier 2 interventions replace or supplement core instruction, schools lack a common, designated intervention time. While each school reported making every effort to schedule interventions around core instruction, the teams also noted that pulling students from core is occasionally unavoidable.	● Consider implementing a school-wide or grade-level-common intervention time at the primary schools to ensure that interventions supplement rather than replace core instruction.
Overall, Tier 2 intervention procedures, strategies, resources, and standardized curricula or approaches for academic and SEB interventions are lacking. ○ Staff had difficulty articulating clearly what "counted" as an intervention and also noted that they would like to continue to improve their knowledge, processes and programming for Tier 2, as most of what is currently considered ○ While some Tier 2 resources exist for literacy, no formal, evidence-based Tier 2 interventions exist for SEB or math. The interventions that are being utilized have a poor to mixed evidence base. ○ At the secondary level, no formal evidence-based Tier 2 interventions were identified.	● Begin by training staff on foundational MTSS terminology (e.g., Tier 1, 2 and 3; assessment terms) as part of a districtwide MTSS 101 training (see recommendations related to infrastructure below for more details). This work would also be supported through the development of an MTSS process guide (CAREI can provide resources for development). ● Develop a comprehensive plan for and engage in differentiated, job-embedded training for staff who will deliver Tier 2 intervention supports and services. ● Develop resources that reflect all of the intervention curricula and strategies staff have available for supporting students' academic and SEB needs through Tier 2. This process would help the teams define/standardize the interventions they deliver and identify and fill gaps in evidence-based curricula/practices when needed.

Tier 3
Strengths
● Interview and survey data indicate that Tier 3 is an area generally in need of support in

Moorhead across all buildings.	
Areas Needing Improvement	***Recommendations***
In most situations, intensive support is only available for students who qualify for special education services.	● Consider aligning Tier 3 instruction with best practices across all grade levels in reading, math, and SEB. Train staff on the definition of Tier 3 – Tier 3 interventions need to be more intensive than Tier 2 interventions and adapted to address individual student needs through an iterative manner based on student data. It will be important to distinguish the difference between Tier 2 and 3 in terms of the data required for decision making, groups size and dosage, instructional delivery methods, and interventionist expertise. As noted above, development of an MTSS process guide would support these efforts. ● Tier 3 interventions need to be defined outside of special education services. The district should consider establishing an intervention framework that allows intensifying and individualizing intervention supports for general education students that are not special education services. ● As much as possible, re-evaluate staffing decisions to ensure sufficient allocations are made to support the implementation of Tier 3 interventions.
● While some counseling and mental health support are in place for students with intensive need, Moorhead currently lacks capacity to address the "overwhelming" mental health needs of students, particularly at the secondary level.	● Consider re-evaluating utility of contracts with external community partners to invest in organizations that provide high-impact, evidence-based practice and programs that can be leveraged to train and support internal staff to acquire specialized skills in the area of SEB and mental health to address unmet needs that may be exacerbating or perpetuating challenges. ● Invest in internal staff capacity to deliver Tier 3 mental health support by reviewing social worker and school counselor roles as well as their current ratios and daily activities to ensure their time is allocated to support specific MTSS tasks, such as Tier 2 and 3 direct service delivery.

Infrastructure & Support Mechanisms	
Strengths	
• Regarding teams that support MTSS, all schools have a team that conducts problem solving and attempts to identify interventions for all students in need of interventions (typically the Title team), teacher teams (by grade or department), and a building leadership team. • The early childhood program reportedly conducts home visits with interpreters, employs paraprofessionals from diverse cultures who act as cultural liaisons and trusted school partners to families, utilizes multicultural texts, and sends out family surveys to understand family backgrounds and tailor educational activities to family cultures and backgrounds.	
Opportunities for Improvement	***Recommendations***
One theme identified by staff when asked what they hope will result from this review process was a need for uniformity and alignment in the district's MTSS framework from preschool to grade 12.	• As noted in sections above, the district would benefit from developing a comprehensive MTSS process guide to communicate the district's MTSS framework and promote consistent implementation across the district. This process guide could include: (a) clear definition of tiers, (b) decision-making rules for movement between tiers, (c) a description of teams who support MTSS, (d) procedures for screening and progress monitoring in academic and social-emotional domains, (e) procedures matching intervention to student need, (f) procedures for evaluating intervention effects, (g) procedures for assessing fidelity, and (h) procedures for documentation of problem-solving efforts. • In addition to a district-level process guide, building leadership teams should develop MTSS Resource Maps (which outline interventions and assessments being used at each tier in the building as well as an inventory of teams and their meeting frequency, membership, and purpose) and align them to district documentation as it is developed. • Building leadership could be supported by gaining clarity on who is leading and holding staff accountable for MTSS implementation at the district level as well as guidance, support, and clarity from district leadership on expectations for implementation of MTSS.

Leadership teams agreed that professional development targeted at helping all staff understand and get on the same page about MTSS is an important next step. ● Majority of staff also noted the need for differentiated, job-embedded training on process, practices, and programs for implementation at each Tier, as well as follow-up implementation supports (i.e., coaching and monitoring) to feel confident and ensure implementation and sustainment of trained upon skills.	● Provide "MTSS 101" training to all staff that includes definitions of the core components in general and articulation of what these look like (or the goal for what they will look like) at each building. ● Develop a comprehensive district-wide training plan aligned with the MTSS process guide. Identify personnel who will be in charge of delivering follow-up implementation support (i.e., coaching) and monitoring of fidelity and results of implementation. ● When tracking information about professional development offered by the district, apply a more detailed coding scheme to identify the content being addressed in each session (e.g., assessment, collaborative teaming) so that professional development trends can be more closely examined and responded to over time.
In general, the extent to which buildings had attended to the cultural and linguistic responsiveness of their curricula and assessments was an area for growth. Moreover, one of staff's greatest wishes is to have an explicit, district-wide focus on diversity, equity and inclusion that include training and active follow-up implementation support in evidence-based strategies to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes across all schools, classrooms, and policies/procedures.	● Evaluate recent efforts to engage staff in cultural competency professional development sessions (11% of training offerings in the past two school years). Review of recent training can include reviewing data on participation levels, whether sessions were required or optional, which staff the trainings were offered to, and any feedback gathered on each session. Although trainings have been *offered*, it may be that staff are seeking a more comprehensive, district-wide approach to engaging in cultural competency work. ● Moving forward, engage in intentional, district-wide work to address cultural competence and cultural humility as a district, grounding this work in allowing every student to experience high levels of learning and belonging across the system while identifying and eliminating barriers that may prevent students from learning at their highest potential. ● Ensure that cultural and linguistic responsiveness is a criterion that is addressed as part of the district's periodic curriculum

	review process, as well as when adopting intervention curricula as a school or district.
Building leadership teams reported that one area for growth was communication with families about MTSS - both about the overall framework and how it functions in the district/school as well as providing regular updates to parents on the status of their students' progress in interventions.	● As the district defines its MTSS framework (through development of a process guide and/or other tools), share this information with families. ● Each building should develop written procedures for communicating about student progress to caregivers (e.g., sending updates every 3 weeks), defining who will do what and how often. As much as possible, use technology to automate this process (e.g., develop standard email or letter templates that pull from student information systems).
It is unclear the extent to which building and district leadership teams explicitly address the core components of MTSS (assessment, data-based decision making, multilevel instruction, infrastructure and support mechanism, and fidelity/evaluation) as part of their normal operating procedures.	● Examine current practices (meeting schedules and agendas) for building and district leadership teams, comparing them to the AIR MTSS rubric to determine which elements are already addressed and which are not. Ensure that MTSS is a central framework used by these teams to talk and think about instruction and student supports throughout each building and at the district office.
Each building-level team follows different processes.	● While not all teams need to operate the exact same way, they would benefit from sharing some standardized components. Consider gathering these teams (or representatives from each team) to discuss current processes and identify areas for greater alignment (e.g., team name, frequency of meeting, agenda structure, use of data, referral process). This process will not only help create some alignment between the student problem-solving teams, but will also allow teams to share tools and resources.
Lack of representation for mental health training and expertise at the district level to support sustainable SEB and mental health programming throughout the district.	● *This was a major point of feedback voiced by nearly all staff across a range of professional service roles. ● The district team should evaluate the gaps in their own training and expertise and consider recruiting a district administrator who has extensive experience coordinating and delivering mental health services in schools

	(across the continuum of prevention, promotion, intervention, and therapy). A goal of this initiative is to implement an MTSS framework with a focus on School Mental Health (SMH) services and programming.

Fidelity & Evaluation	
Strengths	
● Interview and survey data indicate that monitoring fidelity and evaluating implementation as well as student outcomes as a result of implementation is an area generally in need of support in Moorhead across all buildings. ● Staff are supportive of district efforts to increase fidelity monitoring and feedback and evaluation of program impact.	
Opportunities for Improvement	***Recommendations***
Evaluation infrastructures and mechanisms have not been developed and have not yet been directly focused on the district's MTSS framework or its core components	● Develop district and building implementation plans to monitor short- and long-term district and building goals that are explicitly tied to or positioned within an MTSS framework. ● On a cycle that aligns with data availability and decision-making pragmatics, the district and individual schools should evaluate system outcomes to discover who is and who is not adequately benefiting from the current system of support. Data should be regularly collected and disaggregated in the areas of academic achievement, attendance, disciplinary incidents, and SEL. ● The district should use data annually to evaluate the effectiveness of tiered support (e.g., core, supplemental and intensive instruction).
Buildings are not yet collecting any form of fidelity data on most of their intervention or assessment practices.	● Develop a system and measures to monitor the fidelity of implementation of core, supplemental, and intensive interventions, as well as screening and progress monitoring processes.

Evaluation Question 2: To what extent do teachers and staff support implementation of an MTSS framework?

Data Sources:

- MTSS Group Interviews
- MTSS Beliefs Survey
- MTSS Perceptions Survey
- Beliefs About Behavior Survey

Findings

MTSS Group Interviews

Group interviews on MTSS with building leadership teams indicated that Moorhead staff generally support implementation of MTSS in their buildings, but are largely unaware of what MTSS is and what it looks like in practice. Many interviewed staff expressed that they were looking forward to learning more and improving MTSS implementation in the district and expressed hope that Moorhead's MTSS initiative would cultivate consistency across schools within the district and that the district would remain committed to sustain this work over time. The following surveys provide more detailed insight into staff beliefs about, perceived skills, and self-efficacy related to implementation of an MTSS framework.

MTSS Beliefs Survey

This survey contains items designed to measure educator beliefs about: Academic Ability and Performance of Students with Disabilities, Data-Based Decision Making, and Functions of Core and Supplemental Instruction. This tool can be used to identify commonly held beliefs among educators that will likely help facilitate or hinder MTSS implementation efforts. Districtwide (Table 9) and school-level results (Table 10) are presented below. Results were calculated by combining the average percent of staff who rated items in each domain as "agree" or "strongly agree," indicating supportive beliefs in these areas.

Table 9

MTSS Beliefs Survey: Districtwide Agreement Levels (average % agree+strongly agree)

Staff Type	*n*	Academic Ability and Performance of Students with Disabilities	Data-Based Decision Making	Functions of Core and Supplemental Instruction
All staff	**176**	**59.7%**	**72%**	**78.5%**
Admin, Instructional Coaches, District Office	16	87.5%	84.1%	91.2%
General Ed Teachers (+ Specialist and EL)	109	57.2%	71.2%	75.5%

Special Ed Teachers	29	55.2%	72.4%	72%
Student Support Staff (counselors, etc.)	10	46.7%	55.7%	72.4%

Note. Green = 80% or above; Yellow = 70-79%, Red = Below 70%

Table 10

MTSS Beliefs Survey: School-Level Agreement Levels (average % agree+strongly agree)

Building	*n*	Academic Ability and Performance of Students with Disabilities	Data-Based Decision Making	Functions of Core and Supplemental Instruction
Moorhead Early Childhood	9	48.1%	60.3%	69.3%
Dorothy Dodds Elementary	41	60.3%	69.6%	77.7%
Ellen Hopkins Elementary	29	54%	77.6%	78%
Robert Asp Elementary	5*	60%	78.6%	83.5%
S.G. Reinertsen Elementary	33	70.7%	72.4%	81.7%
Horizon East Middle	18	66.7%	72.6%	81.5%
Horizon West Middle	22	36.5%	73.6%	76.2%
Moorhead High School	25	61.3%	70%	74.6%
Career Academy/Alternative Education	12	54.5%	61.3%	74.7%

Note. Green = 80% or above; Yellow = 70-79%, Red = Below 70%; *Please note the low response rate (below 10 respondents) which may not represent the perceptions of the larger staff body.

In the domain of **Academic Ability and Performance of Students with Disabilities**, an average of 60% of respondents indicated that they believe students with disabilities are capable of achieving grade-level standards and expectations. This was the lowest scoring domain. Staff with the highest endorsement levels in this domain were administrators (including instructional coaches and district office staff; 88%) and the lowest were student support staff (47%). The school/program with the highest endorsement level was S. G. Reinertsen (71%) and the lowest was Horizon West Middle School (37%).

The **Data-Based Decision-Making** domain assesses individuals' beliefs about the positive impact of using data to inform educational decisions. On average, 72% of respondents indicated positive beliefs about using data to inform educational decisions. Staff with the highest

endorsement levels in this domain were administrators (including instructional coaches and district office staff; 84%) and the lowest were student support staff (56%). The school/program with the highest endorsement level was Robert Asp Elementary (79%) and the lowest was Moorhead Early Childhood (60%).

The **Functions of Core and Supplemental Instruction** domain assesses an individual's beliefs that the core (Tier 1) program should address the needs of at least 80% of students. In addition, it assesses beliefs related to supplemental supports that ensure students meet grade level expectations. This was the highest scoring domain, with 79% of staff endorsing that core instruction aims to meet the needs of all students and that intervention supports should increase in intensity based on student needs. Staff with the highest endorsement levels in this domain were administrators (including instructional coaches and district office staff; 91%) and the lowest were special education teachers (70%). The school/program with the highest endorsement level was Robert Asp Elementary (84%) and the lowest was Moorhead Early Childhood (69%).

Overall, results from the MTSS Beliefs survey show that while district administrators and instructional coaches may largely hold supportive beliefs regarding MTSS domains, supportive beliefs may not be shared by the broader faculty in Moorhead as evidenced by low scores across the majority of domains regardless of role or school building. In particular, it is worth noting that, while staff are somewhat supportive (e.g., "on the fence") about two of the main tenets of MTSS (i.e., data-based decision-making and functions of core and supplemental instruction), their beliefs about the academic ability of students with disabilities may actually limit their motivation to engage in activities related to data-based decision making and functions of core and supplemental instruction because they may think that investments made in these activities may not result in a more optimal outcome. This mechanism of implementation behavior, called outcome expectancies (i.e., subjective estimates of how likely it is that a specific behavior will be followed by particular consequences), is a predictor of implementation and work behavior. Thus, there should be a focus on cultivating supportive beliefs about the malleable ability of students with disabilities to improve staff motivation to engage in MTSS-aligned work behaviors.

MTSS Perceptions Survey

This survey is intended to measure educators' perceived skills relative to data-based decision making, tiered service delivery, problem solving, data collection, data analysis and technology use. The survey asks questions about these skills as they relate to Academic Content, Behavior Content, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Content, and Data Manipulation and Technology Use. Assessing perceived skill levels in these areas can help identify where staff would benefit most from targeted professional development though in-service training or coaching. Respondents answered questions about their skills using a Likert-type scale with the following response options:

1) I do not have the skill at all (NS)
2) I have minimal skills in this area; need substantial support to use it (MnS)
3) I have this skill, but still need some support to use it (SS)
4) I can use this skill with little support (HS)

5) I am highly skilled in this area and could teach others this skill (VHS)

Districtwide (Table 11) and school-level (Table 12) results are presented below. Results were calculated by combining the average percent of staff who rated themselves as "highly skilled" or "very highly skilled" in each domain.

Table 11

MTSS Perceptions Survey: Districtwide Skill Levels (average % highly skilled+very highly skilled)

Staff Type	*n*	Academic Skills	Behavior Skills	SEL Skills	Data/Tech Skills
All staff	**141**	**52.6%**	**38.1%**	**33.6%**	**45.8%**
Admin, Instructional Coaches, District Office	15	58.3%	40.3%	32.5%	60.8%
General Ed Teachers (+ Specialist and EL)	88	51.6%	33%	28.6%	40%
Special Ed Teachers	23	53.2%	46.9%	43.1%	61.9%
Student Support Staff (counselors, etc.)	7*	43.3%	66.9%	66.9%	44.6%

Note. Green = 80% or above; Yellow = 70-79%, Red = Below 70%; *Please note the low response rate (below 10 respondents) which may not represent the perceptions of the larger staff body.

Table 12

MTSS Perceptions Survey: Districtwide Skill Levels (average % highly skilled+very highly skilled)

Building	*n*	Academic Skills	Behavior Skills	SEL Skills	Data/Tech Skills
Moorhead Early Childhood	7*	41.7%	29%	37.7%	31.3%
Dorothy Dodds Elementary	34	62.4%	40.6%	34.9%	48.9%
Ellen Hopkins Elementary	22	53.8%	32.4%	31%	48.5%
Robert Asp Elementary	3*	60.9%	72.5%	71%	87.5%
S.G. Reinertsen Elementary	27	61%	38.3%	34.1%	55.5%
Horizon East Middle	14	48.4%	43.7%	37.6%	36.6%
Horizon West Middle	15	39.8%	34.8%	27.9%	43.3%
Moorhead High School	20	44.6%	38.9%	29%	45.6%

Career Academy/Alternative Education	9*	35.3%	29%	31.2%	34.7%

Note. Green = 80% or above; Yellow = 70-79%, Red = Below 70%; *Please note the low response rate (below 10 respondents) which may not represent the perceptions of the larger staff body.

Regarding applying MTSS skills to **Academic Content**, the highest percent of staff endorsed having strong skills in this domain (53%) compared to the other domains assessed by this survey. Staff with the highest self-reported skill levels in this domain were administrators (including instructional coaches and district office staff; 58%) and the lowest were student support staff (43%). Elementary schools in Moorhead generally had stronger skills in this area than early childhood and secondary schools. The school/program with the highest skill level in this domain was Dorothy Dodds Elementary (62%) and the lowest was the Career Academy/Alternative Education Center (35%).

For **Behavior Content,** 38% of staff reported that they are highly skilled or very highly skilled in applying MTSS skills in this area. Staff with the highest self-reported skill levels in this domain were student support staff (67%) and the lowest were general education teachers (33%). The school/program with the highest skill level in this domain was Robert Asp Elementary (73%); however, there were only 3 respondents from this school which may not represent broader staff body perceptions. The lowest school/program was Moorhead Early Childhood (29%) and the Career Academy/Alternative Education Center (29%).

In the domain of **SEL Content**, 34% of staff reported that they are highly skilled or very highly skilled in applying MTSS skills in this area (the lowest-rated area on this survey). Staff with the highest self-reported skill levels in this domain were student support staff (67%) and the lowest were general education teachers (29%). The school/program with the highest skill level in this domain was Robert Asp Elementary (71%); however, there were only 3 respondents from this school which may not represent broader staff body perceptions. The lowest school/program was Horizon West Middle School (28%) and Moorhead High School (29%).

Regarding **Data Manipulation and Technology Use** skills, 46% of staff reported that they are highly skilled or very highly skilled in applying MTSS skills in this area. Staff with the highest self-reported skill levels in this domain were special education teachers (62%) and the lowest were general education teachers (40%). The school/program with the highest skill level in this domain was Robert Asp Elementary (88%); however, there were only 3 respondents from this school which may not represent broader staff body perceptions. The lowest school/program was Moorhead Early Childhood (31%).

Overall, *less than half* of staff in Moorhead Area Public Schools feel that they are highly or very highly skilled in the areas of academics, behavior, SEL, and data manipulation and use. In other words, the majority of staff in the district believe that they either do not have these skills, have minimal skills in all areas and need substantial support to use skills, or have the skills but still need some support to use them. Thus, the majority of staff do not currently think they can complete the tasks being asked of them regarding MTSS implementation because they lack the

skills or capability to do so. This is an important finding because an individual's perception of their ability to perform the actions specific to a situation (i.e., task self-efficacy) predict behavior. To improve staff task self-efficacy in academic skills, behavior skills, SEL skills, and data manipulation and use skills, the district should provide strategic and high-quality professional development (i.e., active training employing strategies such as role play, practice using skills, performance-based feedback) on MTSS skills and adequate follow-up support (i.e., coaching with audit and feedback, prompts, and reminders) on each trained-upon skill while monitoring fidelity of implementation for each skill.

Beliefs about Behavior Survey

The Beliefs About Behavior Survey (BABS; Browning Wright & Cook, 2008) was designed to measure school-level beliefs and attitudes relevant to practices targeting students' social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) functioning. The survey addresses staff beliefs about behavior in 11 different domains (as outlined in the tables below). The BABS was completed by a total of 259 Moorhead staff, as indicated in Table 13.

Table 13

Roles of Beliefs About Behavior Survey Respondents

Respondent Role	***n* (%)**
General education teacher	106 (41%)
Paraprofessional/support staff	48 (19%)
Special Education Teacher	35 (14%)
Specialist/elective teacher	26 (10%)
Student support (e.g., counselor, social worker, school psychologist)r	25 (10%)
Instructional Coach	7 (3%)
English learner teacher	5 (2%)
Administrator	5 (2%)
District office staff	2 (1%)
Total	**259**

The BABS is designed to help districts and schools examine shared beliefs among staff that serve as facilitators and barriers to efforts to adopt and implement SEB supports. Analysis of the BABS results includes identifying "supportive" and "unsupportive" beliefs. A supportive belief is one that serves as a facilitator of staff investing in the adoption and delivery of SEB supports. A belief is supportive when a respondent either agrees with a positively stated belief about

behavior (e.g., ‘‘Even without parental involvement and support, educators are able to positively impact students' academics and behavior in school’’) or disagrees with a negatively stated belief (e.g., ‘‘There is little to nothing educators can do to get uninvolved parents to participate in their child’s education’’). An unsupportive belief is likely to serve as a barrier to staff investing in the adoption and delivery of SEB supports. A belief is coded as unsupportive when a respondent agrees with a negatively stated belief or disagrees with a positively stated belief about behavior.

Top Supportive and Unsupportive Beliefs. Tables 14 and 15 identify the top five BABS items in which Moorhead staff indicated supportive and unsupportive beliefs, indicating the percent of staff who selected a supportive or unsupportive belief. The top supportive beliefs fell within the domains of Relationships, Prevention/Proactive, and Positive Reinforcement, while unsupportive beliefs fell under Ownership/Responsibility and Punishment. The top supportive beliefs indicate that staff generally value positive relationship building, proactive/preventative strategies to address SEB needs, and providing positive reinforcement for desired student behavior; the top unsupportive beliefs pertained to who is responsible for student misbehavior and using exclusionary discipline and/or punishment to manage student misbehavior.

Table 14

Top Five Supportive Beliefs Districtwide

Cluster	BABS Item	% Supportive
Relationship	44.Even if treated disrespectfully, educators should restore and repair relationships with students following a negative interaction.	99.56%
Relationship	45.All students are entitled to positive relationships with educators who are in charge of their learning.	99.56%
Prevention/Proactive	9.Proactive strategies are worth the time and energy to implement to prevent problems from happening.	99.19%
Relationship	15.Educators should be sensitive to what students are experiencing outside of school.	99.16%
Positive Reinforcement	3.Recognizing and acknowledging students for exhibiting desired behavior helps establish a positive school climate.	98.41%

Table 15

Top Five Unsupportive Beliefs Districtwide

Cluster	BABS Item	% Unsupportive
Ownership/Responsibility	1.The primary reason students misbehave in school is the lack of parent involvement and support.	79.45%
Ownership/Responsibility	11.If a student has repeated behavior problems, the student should be referred to a team to consider whether special education services are needed.	74.09%
Ownership/Responsibility	4.Students who misbehave in the classroom or non-classroom settings (cafeteria, recess) should be handled by counselors, behavior specialists, and/or administrators.	65.34%

Punishment	22.If a student is sent to the office for problem behavior, then the student should receive some form of punishment for the behavior.	64.66%
Punishment	2.When a student misbehaves, the student should be removed from the learning environment for the benefit of the other students.	63.32%

Analysis by BABS Domain. According to implementation science research, a practice is more likely to be implemented when at least 80% of staff demonstrate support or buy-in for that practice (Fixsen & Blase, 1993; Horner et al., 2004). As such, this tipping point of 80% is used in BABS analyses as an indicator of beliefs or domains that are likely to support effective SEB practices in schools. Items or domains in which 70-79% of staff demonstrate supportive beliefs are considered "on the bubble," in that staff may be more open and amenable to shifting their beliefs to be supportive of the adoption and delivery of specific practices. Items or domains with less than 70% support are likely to act as implementation barriers. Table 16 details the percent of staff endorsing supportive beliefs (average across items in each domain), both across all survey respondents and analyzed by role, with color coding to indicate percent of staff in each category demonstrating supportive beliefs at an 80% or higher level (green), 70-79% level (yellow), and below 70% (red). These data indicate that, as a district, more than 80% of staff endorsed supportive beliefs in most domains, especially in the areas of Relationship, Collaboration/Consistency, Intentions to Implement, and Prevention/Proactive approaches. However, these results also indicate that beliefs in the areas of Punishment, Ownership/Responsibility, and Work Overload may act as barriers to implementing effective SEB practices. Role-specific results show similar trends but may point to areas where targeted training could be useful.

Table 16

Percent of Staff Endorsing Supportive Beliefs in Each BABS Cluster, Overall and By Role

Cluster	All Staff (*n*=259)	Admin, Inst Coaches, District Office (*n*=21)	General Ed Teachers (+ Specialist and EL) (*n*=137)	Paraeducators (*n*=48)	Special Ed Teachers (*n*=35)	Student Support (counselors, etc.) (*n*=25)
Relationship	99%	98%	99%	98%	99%	100%
Collaboration/ Consistency	96%	91%	96%	96%	97%	98%
Intentions to Implement	91%	100%	89%	89%	94%	96%
Prevention/ Proactive	92%	92%	93%	86%	90%	97%
Mission/Scope of Schools	82%	84%	81%	74%	89%	91%

Equity	85%	91%	86%	67%	95%	92%
Self-Efficacy	81%	97%	80%	75%	86%	86%
Positive Reinforcement	78%	73%	75%	81%	81%	87%
Punishment	54%	69%	51%	42%	65%	70%
Ownership/ Responsibility	55%	63%	55%	40%	67%	64%
Work Overload	57%	61%	53%	51%	71%	68%

Note. Green = 80% or above; Yellow = 70-79%, Red = Below 70%

Analysis by School. The BABS was primarily designed to address beliefs held by staff at the school level. As such, Table 17 includes data on the percent of staff endorsing supportive beliefs in each BABS domain for each school in Moorhead. School-specific data show trends similar to those observed across the district. These data could be used by school and district leaders to identify specific buildings where additional training is needed in certain areas as well as areas that should be celebrated for their high levels of staff support.

Table 17

Percent of Staff Endorsing Supportive Beliefs in Each BABS Cluster, by School

	n	Ownership/ Respnsblty	Positive Reinforcmnt	Punishment	Equity	Mission/ Scope of Schools	Work Overload	Relationship	Self-efficacy	Prevention/ Proactive	Collaboratn/ Consistency	Intentions to Implement
Moorhead Early Childhood	3*	75%	89%	52%	92%	94%	78%	100%	94%	92%	92%	100%
Dorothy Dodds Elementary	49	56%	80%	53%	81%	78%	54%	100%	84%	89%	96%	95%
Ellen Hopkins Elementary	27	61%	78%	66%	77%	86%	70%	100%	90%	91%	98%	91%
Robert Asp Elementary	67	62%	85%	58%	94%	85%	60%	99%	84%	93%	97%	94%
S.G. Reinertsen Elementary	19	65%	78%	58%	91%	83%	71%	100%	90%	93%	99%	94%
Horizon East Middle	14	55%	78%	42%	98%	83%	44%	100%	78%	94%	98%	92%
Horizon West Middle	25	54%	65%	58%	86%	83%	52%	99%	81%	89%	96%	95%
Moorhead High School	71	48%	73%	50%	87%	82%	54%	98%	78%	94%	94%	86%
Career Academy/Alternative Education	24	48%	82%	54%	86%	83%	70%	96%	83%	95%	93%	96%

Note. Green = 80% or above; Yellow = 70-79%, Red = Below 70%; *Please note the low response rate (below 10 respondents) which may not represent the perceptions of the larger staff body.

Strengths, Opportunities, and Recommendations

This section and the table below summarizes strengths, opportunities for improvement, and specific recommendations related to ***Evaluation Question 2: To what extent do teachers and staff support implementation of an MTSS framework?***

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Staff Beliefs about MTSS</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Strengths</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">

Majority of interviewed staff expressed that they were looking forward to learning more and improving MTSS implementation in the district.
Approximately 99% of staff generally value positive relationship building, proactive/preventative strategies to address SEB needs, and providing positive reinforcement for desired student behavior.
Majority of district administrators and instructional coaches (84-91% across MTSS domains on the MTSS Beliefs scale) hold supportive beliefs with regard to the academic ability of students with disabilities, data-based decision-making, and functions of core and supplemental instruction.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Opportunities for Improvement</td><td>Recommendations</td></tr>
<tr><td>Overall, 72% of respondents selected Agree or Strongly Agree that there is a positive impact of using data to inform educational decisions.</td><td>Consider providing training to all staff on how data-based decision making can positively influence educational programming and, subsequently, student developmental outcomes. These could be offered as standalone trainings or areas that are emphasized in an MTSS 101 training. Ideally, this would be provided to all staff; additional training on these subjects could be provided to buildings or roles who demonstrated the lowest agreement levels in these areas.</td></tr>
<tr><td>79% of respondents selected Agree or Strongly Agree that core instruction aims to meet the needs of all students and that intervention supports should increase in intensity based on student needs.</td><td>Consider providing training to all staff on how core instruction supplemented by coordinated, tiered supports can benefit all students. These could be offered as standalone trainings or areas that are emphasized in an MTSS 101 training. Ideally, this would be provided to all staff; additional training on these subjects could be provided to buildings or roles who demonstrated the lowest agreement levels in these areas.</td></tr>
</table>

Only 60% of respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed that students with disabilities are able to achieve benchmarks in reading and mathematics	• Consider providing training infused with motivational tactics, such as group motivational interviewing, on student responsiveness to intervention. These could be offered as standalone trainings or areas that are emphasized in an MTSS 101 training. Ideally, this would be provided to all staff. Additional reflection on student achievement could be accomplished through regular review of the data and facilitated discussion with instructional or MTSS coaches at grade-level team meetings.

Staff Beliefs about Behavior	
Strengths	
• Interviews indicated that the majority of staff hope to improve SEB support throughout the district and wish to gain training and curricula to support student SEB development. • The Beliefs about Behavior survey indicated that staff largely value positive relationship building, proactive/preventative strategies to address SEB needs, collaboration and consistency, and believe that addressing social, emotional, and behavioral development is within the purview of education and schools (i.e., mission/scope of schools). • Survey results indicated that staff generally believe in supporting equitable student outcomes.	
Opportunities for Improvement	***Recommendations***
Results indicate that beliefs in the areas of Ownership/Responsibility, Punishment, and Work Overload may act as barriers to implementing effective SEB practices. Role-specific results show similar trends but may point to areas where targeted training could be useful. The cluster of Positive Reinforcement shows some potential for a shift in beliefs (78%).	• Provide district-wide training on expectations for how all staff (based on their role) can and should address challenging student behaviors with an emphasis that all staff are expected to support students' SEB wellbeing at some level. This kind of training could also help reduce experiences of work overload in that shared responsibility to address challenging student behavior can reduce the general sense of feeling overwhelmed (especially for the support staff who are receiving the behavior referrals). Training on MTSS teams and systems described elsewhere in this report will also likely help staff understand what they can do first before referring a student to another staff member or team.

Staff Self-Efficacy	
Strengths	
● Per the results of the MTSS Perceptions Survey, building educators skills and abilities relative to data-based decision making, tiered service delivery, problem-solving, data collection, data analysis, and technology use is an area of need.	
Opportunities for Improvement	***Recommendations***
Only 53% of staff surveyed reported needing little support or being highly skilled at MTSS activities related to academic instruction and intervention	● As part of any district-wide MTSS 101 training, focus more attention/time on how to apply an MTSS framework within the areas of academics, behavior, and SEL. Also plan to provide follow-up training or coaching in this area where staff reported the lowest level of self-efficacy across both domains (~30% in each).
Only 33% of staff surveyed reported needing little support or being highly skilled at MTSS activities related to behavior management and intervention.	● Same as above.
Only 34% of staff surveyed reported being highly skilled and requiring minimal support to carry out MTSS activities related to SEL.	● Same as above.
Only 43% of staff surveyed reported being highly skilled and needing minimal support or so highly skilled that they could train others in MTSS activities related to data manipulation and technology use.	● Through coaching or professional development, train staff on technology and data manipulation (e.g., how to navigate online student information systems, creating graphs in excel or google sheets).

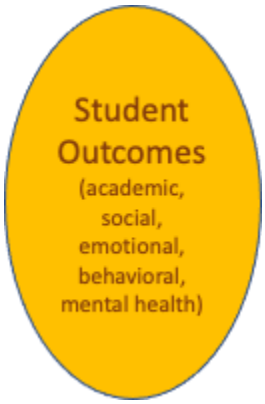
Evaluation Question 3: What is the relationship between implementation of the MTSS framework and student achievement and social, emotional, behavioral outcomes?

Data Sources:

- Student engagement data
- Student academic data
- Minnesota Student Survey data

Findings

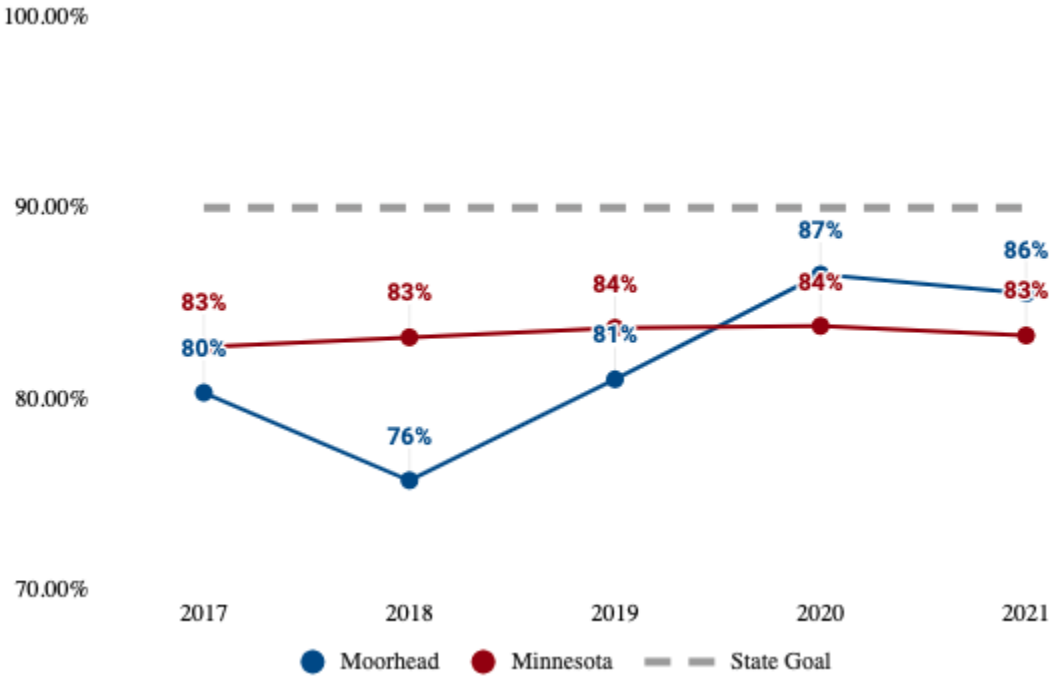
Student Graduation Rates and College Readiness



A broad indicator of a school district's ability to engage students cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally is high school graduation. Moreover, graduation portents odds of better future outcomes in careers and college enrollment. Quality MTSS implementation improves student graduation rates through system-wide data based problem solving that serves to increase student engagement and achievement. Moorhead High School's graduation rates have consistently been below the state averages and the state goal of 90% graduation (Figure 4). However, graduation rates in Moorhead have been increasing over time and in the prior two years have been higher than the state average.

Figure 4

Graduation Rates Across School Years



Note. Data retrieved from the Minnesota State Report Card Database (2022)

While all demographic groups have been trending upward over the course of the last five years,

minoritized student populations have demonstrated gains in graduation rates, having the effect of both pushing up the overall graduation rate as well as reducing the disparity in graduation rates across populations. Over the most recent two years for which we had data, white students were already meeting the state goal of 90% graduation rates. Unfortunately, Black and Hispanic group graduation rates have declined somewhat in 2021 (see Figure 5). It is possible that these minoritized populations had greater impact from the adversities posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the broad trend over the past five years has been positive.

One way to measure disparities between groups is to compute risk ratios. Risk ratios were computed for Moorhead High School. Risk ratios are calculated by dividing the risk for each group of students by the risk for all students (average level of risk).This formula results in a common metric of risk across groups of students. A risk ratio of one indicates that a student in a given group has the same risk of not graduating as a student picked randomly from the total school population. Therefore, a risk ratio higher than one demonstrates greater likelihood of not graduating as compared to the general student population whereas a risk ratio lower than one demonstrates a lower likelihood of not graduating. Computed risk ratios are found in Table 18. Risks have been decreasing but are still large for Black and Hispanic students, both of which are twice as likely not to graduate compared to the population at large and well over three times less likely to graduate from high school than their white peers.

Figure 5

Moorhead High School Graduation Rates over Five Years Across Populations

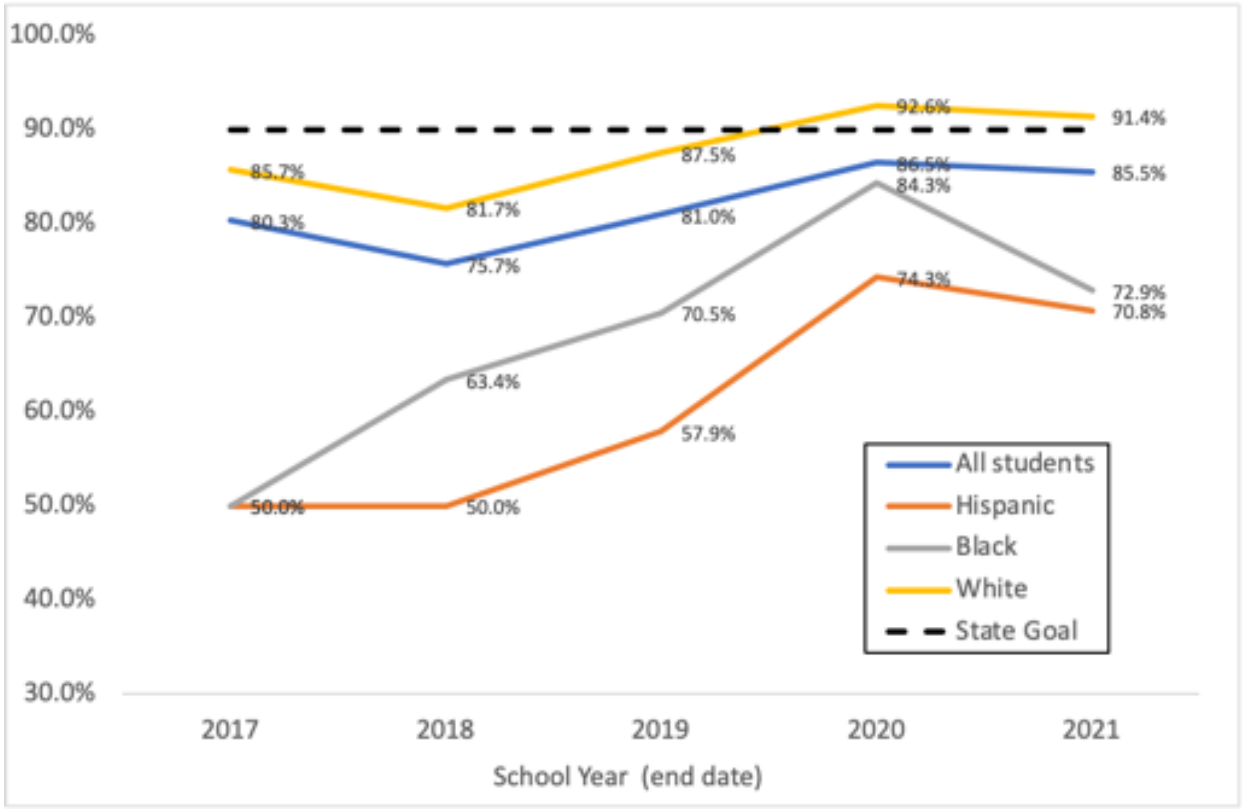


Table 18

Risk Ratios for Graduation Over Five Years

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Hispanic	2.54	2.06	2.22	1.90	2.01
Black	2.54	1.51	1.55	1.16	1.87
White	0.73	0.75	0.66	0.55	0.59

Student Attendance

A lead indicator and primary predictor of high school graduation is student attendance. Chronic Absenteeism is a negative student outcome that provides information about student and family engagement. District and school policies, procedures, and practices influence student social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes. When students and families are disengaged from school (e.g. feeling that they don't belong, are not in a safe space, or that meaningful learning is not taking place), attendance rates decrease. Therefore, while not a pure measure of school engagement (it also measures illness), it does serve as a proxy measure for school engagement.

Chronic Absenteeism is defined as an individual missing more than 10% of school days in which the student is enrolled in a school. *Consistent Attendance*, the converse of chronic absenteeism, is defined in Minnesota as being present 90% or more of the time. Moorhead attendance data was obtained from Minnesota's Minnesota Report Card.

Table 19, below, shows *Consistent Attendance* rates from across Moorhead Area Public Schools. The 2019-20 school year was the most recent data available from the state. Across categories, Moorhead students demonstrate *Consistent Attendance* at lower rates than their state-level peers. Students who are not present for instruction are less likely to benefit from their education. As indicated previously, low attendance rates can also be an indication of low school engagement. Moorhead data suggests that some populations might be more likely to be disengaged than others. Thus, the risk ratios for Hispanic (1.99) and American Indian (2.69) students in particular suggest that they may experience lower levels of school engagement. One comparison that is especially concerning is that an American Indian student is 3.6 times as likely to demonstrate Chronic Absence compared to a white student in Moorhead.

Across schools, Table 20 shows that Consistent Attendance rates in Moorhead are higher in elementary schools and lower in secondary schools. Across schools, Hispanic students experience higher rates of Chronic Absenteeism. District and school teams should examine the root causes of this phenomenon so that plans can target this problem.

Table 19

Consistent Attendance Percentages and Risk Ratios Across Student Groups, 2019-20

Demographic	Moorhead #	Moorhead %	Moorhead Risk Ratio	*State %*	Difference MN-MH
Special Education	1058	73.3%	1.44	76.6%	3.3%
Economic Disadvantage	2505	71.1%	1.56	76.9%	5.8%
English Learners	513	78.8%	1.15	84.4%	5.6%
Hispanic	509	63.1%	1.99	78.7%	15.6%
American Indian	179	50.3%	2.69	56.6%	6.3%
Asian	66	84.8%	0.82	91.1%	6.3%
Black	594	77.9%	1.19	76.8%	-1.1%
White	4370	86.1%	0.75	88.3%	2.2%
District Total	6117	**81.5%**	**1.0**	**85.3%**	**3.8%**

Note. The number indicates the number of each category enrolled in Moorhead. The risk ratio is computed by dividing the percentage of chronically absent students in a given demographic, by percentage of chronically absent students in the Moorhead community. A risk ratio of 1.5 indicates 1.5 times greater likelihood that a student will be chronically absent. The difference score is the state average minus the Moorhead average.

Table 20

Consistent Attendance Percentages Across Schools, 2019-20

School	Consistent Attendance #	Consistent Attendance %	Black Attendance	Hispanic Attendance	White Attendance
Dorothy Dodds ES	580	86.4%	88.1%	62.5%	90.8%
Ellen Hopkins ES	524	85.7%	77.9%	68.3%	91.1%
Robert Asp ES	526	85.9%	83.9%	80.6%	89.2%
S.G. Reinertsen ES	567	90.7%	86.4%	NR	92.7%
Horizon MS	2056	80.1%	73.8%	61.6%	84.6%
Moorhead HS	1776	81.3%	78.6%	61.7%	84.9%
District Total	**4370**	**81.5%**	**77.9%**	**63.1%**	**86.1%**

Student High School Failure Rates

Course failure predicts non-credit attainment and future dropout. It is an indicator that a student is academically disengaged and/or not receiving adequate instructional support.

In Moorhead High School, Freshman have considerably more Fs than students in any other grade, accounting for 42% of total failing grades despite only accounting for a quarter of the high school population. Specifically, they have 3 times the number of Fs as Seniors and 2.5 times as many Fs as Juniors (see Table 21). The classes that generate the most Fs at Moorhead High School are World History 1, English 9, Physical Science 1, Algebra, and Biology, many of which appear to be courses populated by Freshman (see Table 22).

Certain demographic groups are getting more Fs than others. Adjusting for population size, students of color have 1.9 times more Fs than White students and students with disabilities have 1.3 times as many Fs as non-disabled students.

Table 21

High School Failure Rates Across Grades, 2021-22 School Year

Grade	Number of Failures	Percent of Fs
9	1183	42%
10	777	27%
11	486	17%
12	398	14%

Table 22

Most Frequently Failed Classes in Moorhead High School

High Failure Courses	Number of Fs	Percent of Fs
World History I	248	9%
English 9 I	241	8%
Physical Science I	193	7%
Freshmen Intermediate Algebra I	178	6%
Advanced Algebra	169	6%
Biology	139	5%

Student Discipline Data

No office discipline data were available for analysis. Office discipline data are not currently being collected and summarized across the district.

Minnesota Student Survey Data

The Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) asks students about their activities, opinions, behaviors and experiences. Students respond to questions on school climate, bullying, out-of-school activities, healthy eating, emotional health, substance use and connections with school and family. Data from the MSS are helpful for many purposes, and are used in this section in connection with giving students a voice with respect to their feelings of belonging to and engagement with their school community. As previously indicated, student engagement and sense of belonging results in improved attendance, better grades, less problematic behavior, and ultimately to high school graduation.

MSS student responses were obtained for 2019, the latest iteration of the survey in which data are publicly available (though the survey was recently administered in winter 2022). The survey includes three primary domains: Developmental Assets, Developmental Supports, and

Developmental Challenges (see Appendix B for descriptions). The MSS was administered to 5th, 8th, 9th, and 11th graders. Tables 23, 24, and 25 display MSS data for Moorhead. Data were retrieved from the Minnesota Report Card system.

Moorhead students were less likely to report behaviors indicating engagement than state averages in middle school (grades 5 and 8) but more likely to report these adaptive behaviors in high school (grades 9 and 11). Similar trends were noted regarding student connectedness and safety items. Regardless of state comparisons, there is plenty of room to move these survey indicators of student engagement in a positive direction.

Strengths to be celebrated include that the vast majority of students, depending on grade level, believe that "teachers care about students at their school" (83-90%) and "feel safe at school" (90-94%). In addition, 92 to 94% of students endorsed the statement that "being a student is one of the most important parts of who I am."

Overall, student survey responses suggest that students at Horizon Middle School (Grades 5 and 8) are less engaged and have less of a sense of belonging than are peers across the state, whereas student responses from Moorhead High School (Grades 9 and 11) reveal higher rates of engagement and sense of belonging as compared to state-level peers.

In middle school, between 72 and 82% of students and 78% of high school students indicated that "adults listened to students." Only 62% of eighth graders and 70% of high school students endorsed that "most teachers are interested in me as a person." Feeling heard, having agency, and feeling valued as a person, increase both engagement and a sense of belonging. This might be a target for improvement in both the middle and high school.

Table 23

Student Engagement Items with Frequency Response

Item	G5: MH	G5: MN	G8: MH	G8: MN	G9: MH	G9: MN	G11: MH	G11: MN
How often do you care about doing well in school?	80%	87%	83%	85%	88%	86%	89%	85%
How often do you pay attention in class?	81%	89%	87%	87%	94%	86%	92%	86%
How often do you go to class unprepared?	17%	11%	8%	9%	7%	9%	8%	9%

Note. Percentages Indicate Endorsement of "Most" or "All of the Time."
G5 = Grade 5; G8 = Grade 8; G9 = Freshman in HS; G11 = Junior in HS. MH = Moorhead; MN = Minnesota.

Table 24

Student Engagement Items with Level-of-Agreement Response

Item	G5: MH	G5: MN	G8: MH	G8: MN	G9: MH	G9: MN	G11: MH	G11: MN
I think things I learn at school are useful.	80%	87%	83%	85%	88%	86%	89%	85%
Being a student is one of the most important parts of who I am.	81%	89%	87%	87%	94%	86%	92%	86%

Note. Percentages indicate an Endorsement of "Agree" or "Strongly Agree".
G5 = Grade 5; G8 = Grade 8; G9 = Freshman in HS; G11 = Junior in HS. MH = Moorhead; MN = Minnesota.

Table 25

School Belonging, Connections and Safety with a Level-of-Agreement Response

Item	G5: MH	G5: MN	G8: MH	G8: MN	G9: MH	G9: MN	G11: MH	G11: MN
Overall, adults at my school treat students fairly.	83%	84%	78%	76%	82%	78%	86%	79%
Adults at my school listen to the students.	82%	86%	72%	72%	78%	74%	78%	74%
The school rules are fair.	77%	82%	76%	68%	80%	75%	85%	73%
At my school, teachers care about students	92%	95%	83%	86%	92%	86%	93%	87%
Most teachers at my school are interested in me as a person.	79%	81%	62%	66%	71%	64%	69%	68%
I feel safe at school.	90%	92%	90%	90%	93%	89%	94%	92%
I feel safe going to and from school.	92%	93%	93%	94%	96%	94%	97%	95%

Note. Percentages indicate an Endorsement of "Agree" or "Strongly Agree".
G5 = Grade 5; G8 = Grade 8; G9 = Freshman in HS; G11 = Junior in HS. MH = Moorhead; MN = Minnesota.

Student Academic Data

Student achievement data, including the American College Test (ACT), the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) data, and the district's screening data (AIMSweb and NWEA), are summarized below. See Appendix B for descriptions of the assessments.

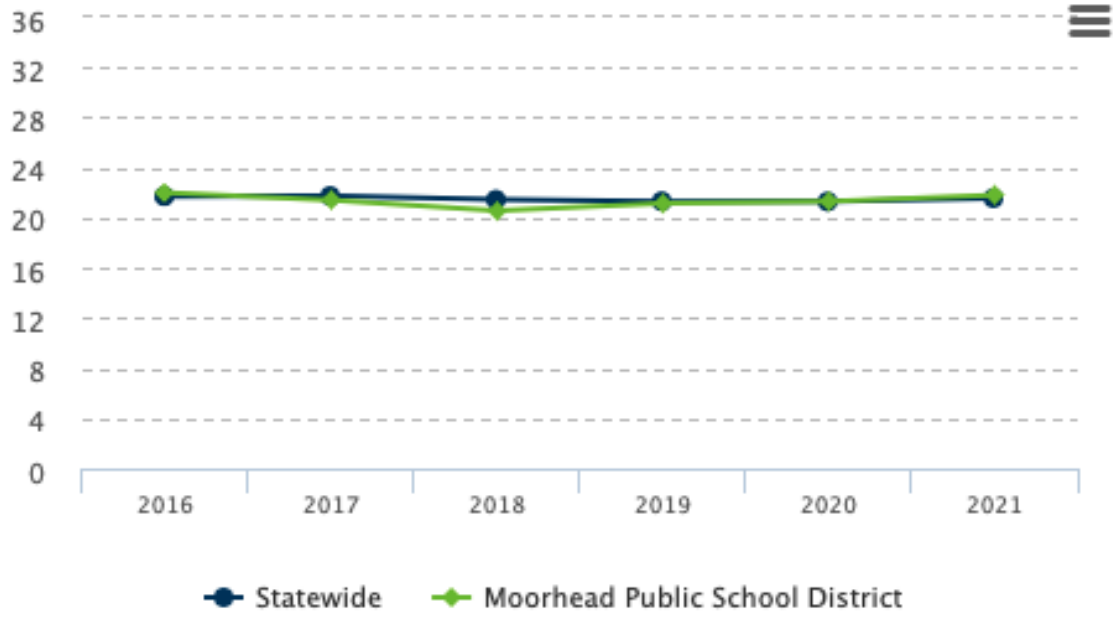
ACT Results

The ACT was designed to predict success in college courses based on aptitude attained by the end of high school. Moorhead's high school students perform about as well as their peers from across Minnesota (Figure 6), with an average scale score of about 22 (nationally the average score was around 21). On subject area subtests, scores vary between White students and students from minoritized racial/ethnic groups. Gaps between these groups in Moorhead are somewhat higher than they are across the state across subject areas (Figure 7). While on average students are graduating from the Moorhead system with similar levels of academic college readiness as their peers from across the state; this is not so across populations. Students from minoritized

racial/ethnic groups are graduating with considerably less academic college readiness than are their White peers. Discrepancies appear particularly pronounced in mathematics and reading.

Figure 6

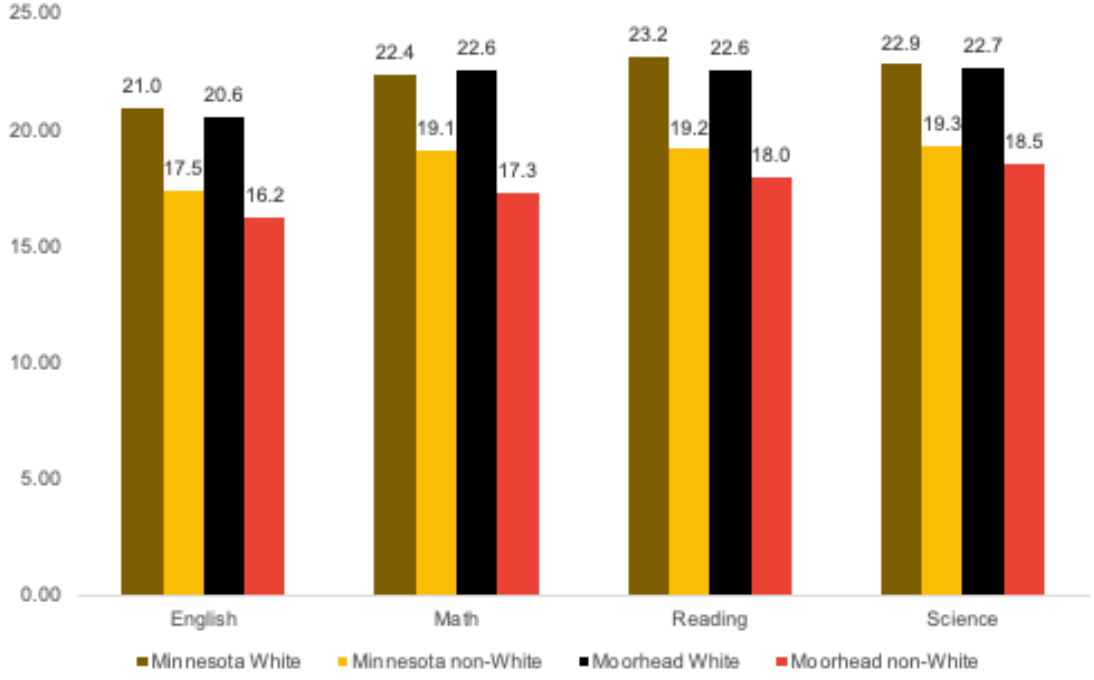
ACT Scale Scores from 2016 to 2020



Source: Minnesota SLEDS Database

Figure 7

ACT (2021): Scale Scores Across Subject Areas



Source: Minnesota SLEDS Database (2022)

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) is designed to measure the degree to which

students are learning state standards across key subject areas such as reading and math. Quality implementation of MTSS should improve MCA outcomes.

Table 28 shows the percent of students meeting expectations for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years on the MCA in reading and math. Testing did not occur in the 2019-20 school year due to the pandemic. Data from the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years were not available in the Minnesota Report Card system. However, data from the 2019-20 school year give an indication of pre-pandemic achievement levels.

Reading achievement in Moorhead is below state averages by about five percentage points across both years. Students in Moorhead had lower proficiency rates in reading across student populations. American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students have significantly lower reading proficiency rates than the general Moorhead school population. Table 26 provides risk ratios for reading. American Indian, Hispanic, and Black students are 1.7 times as likely as White students to be non-proficient on Minnesota's state accountability test in reading. English learners, students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, and students eligible for special education services also have much lower proficiency rates than district averages. Only 18% of English learners in Moorhead are reading at proficient levels. Proficiency rates from all elementary schools consistently fall below the state average, ranging between 42 and 53% proficient in reading (Table 26). Secondary schools range between 55 and 61% proficient in reading.

Moorhead math achievement is also below state averages (Table 27) but more variable by school (Table 28). American Indian and Hispanic students are 1.7 times more likely to be non-proficient in math than White students, while Black students are 1.8 times more likely to be non-proficient in math. Math proficiency ranges from 52 to 67% in elementary schools and from 42 to 56% in secondary schools.

Table 26

Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations and Risk Ratios on Reading MCAs

	2017-18		2018-19		2018-19 Risk Ratios	
	State	**Moorhead**	**State**	**Moorhead**	**State**	**Moorhead**
All Students	59.2%	54.1%	58.3%	53.2%	**1.00**	**1.00**
Race/Ethnicity						
Am. Indian	34.5%	27.2%	34.0%	29.9%	**1.58**	**1.50**
Asian	54.5%	48.5%	54.3%	51.3%	**1.10**	**1.04**
Black	33.9%	28.6%	34.0%	29.5%	**1.58**	**1.51**
Hispanic	38.5%	40.9%	38.2%	32.0%	**1.48**	**1.45**
White	67.5%	60.1%	66.6%	59.2%	**0.80**	**0.87**

Status						
English Learner	31.2%	18.1%	30.8%	18.1%	**1.66**	**1.75**
FRL	40.3%	35.8%	39.3%	35.6%	**1.46**	**1.38**
SWDs	33.5%	29.0%	32.8%	30.2%	**1.61**	**1.49**

Note. FRL= eligible for free or reduced price lunch, SWDs= Students with disabilities.

Table 27

Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on Math MCAs

	2017-18		2018-19		2018-19 Risk Ratios	
	State	Moorhead	State	Moorhead	State	Moorhead
ALL Students	56.2%	49.3%	53.9%	47.3%	**1.0**	**1.0**
Race/Ethnicity						
Am. Indian	28.2%	25.9%	25.9%	24.8%	**1.61**	**1.43**
Asian	55.4%	60.6%	54.2%	54.0%	**0.99**	**0.87**
Black	28.0%	19.0%	26.5%	19.5%	**1.59**	**1.53**
Hispanic	33.8%	27.4%	31.4%	23.3%	**1.49**	**1.46**
White	65.2%	55.9%	62.9%	54.5%	**0.80**	**0.86**
Status						
English Learner	31.0%	16.4%	29.0%	14.5%	**1.54**	**1.62**
FRL	35.9%	29.9%	33.3%	28.1%	**1.45**	**1.36**
SWDs	32.0%	27.4%	30.8%	27.1%	**1.50**	**1.38**

Note. FRL= eligible for free or reduced price lunch, SWDs= Students with disabilities.

Table 28

Percentage of Students Who Were Proficient or Advanced in Reading and Math By School

	2017-18		2018-19	
School	**Reading: Proficient +**	**Math: Proficient +**	**Reading: Proficient +**	**Math: Proficient +**
STATE	**59.2%**	**56.2%**	**58.3%**	**53.8%**

Dorothy Dodds ES	45.1%	58.8%	48.3%	51.7%
Ellen Hopkins ES	49.1%	57.5%	49.0%	62.0%
Robert Asp ES	43.8%	52.3%	43.9%	53.9%
S. G. Reinertsen ES	50.6%	67.4%	52.2%	66.8%
Horizon MS	56.6%	43.1%	55.5%	42.1%
Moorhead HS	60.6%	55.7%	56.9%	43.1%

Universal Screening Data: Reading

Universal screening data not only helps an MTSS system identify which students are at risk and thus need intervention support, it also allows a school (and district) to see the impact of instructional programming within the school year so that changes to instruction can be made at a systems level during the school year. School based problem-solvers can evaluate whether or not students who begin the year on benchmark stay on benchmark, and whether or not students who are at risk decrease their level of risk over the course of an instructional year.

Screening in Elementary School: AimswebPlus

AimswebPlus is administered to screen students for potential reading or math difficulties in kindergarten through fourth grade (see Appendix B for descriptions). At the district level we recommend examining the Tier Transition Plan report from the aimswebPlus data system. This report answers the question, "How effective are our systems at teaching reading skills (and math skills, if those benchmarks are administered?" Additionally, this report shows whether students are maintaining benchmark status as well as how many students are reducing their level of risk over time. The Scores and Skills Plan report is also an outstanding report to guide system-wide evaluation of programming effectiveness. This report answers questions about what skills need to be better taught across the district. We recommend that these same reports be used at the school level to evaluate these questions so that variations in success with tiered programming can be understood from school to school, and successes can be replicated.

Moorhead provided CAREI with de-identified raw data from the aimswebPlus system from the current 2021-22 school year. Given that the key skill learned in first grade is mastery of the alphabetic principle and that the key skill for second through fourth grade is reading fluency (automatic and effortless decoding skills), we analyzed achievement level and within-year growth for Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) for first grade and Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) for second through fourth grade. For NWF, average scores for middle of the year (MOY) and end of the year (EOY) were computed. NWF was not administered to first graders at the beginning of the current school year. For ORF, average scores were computed for beginning of the year (BOY) and EOY. To measure progress over the year, students who didn't have both a baseline and EOY score were eliminated from the analysis. Growth was computed at the individual student level by subtracting the EOY raw score from the baseline score (MOY for NWF and BOY for ORF). For first grade, this represents the growth in correct letter sounds from MOY to

EOY. For second through fourth graders, this represents the growth in words read correct from BOY to EOY.

Among first graders, students of color started and ended the second semester with lower average proficiency rates in reading nonsense words than did their White peers. Rates of progress were similar across groups with the exception of Black students who demonstrated slightly lower rates of progress. The growth rates were insufficient to close these achievement gaps (see Table 29).

Among second through fourth graders, American Indian and Hispanic students ended the year with lower average reading proficiency than their White peers. This appears to be the result of lower growth rates. Both groups on average had lower increases in words read correctly per minute over the course of the current school year (see Table 30).

Student proficiency grew steadily across second, third, and fourth grades; however, end of year reading scores were consistently below the national 50th percentile. As is typical in national normative data, growth rates were higher in earlier than in later grades; but growth rates were below what they need to be for students to be reading at the national grade-level medians or state expectations (see Table 31).

Table 29

First Grade Average NWF Scores Middle to End of Year, by Race, 2021-22

Demographic	NWF Avg. MOY '22 (n=473)	NWF Avg EOY '22 (n=309)	MOY to EOY Progress (n=298)
Proficiency Benchmark	**45**	**57**	**12**
Black (n=99)	40.4	49.1	12.8
Hispanic (n=48)	34.7	49.1	15.5
Native American (n=35)	36.4	45.9	16.4
White (n=389)	45.0	59.6	15.5
All Students	**43.0**	**56.4**	**15.0**

Note. Scores represent the number of correct letter sounds per minute. Scores for Asian first grade students were not reported due to an inadequate sample size across administrations. NWF = Nonsense Word Fluency, MOY=Middle of the Year, EOY=End of the Year.

Table 30

Grade 2-4 ORF Scores, Beginning to End of Year, by Race, 2021-22

Demographic	ORF Avg. BOY '22 (n=1343)	ORF Avg EOY '22 (n=1067)	MOY to EOY Progress (n=1021)
Asian (n=31)	74.0	101.3	36.4
Black (n=247)	59.6	83.8	34.3

Hispanic (n=152)	51.9	69.1	29.0
Native American (n=120)	49.8	69.4	28.4
White (n=1194)	69.7	94.1	36.5
All Students (n=1946)	**65.4**	**88.8**	**35.1**

Note. Scores represent the number of words read correctly per minute; ORF = Oral Reading Fluency; BOY = Beginning of year; MOY=Middle of the Year; EOY = End of year.

Table 31

Grade 2-4 ORF Scores, Beginning to End of Year, by Grade, 2021-22

Grade-Level	ORF Avg. BOY '22 (n=1343)	ORF Avg EOY '22 (n=1067)	National Median for EOY ORF*	MOY to EOY Progress (n=1021)
Second Grade (n=674)	49.1	87.0	100	38.9
Third Grade (n=629)	70.8	104.4	112	36.2
Fourth Grade (n=643)	86.9	116.9	133	26.7

Note. Scores represent the number of words read correctly per minute; ORF = Oral Reading Fluency; BOY = Beginning of year; MOY=Middle of the Year; EOY = End of year. *National averages were taken from the 2017 Hasbrouk and Tindal Norms Charts for End of Year.

Screening in Middle and High School: NWEA-MAP.

The NWEA Measure of Academic Proficiency (MAP) test is a computer administered test designed to measure reading and math skills. In the Moorhead school district this test administered from Grade 5 to Grade 9 as a screening measure (through middle school and in freshman year of high school). Results (RIT scores) were provided to the CAREI team for a winter administration in the 2021-22 school year. Since there has only been a single administration for the current school year, within-year growth could not be evaluated. Data for winter administrations of the reading and math NWEA MAP test were analyzed (see Table 32). Data for 14% of the students was missing for the reading test and for 15% of students on the math test. RIT scores were converted to proficiency levels based on 2020 norms for the NWEA MAP. For this analysis, scores at or better than the mean for national scores were considered *Low Risk*, scores between the mean and one standard deviation below the mean were considered *Some Risk*, and scores below one standard deviation below the mean were considered *At Risk* (see Appendix B for descriptions).

Reading. Table 32 shows risk levels based on grade level for reading. On average, across grade levels students scored as well or better than national averages for the winter administration (50% of the national sample would be classified as Low Risk based on our definition of risk). Results varied by student population (Table 33). Notably, Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students demonstrated lower proficiency rates than White peers. Specifically, American Indian students were more than 1.5 times the risk of being non-proficient in reading as compared to their White peers, whereas Hispanic and Black students had 1.4 and 1.3 times the risk.

Table 32

Reading Risk by Grade Based on NWEA-MAP Test, Winter 2021-22 School Year

Grade	Number Tested	Low Risk	Some Risk	High Risk
5	419	50%	34%	16%
6	517	63%	26%	11%
7	445	50%	38%	12%
8	441	52%	31%	17%
9	409	65%	29%	6%
ALL	**2231**	**56%**	**31%**	**12%**

Note. Low risk is defined as having a RIT score at or above the national mean for a given grade and season. High Risk is defined as having a RIT score that is more than one standard deviation below the mean.

Table 33

Reading Risk by Population on NWEA-MAP Test, Winter 2021-22 School Year

	Proficient	Non-Proficient	Risk Ratio
White	59%	41%	0.93
American Indian	37%	63%	1.43
Black	47%	53%	1.20
Hispanic	43%	57%	1.30
ALL	**56%**	**44%**	**1.00**

Note. Risk ratios were computed by dividing the group non-proficiency rate by the non-proficiency rate of all Moorhead students.

Math. Table 34 shows math risk rates based on the NWEA-MAP. The percentage of students who are at Low Risk increases across grade levels while the percentage of students at High Risk decreases in this cross sectional sample. In grades 7, 8, and 9, students performed somewhat better than the national average. Once again proficiency was unevenly distributed across demographic groups with American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students at approximately 1.5 times the risk of White students for math failure (see Table 35).

Table 34

Math Risk by Grade Based on NWEA-MAP Test, Winter 2021-22 School Year

Grade	Number Tested	Low Risk	Some Risk	High Risk
5	419	48.50%	34.00%	17.50%
6	517	47.24%	33.95%	18.81%
7	445	53.24%	32.21%	14.54%

8	441	52.30%	33.18%	14.52%
9	409	59.47%	33.33%	7.19%
ALL	**2231**	**52.03%**	**33.33%**	**14.63%**

Note. Low risk is defined as having a RIT score at or above the national mean for a given grade and season. High Risk is defined as having a RIT score that is more than one standard deviation below the mean.

Table 35

Math Risk by Population on NWEA-MAP Test, Winter 2021-22 School Year

	Proficient	Non-Proficient	Risk Ratio
White	49%	51%	0.91
American Indian	21%	79%	1.41
Black	28%	72%	1.29
Hispanic	21%	79%	1.41
ALL	44%	56%	1.00

Note. Risk ratios were computed by dividing the group non-proficiency rate by the non-proficiency rate of all Moorhead students.

Strengths, Opportunities, and Recommendations

This section summarizes strengths, opportunities for improvement, and specific recommendations related to ***Evaluation Question 3: What are the student achievement, social-emotional, and behavior outcomes that result from Moorhead's MTSS implementation?*** Recommendations are divided into two sections: student engagement outcomes and student academic achievement.

Student Engagement Outcomes	
Strengths	
• Within the last five years there has been an upward trend in graduation rates in all student populations, but especially among students of color. While still not meeting state goals, graduation rates are now above the state average. • The vast majority of students, depending on grade level, believe that "teachers care about students at their school" (83-90%) and "feel safe at school" (90-94%). In addition, 92 to 94% of students endorsed the statement that "being a student is one of the most important parts of who I am."	
Opportunities for Improvement	Recommendations
• Graduation rates are below state targets and some populations are graduating at lower rates than others.	• Continue to improve student and family engagement through building relationships, belonging, agency, and communication.

• Consistent Attendance rates were low overall and lower for some groups of students than others (even before the pandemic). • Course failure rates are high, particularly for freshman high school students in core classes such as English, math, and science. • Student discipline data were not available for this analysis. There is not a district-wide method to collect office disciplinary referrals so that school and district teams can problem-solve system-wide behavior problems for more efficient and effective solutions. This will hamper efforts for MTSS in the domains of behavioral, emotional, and social health. • MSS data indicate that more could be done to improve a sense that students belong and are valued in their school communities; only 72 to 82% of students, depending on the grade, indicate that "adults listen to students," and 62 to 70% of students indicate that "most teachers care about me as a person."	• Track and problem-solve around lead indicators of student dropout, such as Chronic Absenteeism and Course Failures. An Early Warnings System, which CAREI can help with, would be helpful in this regard. • Provide additional support to 8th and 9th grade students to ensure success in high school classes: e.g., peer mentor program involving upper classmen, communication between middle and high school staff to problem-solve around a successful handoff in the transition between middle and high school, increased coaching of high school teachers in instructional strategies that might improve student success in Tier 1, such as explicit teaching of expectations, active student engagement, universal instructional design, and scaffolding techniques. • Adopt a system (such as SWIS) where behavior data can be easily collected, analyzed, and used for problem solving. • Establish a shared vocabulary and dedicated practice around developing, maintaining, and restoring relationships with students.

Student Achievement Outcomes	
Strengths	
• College readiness, as measured by ACT, has been similar to state averages across the last five years, with an average score of about 22.	
Opportunities for Improvement	Recommendations
• In high school, students of color are performing at lower levels than their White peers on the ACT. This discrepancy is wider than it is on average across the state.	• Enhance the quality of MTSS across grade levels using academic screening data to enhance problem-solving and facilitate continuous improvement across layers of instructional delivery. MTSS should not only increase achievement overall but also

- Across the secondary schools (middle and high school) on MCAs, 55 to 61% of students are proficient in reading and 42 to 56% are proficient in math.
- Across Moorhead elementary schools on MCAs, 42 to 53% of students were proficient in reading (below state averages) and 52 to 67% of students were proficient in math.
- Again, MCAs revealed large gaps between student populations. In both reading and math, minoritized populations were 1.7 times (or more) likely to perform below the proficiency range compared to their White peers.
- AimswebPlus screening data indicates lower spring oral reading fluency rates in Moorhead than the national median. Within-year grade-level increases in reading fluency were below national norms and recommended growth rates (Deno, Fuchs, Marston, & Shin, 2001, Fuchs et al., 1993) across demographic groups.
- The slowest growth in oral reading fluency across grades was experienced by American Indian and Hispanic students. Black students showed more growth in the current school year, but did not close the gap with White students in Moorhead.
- First grade students of color started and ended the spring semester with average NWF below the benchmark. Significant progress was made but not enough to close the gap with White students or to the gap with benchmark expectations.
- Middle and high school screening results on the NWEA-MAP indicate that gaps between demographic groups continue. Compared to their White peers, American Indian students have 1.5 times the risk in reading and 1.6 decrease the opportunity and achievement gaps between student populations.
- Academic instructional practices across tiers of MTSS delivery could be improved, particularly in the area of reading in the elementary schools. This can be best accomplished by finding areas in the curriculum that don't match with the science of reading, focusing on high-yielding practices in instructional delivery, and using data-based problem solving protocols with screening and progress monitoring data.
- Focus attention on bringing the science of reading into focus across elementary schools. This will require strong curriculum supports, direct instruction and lots of practice with authentic, connected text. In particular, attention should be brought to ensure:
    - kindergarteners end the school year proficient in phonemic awareness (blending, segmenting, elision)
    - first graders should end the school year proficient at letter sounds and blending letter sounds together automatically and fluently when decoding
    - second through fourth graders should end the year reading connected text fluently at their grade level.
- Continue maximizing time reading and interacting with connected text in middle school as well as frequent opportunities for writing (e.g., quick writes, bell ringers, exit tickets, essays)

times the risk in math. Hispanic students have 1.4 times the risk in reading and 1.6 times the risk in math. Black students have 1.3 times the risk in reading and 1.4 times the risk in math.	

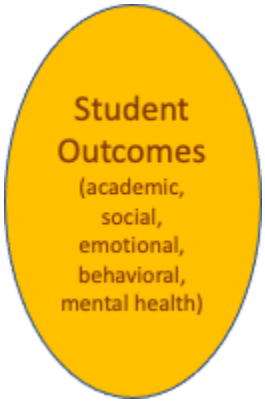
Evaluation Question 4: What is the impact of the MTSS framework on special education child count?

Data Sources:

- Special Education Child Count Data

Findings

Special Education Child Count Data



Due to its emphasis on prevention, systems improvement, and improved interventions, quality MTSS implementation tends to reduce the number of students who are referred for evaluation and qualify for special education services. Special education child count data from the past three school years from Moorhead were examined to compare the district data to regional and state averages and identify recent trends related to specific disability categories. Data provided by Moorhead were cross referenced with Minnesota's Report Card database.[1]

Data in Figure 8 indicate that, overall, Moorhead's recent special education child count rates (19.7% in 2021-22) have remained higher than those in the state (16.9% in 2021-22). District and state data all indicate a level trend in special education child count rates over the past three years.

Figure 9, below, provides information about trends in disability areas across the past three school years. All disability areas reported here (those with prevalence rates above 1% in the district) consistently remained below 5% of all Moorhead students. However, the 2021-22 rates in most categories are above the state average, especially for Speech or Language Impairment (SLI: Moorhead, 3.6%, MN: 2.6%), Other Health Impaired (OHI: Moorhead, 3.2% ; MN, 2.2%), Developmental Delay (DD: Moorhead, 3.2%, MN, 2.1%) and Specific Learning Disability (SLD: Moorhead, 4.7%; MN, 4.1%). Across the three years, there has been an upward trend of Moorhead students receiving services related to SLD. Districts with strong MTSS frameworks that are implemented with fidelity districtwide should expect to see decreases in percentages of students identified with disabilities in high-incidence areas, especially OHI (with respect to ADHD), SLI, and SLD. The instances of SLD have been increasing in the wake of the pandemic. Improved prevention of academic difficulties through the instruction and intervention of MTSS may reverse this trend.

[1] Source: https://rc.education.mn.gov/#mySchool/p--3

Figure 8

Percentage of Students with Disabilities: Last Three Years

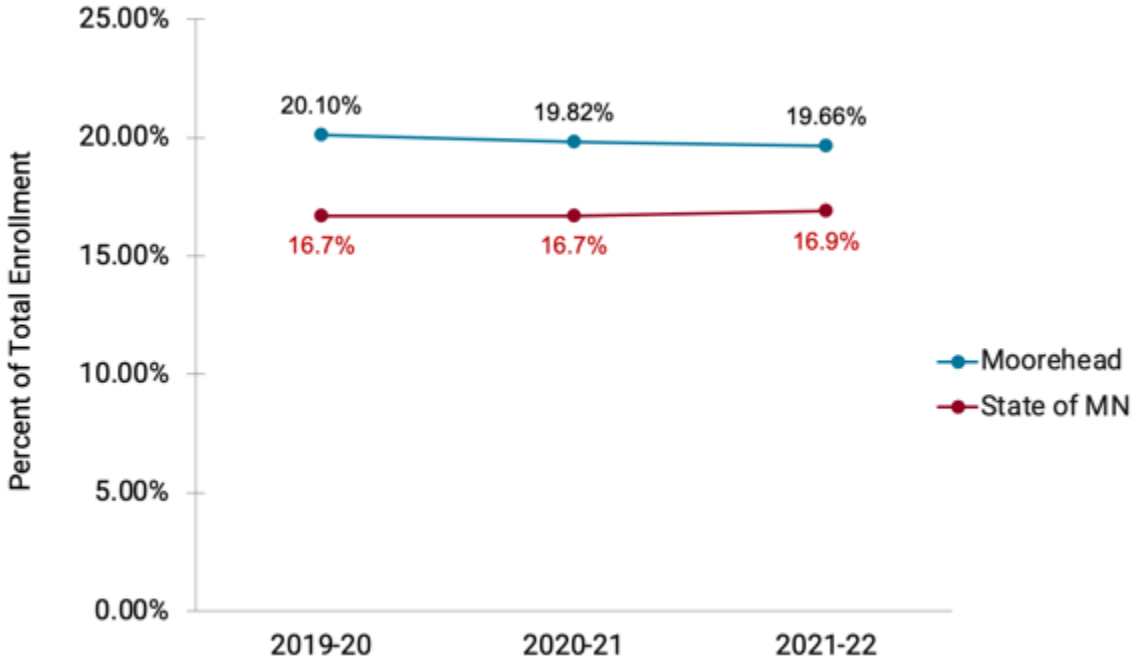
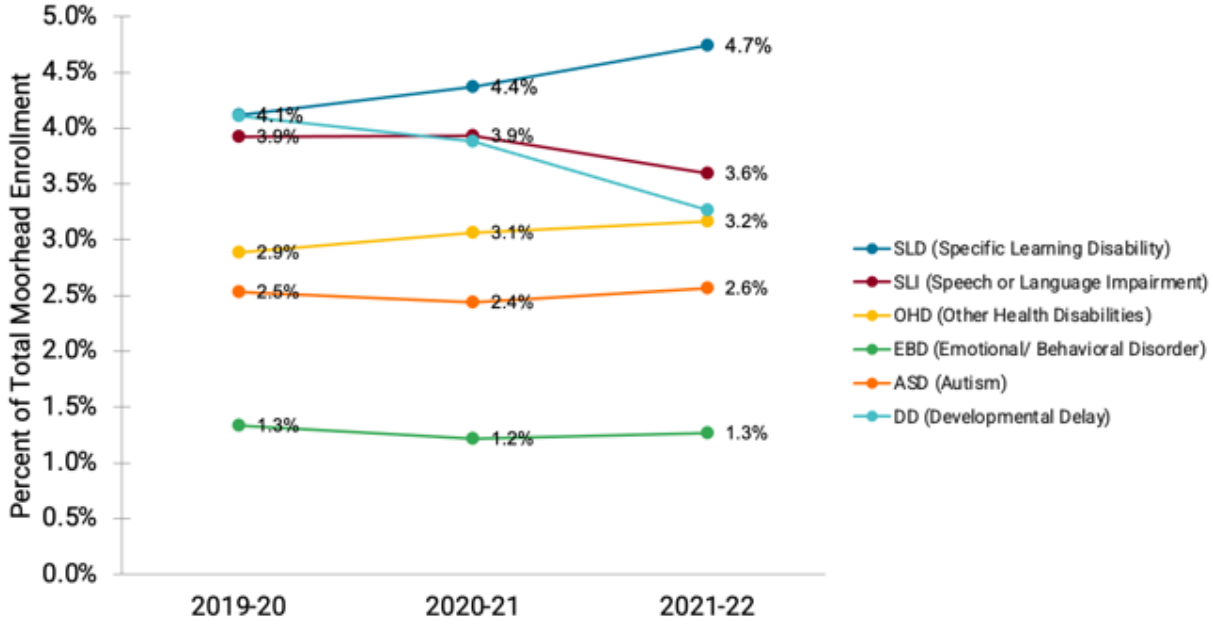


Figure 9

Percentage of Students Identified with High-Incidence Disabilities



Strengths, Opportunities, & Recommendations

Special Education Child Counts
Strengths
• Moorhead is actively engaging in required child find duties and is enrolling students for

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">special education services across classification categories.
● The percentage of students being identified with speech and language impairments and with developmental delays has been trending downward.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Opportunities for Improvement</th><th>Recommendations</th></tr>
<tr><td>● The percentage of students identified with disabilities is higher than state averages.
● The number of students identified with SLD has been trending upward over the last three years.</td><td>● Enhance implementation of MTSS. MTSS is designed to prevent problems before they become intractable and is an effective and efficient means of supporting students to meet grade-level expectations. Schools, districts, and states that implement MTSS with fidelity consistently show drops in the percentage of students who require special education services, especially within the SLD category.
● As the district's MTSS framework continues to improve, administrators should continue to monitor these child count trends as broad indicators of successful system implementation.</td></tr>
</table>

Evaluation Question 5: How effective is the district at identifying and serving students in need of school mental health services based on best practice research?
Data Sources: ● School Mental Health Group Interviews ● Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) data ***(see data under Evaluation Question 3)***

Findings

School Mental Health Group Interviews

Four groups were interviewed to gain information about school mental health services provided in Moorhead Public Schools: (1) elementary school-employed staff with the background/training that equips them to provide mental health and counseling supports to students (i.e., school social workers, school counselors, and school psychologists); (2) secondary school-employed staff with the background/training that equips them to provide mental health and counseling supports to students (i.e., school social workers, school counselors, and school psychologists); (3) contracted staff working for Solutions Behavioral Healthcare (Solutions) who provide on-site mental health services for students in Moorhead primary schools; and (4) Lakeland Mental Health (Lakeland) who provide on-site mental health services for students in Moorhead secondary schools. All groups were asked about identifying and matching students to supports, the types of mental health and SEB supports they are able to provide, teaming and coordination between contracted and school-employed staff, and general reflections on school mental health service delivery in the district.

Theme 1: Mental Health Services & Evidence-Based Interventions. A major theme that arose from interviews with SEB and mental health (SEB/MH) staff was the mental health services and evidence-based interventions that are currently available (or unavailable) across the district. Specifically, there was a significant difference between the quality and breadth of evidence-based practices and programs provided through contracted services at the elementary and secondary level. Moreover, group interviews indicated that counseling staff has made a concerted effort to improve Tier 1 programming throughout Moorhead schools, resulting in more effective Tier 1 programming that is reducing the length of interventions delivered by contracted staff at Tiers 2 and 3.

Below is a description of SEB and mental health services provided at the elementary and secondary levels throughout the district through school-employed staff and contracted staff. It is recommended that the district review these resources and revise current resource allocation as necessary to ensure schools across the whole system are receiving high quality mental health support for their students and that internal staff increase their capacity to deliver Tier 2 and 3

services to support students who are not otherwise eligible for services through contracted mental health services.

Mental Health Services & Evidence-Based Interventions	
Current Tier 1 Service Provision	
Elementary School Services & Interventions	**Middle/High School Services & Interventions**
School-Employed Mental Health Staff	
• Second Step (i.e., evidence-based social-emotional learning curriculum) implemented at all elementary schools o **Facilitated, coached, and monitored by school counselors. Essential to keep them in this role to sustain implementation.* • No evidence-based proactive classroom management program implemented at elementary schools.	• Tier 1 and risk assessment/review components of BARR used at middle and high school o Only validated for use in 9th grade, but schools are trying to use across grades unsuccessfully o Mostly implemented at Horizon East • No evidence-based social-emotional curriculum.
Contracted Mental Health Staff (Solutions)	*Contracted Mental Health Staff (Lakeland)*
• Mental Health Liaisons provide a range of services that extend to Tier 1, including classroom consultation on evidence-based behavior management strategies	• Provide no, to limited, scope of service that extends to Tier 1.
Current Tier 2-3 Service Provision	
Elementary School Services & Interventions	**Middle/High School Services & Interventions**
School-Employed Mental Health Staff	
• No formalized, evidence-based Tier 2 or 3 MH interventions delivered by school-employed staff. • Check-in/Check-out delivered in some elementary schools.	• No formalized, evidence-based Tier 2 or 3 MH interventions delivered by school-employed staff.
Contracted Mental Health Staff (Solutions)	*Contracted Mental Health Staff (Lakeland)*
• Skills work completed by Solutions at elementary schools for select students who meet eligibility requirements.	• Very few students (approx. less than 20 per school) accessing therapy, skills work, or mental health interventions at secondary

○ Requires parent/caregiver participation and insurance eligibility. ● Approximately 20-25 students per building accessing evidence-based therapy/mental health interventions at elementary level through contracts with Solutions. Evidence-based Practices (EBPs) available through all providers include: ○ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) ○ Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) ○ Bounce Back ○ Incredible Years (IY) ○ Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) ○ Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) ○ Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS) ○ Managing and Adapting Practice (MAP) ● Day treatment provided to very few students (i.e., ~20 students) across entire district: ○ *Elementary:* One day treatment classroom at one elementary school implementing Incredible Years (IY), evidence-based curriculum. ▪ Capacity to open at least one additional day treatment classrooms. ▪ Explicit focus on making day treatment a time limited, intensive intervention which students exit. ● Hope to partner with schools to develop better strategies for fading service intensity.	schools through contracts with Lakeland. None or few evidence-based practices implemented. Evidence-based therapy/mental health interventions available through one or two providers include (hyperlinks provided to EBPs provided): ○ Motivational Interviewing (MI) ○ Solutions-focused counseling ○ Some cognitive-behavioral skills ● Day treatment provided to very few students (i.e., ~20 students) across entire district: ○ *Secondary:* ~10 students accessing day treatment at high school at a time. Long waitlist due to slow integration (one new student integrated per month). ● No evidence-based curriculum or program implemented.

Theme 2: Identifying and Connecting Students to Supports. This theme was composed of comments from SEB/MH staff focused on processes and procedures for identifying

and connecting students to Tier 2 and 3 mental health supports. The strengths and areas for improvement of current processes and functions are outlined below.

Identifying and Connecting Students to Supports	
Strengths	***Areas Needing Improvement***
• Some schools regularly examine referral data to identify students in need of SEB support. • Students are regularly discussed in team/student meetings at all buildings. Solutions staff attend are involved in meetings (are sometimes followed-up with afterward as needed). • School and Solutions staff agreed that it works well to have the school social worker as a "point person" who manages referrals to them. Referrals typically come as a result of team meetings and from parents. • Solutions has been able to focus on briefer forms of therapy and skills work as Tier 1 work at the elementary schools has increased.	• Most schools lack a proactive system to screen students and instead rely heavily on referrals for any kind of SEB support. Some schools reported that they just "know" which students to discuss in team meetings, which can introduce bias (especially toward students with externalized needs vs. internalizing needs). • Schools have improved Tier 1 supports however internal capacity for Tier 2 or 3 supports for SEB/MH are lacking, so a large number of students are referred to therapy services. • Services wane in summer months and continuity of care could be improved with more collaboration and discussion. • School staff have difficulty referring and starting services for secondary schools through Lakeland.

Theme 3: Increasing Internal Capacity. The third major theme that arose from group interviews with SEB/MH staff focused on the need to increase internal capacity of school-employed support staff to deliver evidence-based SEB/MH services.

Increasing Internal Capacity	
Strengths	***Areas Needing Improvement***
• Moorhead has exceptionally skilled and committed school counselors and social workers who hold licenses and have received education and training that equip them with the requisite skills to deliver many of the evidence-based practices and programs provided by contracted staff in addition to more robust Tier 2 services.	• Solutions has exceptional Tier 2 and 3 services that they deliver to students, but only a small fraction due to their funding structures as mandated through the state; however, their supervisor and practitioner's knowledge and skills could be leveraged to increase internal staff capacity by creating a comprehensive training program for internal staff based

● Moorhead school counselors have made an exceptional and effective effort to improve the quality of Tier 1 SEL programming by delivering SEL lessons on a routine basis in classrooms and/or coaching teachers in the delivery of SEL lessons and coaching them on integrating content from lessons throughout the day. ○ This is a service and embedded training mechanism that should be kept in place and leveraged to include additional Tier 1 training and coaching (e.g., proactive classroom management programs, equity and inclusion strategies) for teachers by school counselors currently facilitating SEL supports in classrooms as well as fidelity monitoring and evaluation of Tier 1 programming.	on the services Solutions offers. This would create a seamless approach to Tier 2 and 3 that leverages complementary resources from both contracted and school-employed staff. A similar model could be adopted at the high school after considering the quality of contracted services there. ● Both contracted and school-employed staff at the secondary level needs training and follow-up support in a range of evidence-based practices specifically designed to address adolescent mental health promotion and intensive needs. CAREI can provide resources on evidence-based programs that would be ideally delivered in schools to address adolescent mental health needs, such as this Secondary School Intervention Mapping Tool ● Moorhead is significantly understaffed with regard to school-employed SEB/MH support staff. Without sufficient number of qualified staff to deliver Tier 2 and 3 supports, the system will never reach capacity to address student needs at each of these levels and provide the training, coaching and implementation support necessary to continue sustainable and adherent Tier 1 programming. The district should examine Staff Utilization data below in this report in conjunction with ratio recommendations put forth by ASCA and NASW to determine a plan for increasing the number of qualified staff to support SEB/MH equitably in all Moorhead schools.

Theme 4: Role Clarity and Adherence to Responsibilities. The fourth major theme that arose from group interviews with SEB/MH staff focused on the need for the district to clarify all roles that encompass SEB/MH tasks and develop monitoring mechanisms that will ensure staff adhere to these responsibilities. While the pandemic was an exceptional time for all related to role diffusion, support staff noted a lack of clarity and consistency in role definition

that predates the pandemic. Staff noted it would be helpful to understand how staff roles differed and complemented each other and that this information be disseminated to all staff to enhance system-wide clarity on Moorhead's approach to staffing and organizing SEB/MH services across professionals within the system.

Specifically, staff noted it would be helpful to create "staffing patterns," which refer to the number and types, or categories, of staff assigned to the particular buildings or service units within a building. Staffing patterns that accommodate imbalanced student-to-staff ratios can affect both SEB/MH staff performance and student development negatively.

Theme 5: Teaming & Collaboration. The fifth theme that arose from group interviews with SEB/MH staff focused on collaboration and teaming (both among school staff and between school-employed and contracted staff).

Teaming and Collaboration	
Strengths	***Areas Needing Improvement***
● Contracted staff feel valued and included in meetings, teaming, and school community overall. ● Leaders and school personnel value services and support of contracted staff. ● Effective collaboration and communication between in-house and contracted providers (not "silo-ed"). ● Some contracted staff have been able to provide periodic lessons in health classes. ● Contracted staff provide consultation to teachers and other school staff (for students on their caseload and not). ● Contracted providers have taught school staff how to document increased need in schools in order to advocate for additional contracted staff.	● Contracted counselors do not attend student problem solving meetings at all buildings. ● Need role descriptions for school and contracted mental health providers which includes allocation of time. ● Need adequate time to debrief and discuss student progress and needs ● Need all educational partners involved in discussions and debriefs about students with SEB needs, not just mental health providers and school administrators. ● Need professional development for staff in SEB (e.g., wellbeing, strategies, general information on behavior management). This would reduce the need for individual consultations with teachers.

Theme 6: Truancy as Tier 3 Intervention Need. Truancy was noted as a significant problem in Moorhead Area Public Schools and a major concern across both school-employed and contracted SEB/MH staff. Staff noted that while there was supposed to be a truancy program in place at Moorhead, they do not see it working in its current form. Staff noted that both tracking student attendance has been difficult as well as being a part of planning the truancy intervention process.

School-employed staff noted that they believed a more robust truancy program that included home visitation as well as the provision of resources (e.g., transportation) and a high quality case management model would be helpful. Complementing these comments, Solutions supervisors indicated that they also felt truancy was a major concern in Moorhead and had already started grant writing efforts to secure funding to implement an evidence-based Tier 3 intervention, called Wraparound, in schools with which they have contracts.

Wraparound is "a team-based service planning and coordination process intended to improve outcomes for children and youth with serious emotional and behavioral disorders and support them in their homes, schools, and communities" (Suter & Bruns, 2009). Solutions has interest in partnering with Moorhead to implement a Tier 3, wraparound intervention that effectively addresses the need for an effective truancy intervention. While grant submissions have been unsuccessful to date, this is a clear area of alignment that could bring forth a high-quality intervention that addresses a systemwide need affecting student developmental and academic functioning and achievement as well as family needs.

Evaluation Question 6: To what extent does the district have sufficient services/supports in place to serve all students?

(a) To what extent does the district have appropriate staff to lead and support a multi-tiered SEB framework?

(b) What are the resources available for staff to help meet the SEB needs of all students?

Data Sources:

- Staff Utilization Data
- District Professional Development Inventory: Applications to SMH
- School Mental Health Group Interviews ***(see data under Evaluation Question 5)***

Findings

Staff Utilization Data

While the main intent of this review was not to conduct a comprehensive staffing analysis, the following section provides some simple data calculations that can allow for comparison and discussion of staffing across buildings. The data and discussion below should not be considered in isolation - rather, these data can function as a screening tool and point to areas where more data collection and analysis should be conducted to make decisions about staffing across the district. These calculations were based on data provided by Moorhead regarding the amount of full time equivalent (FTE) dedicated to special education and MTSS staff at each building.

Special Education Staffing

A basic analysis was conducted to determine the ratio of special education teaching staff (licensed and non-licensed, in addition to school psychologist FTE) to the total student population. This is a simple way to compare staffing across buildings. In general, higher ratios are commonly seen at the secondary level than elementary.

Table 33 shows each building, enrollment, number of students qualified for special education ("SPED child count"), staffing data, and ratios of staff to students. "Total SPED Support FTE" was calculated by summing the FTE allocated at each school for special education teachers, related service providers (e.g., occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists), school psychologists (licensed staff who are funded to support students with disabilities), and special education paraprofessionals. Two types of ratios were calculated: "professional" and "total" ratios. Professional ratios are calculated by dividing the total FTEs for the school-employed licensed/professional staff listed above by the total school enrollment. Total ratios are calculated by dividing the total FTEs for licensed/professional and non-licensed/paraprofessional staff by the total enrollment.

When looking at total ratios across the district, the range was 1:5 at the ECE to 1:29 at the high school. Ratios were generally comparable across schools, though slightly higher at the high

school, which is typical. The professional and total ratios were somewhat lower at Robert Asp Elementary, but this is appropriate given the high SPED child count at that school (25%). Overall, these special education staffing ratios appear typical as well as similar across buildings, with consideration given to building enrollment and special education needs.

Table 33

Special Education Staff Utilization Ratios

School	Demographics		Staffing			Ratios	
	Total Enrollment *(10/1/21)*	SPED Child Count	FTE: Licensed SPED Staff + Psych	# of SPED Paras	Total SPED Support FTE	SPED Professional Ratio	Total SPED Support Ratio
ECE	204	204 (100%)	27.9	10	37.9	1:7	1:5
Asp ES	640	162 (25%)	17.8	28	45.8	1:36	1:14
Dodds ES	701	119 (17%)	13.4	20	33.4	1:52	1:21
Hopkins ES	628	114 (18%)	8.9	16	24.9	1:70	1:25
Reinertsen ES	731	125 (17%)	11.9	22	33.9	1:61	1:22
Horizon MS	2069	338 (16%)	36.2	60	96.2	1:57	1:22
Moorhead HS	1905	291 (15%)	28.0	38	66.0	1:68	1:29

MTSS Staffing

To further examine staffing related to those who may be equipped to support an MTSS framework and/or interventions in a school, data were also collected from the district regarding licensed staff who work in and are funded through general education in each building (including school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and licensed academic and behavioral interventionists). Table 34 shows enrollment and "Combined Proficiency" (an average of reading + math proficiency levels at each school based on 2018-19 MCA data; see Table 28) as well as the number of licensed staff positions (no data for non-licensed general education staff such as paraprofessionals were collected) that could potentially support an MTSS framework and interventions. As with the special education data above, professional ratios were calculated by dividing the total FTEs for the licensed/professional staff by the total school enrollment.

Table 34

MTSS Staff Utilization Ratios

School	Demographics		Staffing			Ratio
	Total Enrollment *(10/1/21)*	Combined Proficiency *(2018-19 MCAs)*	FTE: Counselors + Psychs + SSWs	FTE: Intervent-ionists	Total MTSS Support FTE	MTSS Professional Ratio
Asp ES	640	49%	3.0	3.5	6.5	1:98
Dodds ES	701	50%	2.8	2.5	5.3	1:132
Hopkins ES	628	56%	2.5	3.5	6.0	1:105

Reinertsen ES	731	60%	2.5	2.5	5.0	1:146
Horizon MS	2069	49%	7.0	2.0	9.0	1:230
Moorhead HS	1905	50%	8.0	1.0	9.0	1:211

Table 35 also displays MTSS staff utilization ratios. Comparing professional/licensed staff ratios across the district, the range was 1:98 at Robert Asp Elementary to 1:230 at the middle school. Ratios were generally comparable at the elementary schools and matched to the level of academic need indicated by the 2018-19 MCA "combined proficiency" percentage, though Ellen Hopkins Elementary had a lower ratio than Dorothy Dodds Elementary despite having higher MCA proficiency levels. The ratio of licensed staff (those with the ability to support MTSS) to students was higher at the secondary schools, which is typical of most districts. However, middle schools often have a higher need and greater opportunity for intervention than high schools given the younger age and developmental level of the students, so having a higher staff-to-student ratio at the middle school than the high school is not typical, especially as academic achievement levels are comparable between the two schools.

Table 35

MTSS Staff Utilization Ratios

	Demographics		Staffing			Ratio
School	Total Enrollment *(10/1/21)*	Combined Proficiency *(2018-19 MCAs)*	FTE: Counselors + Psychs + SSWs	FTE: Intervent-ionists	Total MTSS Support FTE	MTSS Professional Ratio
Asp ES	640	49%	3.0	3.5	6.5	1:98
Dodds ES	701	50%	2.8	2.5	5.3	1:132
Hopkins ES	628	56%	2.5	3.5	6.0	1:105
Reinertsen ES	731	60%	2.5	2.5	5.0	1:146
Horizon MS	2069	49%	7.0	2.0	9.0	1:230
Moorhead HS	1905	50%	8.0	1.0	9.0	1:211

In summary, although staffing of licensed staff broadly appears to be consistent with typical staffing data across Moorhead schools, district leadership may want to examine staffing more closely at Dorothy Dodds Elementary and Horizon Middle School (including support from non-licensed staff which was not included in these calculations) to ensure that there are adequate staff to support MTSS infrastructure and interventions.

School Mental Health Staffing

The final analyses conducted using the staffing data supplied by Moorhead were simple comparisons of recommended ratios provided by professional organizations to actual ratios in Moorhead schools for school counselors and school social workers. Note that while school psychologists and other staff with training in mental health and behavior may also be equipped to provide direct support to students, counselors and social workers are highlighted here as they are

the school-employed staff who most often have time allocated to directly supporting student mental health (and not other tasks, such as MTSS/PBIS coordination).

According to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the ideal ratio of students to school counselors is 250 to 1, though the current average nationwide is 451 to 1.[2] Similarly, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) advocates for a recommended ratio of 1 school social worker for every 250 students to best provide preventative and responsive school mental health services to students.[3] Table 36 below indicates that, to meet these recommended ratios, anywhere from 0.8 to 4.3 counselors (totalling 14.5 FTE) and 0.8 to 7.3 social workers (totalling 20.5 FTE) should be added to each school. While these recommended ratios are not feasible to match in the short term, these data are presented to demonstrate the discrepancy between best practices in school mental health services and the current level of support in Moorhead schools. Similar to special education and MTSS ratios above, these data also demonstrate the extent to which ratios are equitable across schools. At the elementary level, staffing appears to be similar across schools for both counselors and social workers. However, at the middle school, there are very high student to school mental health staff ratios in comparison to the high school. These data provide another rationale for examining staffing at the middle school, as recommended above. In general, Moorhead should strive to work toward these ideal ratios, and when making decisions about staffing allocations across schools, should consider starting with adding school mental health supports at the middle school level.

Table 36

School Mental Health Staffing Ratios

Recommended Ratios for School Mental Health Staff							
		ASCA Ratio: 250:1			**NASW Ratio: 250:1**		
Building Name	**Total Student Enrollment (2021-22)**	**Current School Counselor FTE**	***Total FTE Needed for ratio***	**School Counselor FTE to Add**	**Current School Social Worker FTE**	***Total FTE Needed for ratio***	**School Social Worker FTE to Add**
ECE	204	0	*0.8*	**0.8**	0	*0.8*	**0.8**
Asp	640	1	*2.6*	**1.6**	1	*2.6*	**1.6**
Dodds	701	1	*2.8*	**1.8**	1	*2.8*	**1.8**
Hopkins	628	1	*2.5*	**1.5**	1	*2.5*	**1.5**
Reinertsen	731	1	*2.9*	**1.9**	1	*2.9*	**1.9**
Horizon MS	2069	4	*8.3*	**4.3**	1	*8.3*	**7.3**
Moorhead HS	1903	5	*7.6*	**2.6**	2	*7.6*	**5.6**
TOTAL	***6876***	***13***	***27.5***	***14.5***	***7***	***27.5***	***20.5***

[2] https://www.schoolcounselor.org/About-School-Counseling/School-Counselor-Roles-Ratios

[3] https://www.socialworkers.org/News/News-Releases/ID/1633/NASW-Highlights-the-Growing-Need-for-School-Social-Workers-to-Prevent-School-Violence

District Professional Development Inventory: Application to School Mental Health

Moorhead leadership shared a list of professional development sessions that have been offered to district staff during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, coded by continuing education re-licensure requirement categories. Table 8 (located under Evaluation Question 1) provides a summary of the topics covered across a total of 1,103.2 hours of professional development time. These data indicate that most district-run professional development sessions were categorized as "general" (55.3% of of the total hours across two years), encompassing a wide range of topics to support teaching and learning in the district (e.g., PLC time, vertical alignment across grades, test administration, data use). While some of these topics may have been related to school mental health and SEB, most appeared to focus on academic supports. There were many hours dedicated to implementation of Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (16.4% of the total across two years) which is certainly aligned to supporting student SEB needs, especially at the Tier 1 level. In contrast, very few professional development hours were dedicated specifically to mental health (1.3%) and suicide prevention (0.8%). These data point to a need for increased professional development targeting how staff can support students' social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs.

Strengths, Opportunities, and Recommendations

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">District Capacity to Provide Multi-Tiered SEB Supports</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Strengths</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">

Overall, special education staffing ratios appeared consistent and similar to typical staffing ratios within and across schools.
A review of district professional development offerings included a significant number of hours dedicated to implementation of Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies which likely benefits the district's ability to support students' SEB needs, especially at the Tier 1, universal level.
As reported under Question 5:

Moorhead has exceptionally skilled and committed school counselors and social workers who hold licenses and have received education and training that equip them with the requisite skills to deliver many of the evidence-based practices and programs provided by contracted staff in addition to more robust Tier 2 services.
Moorhead school counselors have made an exceptional and effective effort to improve the quality of Tier 1 SEL programming by delivering SEL lessons on a routine basis in classrooms and/or coaching teachers in the delivery of SEL lessons and coaching them on integrating content from lessons throughout the day.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Opportunities for Improvement</td><td>Recommendations</td></tr>
<tr><td>

Dorothy Dodds Elementary School and Horizon Middle School appear to have a relative lack of licensed staff who can support MTSS infrastructure and interventions (e.g., school psychologists, school counselors, interventionists) when compared to

</td><td>

We recommend that district leadership examine staffing more closely at Dorothy Dodds Elementary and across elementary schools as well as at Horizon Middle (including support from non-licensed staff, which was not included in this report's calculations) to ensure that there are adequate and equitable

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other schools in the district, despite demonstrating high levels of academic need.	staffing levels to support MTSS infrastructure and interventions at each school.
• Each of Moorhead's schools has a ratio of school counselors- and social workers-to-students that does not align with best practice recommendations of 1:250. In particular, Horizon Middle School has the highest student-to-school mental health staff ratios in the district, far above the high school's levels.	• In general, Moorhead should develop a plan to move toward best practice ratios for school mental health staff as much as possible. This could include reallocating funds from within each school or across the district as well as advocating for state legislators to increase funds for school mental health staff (e.g., through bills such as HF 1742). These increases are especially critical in light of the student mental health needs arising in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. • We also specifically recommend closely examining staffing at the middle school as it relates to school mental health (and MTSS overall, as noted above). When making decisions about staffing allocations across schools, consider starting by adding school mental health supports at the middle school level.
• Very few professional development hours have been offered to Moorhead staff related to mental health and suicide prevention.	• We recommend providing required annual training to all Moorhead staff on student mental health, highlighting the role that all staff can play in supporting students' social, emotional, behavioral, and mental wellbeing (e.g., through Tier 1 supports such as relationship building and positive reinforcement). Alongside this effort, provide training/documentation that clarifies how and when to refer students to counselors and other support staff (i.e., calling the family first or attempting a simple intervention). • In addition to training all staff, contracted and school-employed staff at the secondary level need training and follow-up support in a range of evidence-based practices specifically designed to address adolescent mental health promotion and intensive needs. CAREI can provide resources on evidence-based programs that would be ideally delivered in schools to address adolescent mental health needs such as this Secondary School Intervention Mapping Tool.
• As noted in Question 5, Solutions has exceptional Tier 2 and 3 services that they deliver to students; however, these services are only available for a small fraction of students in need of support	• Solutions supervisor and practitioner knowledge and skills could be leveraged to increase internal staff capacity by creating a comprehensive training program for internal staff based on the services Solutions offers. This would create a seamless

due to their funding structures as mandated through the state.	approach to Tier 2 and 3 that leverages complementary resources from both contracted and school-employed staff. A similar model could be adopted at the high school after considering the quality of contracted services there.

Evaluation Question 7: How effective is the coordination of services with outside agencies and between buildings within the district?

Data Sources:

- Interagency School Mental Health Survey
- School Mental Health Group Interviews ***(see data under Evaluation Question 5)***

Findings

Interagency School Mental Health Survey

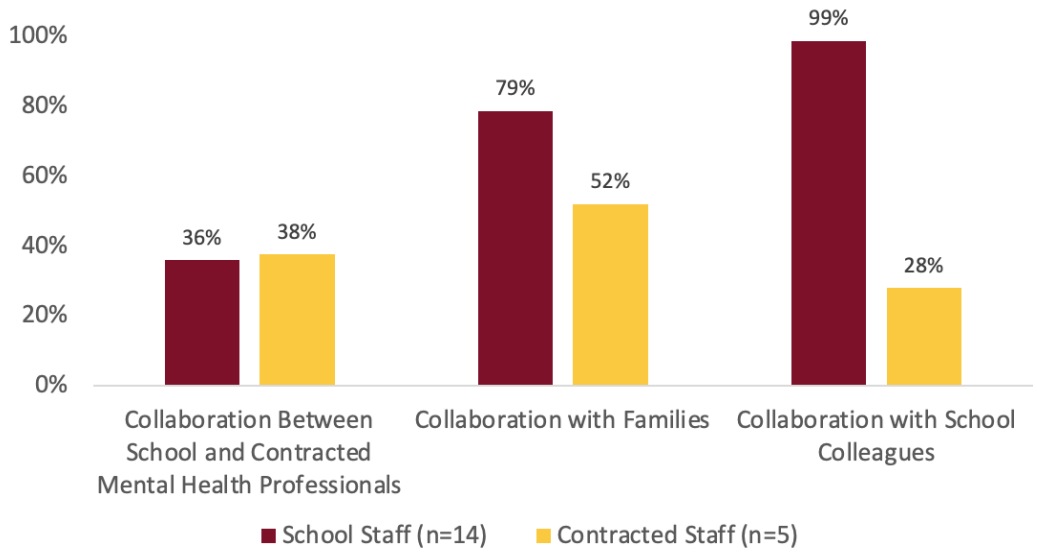
Two groups were surveyed to gain insight into collaboration between school staff and contracted mental health agencies in Moorhead: (1) School-employed staff with the background/training that equips them to provide mental health and counseling supports to students (i.e., school social workers, school counselors, and school psychologists) and (2) Contracted staff working for Lakeland Mental Health and Solutions Behavioral Healthcare Professionals who provide mental health supports for students in Moorhead. A total of 19 people responded to the survey, including 14 school-employed staff and 5 Lakeland staff (no staff from Solutions responded to the survey). Respondents included staff working at all grade levels (10 working in elementary, 7 in middle, and 9 in high school), 7 (37%) of whom worked in multiple Moorhead schools. The survey was adapted from the Expanded School Mental Health Collaboration Instrument: School Version (Mellin et al., 2014) and Community Version (Mellin et al., 2016; See Appendix B for more details). Responses fell into three categories (Types of Collaboration, Influences on Collaboration, and Perceived Benefits of Collaboration), each of which are summarized below.

Types of Collaboration

The **Types of Collaboration** domain includes three subdomains which relate to collaboration with different groups of educational partners. As illustrated in Figure 10, school-employed staff reported that they engage in frequent collaboration with families and school colleagues. In contrast, contracted staff reported lower rates of collaboration with both groups (with higher collaboration levels with families than with school colleagues). Both groups also reported lower levels of collaboration between school and contracted mental health professionals (36-38% reported this occurs *sometimes* or *often*). This may indicate lower levels of collaboration or may also reflect the fact that some survey items ask about the extent to which the two types of staff *deliver services* and *complete student assessments* together; the relationship between Lakeland and school-employed mental health professionals is largely focused on working together to *coordinate* services. As such, these results may misrepresent the actual amount of time contracted and school mental health staff spend working together. Further data could be collected on time spent and frequency of coordination of services to gain a clearer picture of levels of collaboration between these roles at each school.

Figure 10

Types of Collaboration: Frequency of Collaboration Type (sometimes+often) by Role

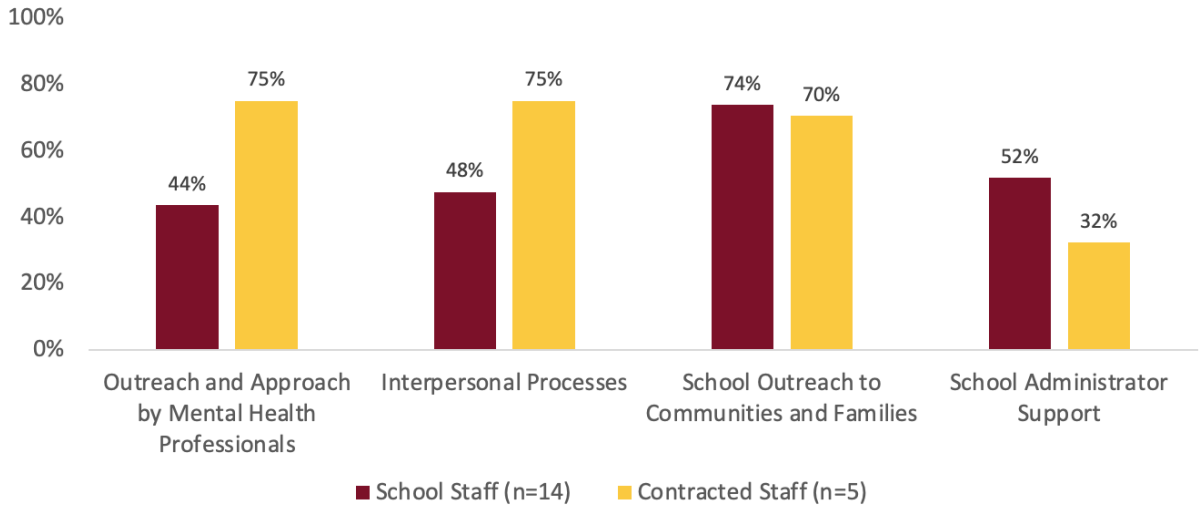


Influences on Collaboration

Four subdomains comprise the **Influences on Collaboration** scale which examines factors that support or present a barrier to collaboration among school and contracted mental health staff. As indicated in Figure 11, school staff were less likely than contracted staff to report that contracted mental health professionals are visible and accessible in their outreach to Moorhead staff and students. Additionally, school-employed staff were less likely than contracted staff to agree that interpersonal relationships and processes between contracted and school-employed staff have been supportive of ongoing collaboration. For example, only 23% of school-employed staff agreed that the two types of staff "trust each other." However, both types of respondents agreed that their school/district values and welcomes collaboration with families and community agencies. The two groups again demonstrated differing opinions about the extent to which school administrators support and engage with contracted mental health professionals, with school-employed staff reporting higher agreement than contracted staff. However, this may be more a function of how Lakeland services are run in Moorhead than an area of significant concern (i.e., school social workers or counselors typically work more closely with contracted school mental health staff rather than directly with the school principal).

Figure 11

Influences on Collaboration: Percent Agreement (agree+strongly agree) by Role



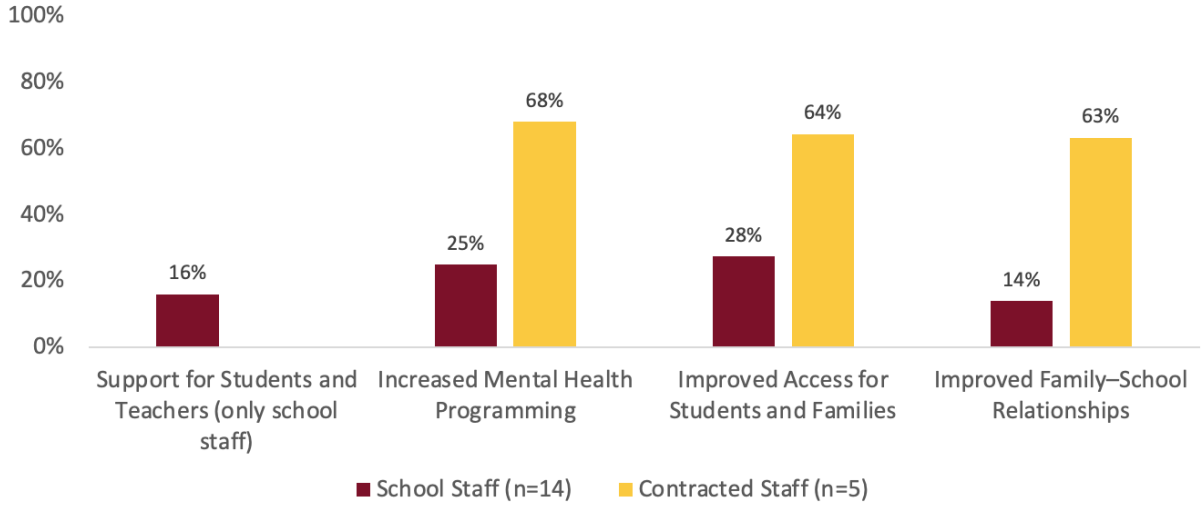
Perceived Benefits of Collaboration

The **Perceived Benefits of Collaboration** includes items which encourage respondents to think about how collaboration between professionals has improved or expanded services for students and families during the most recent school year. As seen in Figure 12, of 14 school staff members who responded to the Support for Students and Teachers questions (these two questions were administered solely to school staff), only 16% agreed that collaborating with contracted providers had generally improved support for students and teachers; for example, few agreed that "There are more consistent expectations for students" or "There are fewer referrals to special education" in the school as a result of working with contracted agencies. It should be noted that the work of contracted mental health professionals in Moorhead is presently focused on the needs of students who are eligible for special education services or have been identified as having intensive Tier 3 needs. Therefore, as services and contracts are currently structured, we would not expect to see an impact in these areas. If contracts and service delivery models were restructured to expand their focus to student needs at the Tier 1 and Tier 2 level, it is possible that staff perceptions may shift.

In general, school-employed staff did not agree that working with contracted agencies benefitted their schools in the ways outlined in the survey; only 25% reported a perception that contracted services increased mental health programming for students, 28% reported that access to services had improved, and 14% reported an improvement in family-school relationships. In contrast, more contracted providers agreed that each of these outcomes had been impacted by their agency's collaboration with Moorhead schools (ranging from 63-68% reporting perceptions of positive outcomes). Given the discrepancy in perceptions between school staff and contracted staff, the district may benefit from identifying specific outcomes that they hope to achieve through these mental health service contracts and evaluating the impact of contracted services on these outcomes. While perceptions of staff are meaningful, they are insufficient on their own in identifying the true degree to which contracted services are having a desired effect on student outcomes.

Figure 12

Perceived Benefits of Collaboration: Percent Agreement (agree+strongly) by Role



Overall, results from the Interagency School Mental Health Survey indicate some strengths in the district (e.g., most respondents agreed that their school/district values and welcomes collaboration with families and community agencies), but also indicate several areas of concern. Namely, contracted mental health staff do not appear to be able to dedicate much time to collaboration with school colleagues. Additionally, it is concerning that a large proportion of school-employed mental health staff did not agree that the contracted service providers demonstrated effective outreach, approach, and interpersonal processes in schools (which contrasted with contracted staff views that these were generally effective). School administrator support for collaborative work was also rated at a low level by both groups, indicating disconnect between the expectations and priorities laid down by school leadership and a need to leverage collective expertise. Lastly, there were significant differences in perceived outcomes of collaboration between schools and contracted programs, with school-employed staff reporting low levels of perceived positive impact on programming, access, and relationship building between schools and families and contracted service providers reporting a higher degree of impact. It is clear from these results that the contracted and school-employed mental health service providers who responded to this survey have had very different perceptions of professional impact on Moorhead students and families. The district may benefit from looking beyond staff perceptions to identify specific outcomes that they can measure to determine the impact of services.

Strengths, Opportunities, and Recommendations

Interagency Collaboration
Strengths
● As reported under Question 5, focus group data indicated: ○ Contracted/school-linked mental health staff reported feeling valued and included in meetings, teaming, and school community overall.

- Leaders and school personnel reported valuing services and support of contracted staff.
  - Some contracted staff have been able to provide periodic lessons in health classes.
  - Contracted staff have provided consultation to teachers and other school staff (for students on their caseload and not).
  - Contracted providers have taught school staff how to document increased need in schools in order to advocate for additional contracted staff.
- School-employed mental health staff reported high levels of collaboration with other school-employed colleagues regarding student mental health.
- Most school-employed and contracted mental health service providers agreed that Moorhead schools value and welcome collaboration with families and community agencies

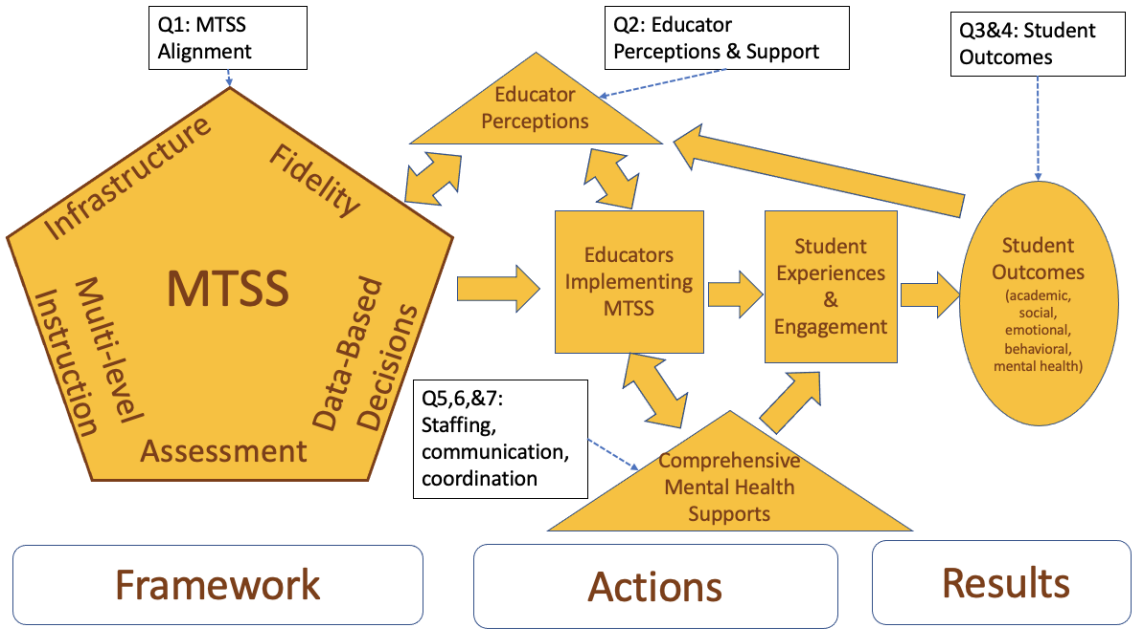
Opportunities for Improvement	***Recommendations***
● In focus groups, staff reported a need for clear role descriptions for contracted mental health providers, including how staff should prioritize/allocate their time. For example, some contracted counselors attend student problem solving meetings and some do not - the extent to which they attend these types of collaborative meetings should be uniform and clear across buildings as much as possible.	● Moorhead leaders are encouraged to either refine current contracts with outside agencies to include more detailed role descriptions or create/request additional details in writing that outline how contracted staff are expected to spend their time and best practices for working within the district. The following tool, developed by Dr. Kim Gibbons and the St. Croix River Education District (SCRED) may be a useful template to use or adapt for this purpose: SCRED Community Partner Services in the Schools Communication Guide.
● While collaboration does occur, there is often a need for *more* time to collaborate, whether that be through contracted staff attending standing meetings or just time in general to debrief about students the contracted staff are working with and discuss their progress and needs.	● As noted above, some work is needed on clarifying expectations for contracted mental health providers in the district. Regarding this issue specifically, the district should collaborate with contracted provider leadership to determine what the ideal balance should be between time contracted staff are expected to provide direct service for students and families and time spent on collaboration with school staff, and then make this clear within contracts or other clarifying documents.
● Focus group participants indicated a need for professional development for all staff in SEB (e.g., wellbeing, strategies, general information on behavior management) as a strategy for reducing the need for contracted and school-employed staff to conduct individual consultations with teachers.	● As noted in previous sections, an annual training for all Moorhead staff on student mental health highlighting the role that all staff can play in supporting students' SEB needs would allow mental health service providers to focus their time on students who need the most intensive supports.

• Although staff generally reported that Moorhead schools value and welcome collaboration with community agencies, the Interagency Survey demonstrated that school-employed and contracted mental health service providers have had very incongruent and sometimes difficult experiences regarding collaboration and impressions of overall impact in the school. Both groups reported infrequent opportunities to collaborate with each other and reported low support from administration regarding collaboration. School-employed staff generally did not believe that contracted service providers demonstrated effective outreach, approach, and interpersonal processes in schools (which contrasted with contracted staff views that these were generally effective), nor did they observe positive outcomes from the collaboration with outside agencies (again contrasting with contracted staff who rated the impact as relatively high).	• Given the significant disconnect in experiences but shared value regarding school-agency collaboration, we recommend that as contracts or role descriptions are being redesigned (as noted above), contracted staff have intentional time built into their role for collaboration with school staff. • Given this current working relationship (with staff reporting low levels of trust between the groups), it would also be beneficial to plan strategies for building psychological safety (i.e., team members feel accepted and respected) and shared mental models (i.e., staff being on the same page about the roles and responsibilities of team members, the flow of information, and how they interact with each other based on each member's skills and preferences) among school-employed and contracted staff at each building. See this resource for a definition of psychological safety and initial strategies to engage in.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Moorhead leadership that will help facilitate effective, efficient, and targeted action planning that will lead to improving academic, social, emotional, and mental health outcomes for Moorhead students. To this end, the CAREI team evaluated MTSS implementation, staff beliefs and perceptions, staffing, supports offered for adults in the system, and student outcomes.

This review indicates that the Moorhead Area Public School district demonstrates many strengths related to its implementation of an MTSS framework and provision of School Mental Health programming. Evaluators also identified a variety of opportunities for improvement, particularly related to the use of data to inform decision-making, systematic integration of and communication between various district- and agency-employed SEB support staff, and the communication of clear expectations for contracted school academic and mental health staff regarding their roles and how they coordinate their work on behalf of students. CAREI looks forward to supporting Moorhead Area Public Schools in the process of prioritizing, planning for, and implementing the recommendations offered in this report to leverage the district's strengths and address identified challenges.



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MOORHEAD
AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Memo ASTL.23.01

TO: Dr. Brandon M. Lunak, Superintendent

FROM: Dr. Jeremy Larson, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

DATE: 07/12/2022

RE: K-4 Literacy Evaluation Review

During the 2021-2022 school year, a comprehensive review of our current K-4 Literacy program was conducted. Courtney Seiler, Supervisor of Teaching and Learning for Elementary Education will be here to present the findings of that review.

Suggested Resolution: presentation

JL/tro

ATTACHMENTS:
MAPS Literacy Program Review

MAPS
Literacy Program Evaluation

July 18, 2022

Task Force Team Members

Name	Position
Jeremy Larson	Asst Superintendent of Learning and Accountability
Courtney Seiler	Supervisor, Elementary Learning and Accountability
Amy Zanotti	Supervisor, Secondary Learning and Accountability
Joanna Struck	Literacy Coach
Nancy Wilson	Asst Principal
Dan Dooher	Resource Strategist
Karen Taylor	Instructional Coach
Alexis Lundberg	Family Literacy Coach

Literacy Evaluation Framework

1. Goals, Objectives & Priorities
2. Assessment
3. Instructional Program & Materials
4. Instructional Time
5. Differentiated Instruction, Grouping & Scheduling
6. Administration, Organization & Communication
7. Professional Development

Literacy Evaluation Leadership Teams

Task Force: Reviewed sections 1 & 2

PLC Leaders: Reviewed sections 3, 4 & 5

Building Administration & Literacy Coaches: sections 6 & 7

Literacy Evaluation Framework cont.

Directions: This tool will be used to evaluate our existing schoolwide curriculum program. The results of this evaluation will guide our action planning to support the district and buildings in ensuring we have an effective schoolwide program.

- Working as a Leadership Team, use the listed evaluation criteria to score your current implementation of effective schoolwide program implementation.
- Most items in the evaluation have a value of 0, 1, 2 to indicate the level of implementation: 0=Not in place, 1=Partially in place, 2=Fully in place.
- In the right-hand column of the table, document the evidence that supports your rating for each item.

Overall Scores

Percent: The percent score for each element allows you to determine the percentage of items the school is implementing within that element. The percentages can be used to evaluate the respective quality of implementation.

Element	Score	
1. Goals, Objectives, and Priorities	4.0/10	[illegible]
2. Assessment	6.4/16	40%
3. Instructional Practices and Materials	5.8/20	29%
4. Instructional Time	4.3/10	43%
5. Differentiated Instruction and Grouping	3.6/10	36%
6. Administration, Organization, and Communication	7/12	58%
7. Professional Development	4.8/8	60%
Total Score	35.9/86	42%

0,1,2 scale

1. Goals, Objectives, & Priorities

Goals for reading achievement are clearly defined, anchored to research, prioritized by importance to student learning, commonly understood by users, consistently employed as instructional guides by all teachers of reading.

Positives:

- We currently have an explicit literacy framework
  - But, it's not being used consistently across the district
- Goals are understood within grades, work is aligned to standards

Challenges/Next Steps:

- Progress reports need to be clarified and aligned to priorities
- There is a need for a data coach

40%

2. Assessment

Instruments and procedures for assessing reading achievement are clearly specified, measure essential skills, provide reliable and valid information about student performance, and inform instruction in important, meaningful, and maintainable ways.

Positives:

- We have a Tier 1, universal screener (Aimsweb Plus) that measures both comprehension and word recognition
- Data is being analyzed sporadically and in pockets

Challenges/Next Steps:

- Tier the assessment plan
- Assessment training is needed for all staff
- Leadership leads data digs regularly

40%

3. Instructional Practices & Materials

The instructional programs and materials have documented efficacy, are drawn from research-based findings and practices, align with state standards and benchmarks, and support the full range of learners.

Positives

- Tier 1 comprehensive curriculum and established pacing guide
- Small group instruction training has been provided

Challenges

- Tier 1 curriculum focuses on comprehension, lacks word recognition
- Tight pacing guide needs room for formative assessment & instructional adjustment
- Need work on all Tiers of instruction

29%

4. Instructional Time

A sufficient amount of time is allocated for instruction and the time allocated is used effectively.

Positives

- Literacy instructional time is prioritized across the district
- Framework has been established

Challenges

- Current framework needs to be updated to align to new research and be more explicit
- Identify priorities of the daily schedule

43%

5. Differentiated Instruction, Grouping and Scheduling

Instruction optimizes learning for all students by tailoring instruction to meet current levels of knowledge and prerequisite skills and organizing instruction to enhance student learning.

Positives

- Small group instruction training has been provided
- Pilots/pockets of fluid grouping happening

Challenges

- A diagnostic assessment is needed to determine grouping

36%

6. Administration, Organization, and Communication

Strong instructional leadership maintains a focus on high quality instruction, organizes and allocates resources to support reading, and establishes mechanisms to communicate reading progress and practices.

Positives

- Administrators & coaches work together to understand state standards, literacy practices, and assessment

Challenges

- Concurrent instruction (e.g., Title, special education) is coordinated with and complementary to general education reading instruction.

58%

7. Professional Development

Strong instructional leadership maintains a focus on high quality instruction, organizes and allocates resources to support reading, and establishes mechanisms to communicate reading progress and practices.

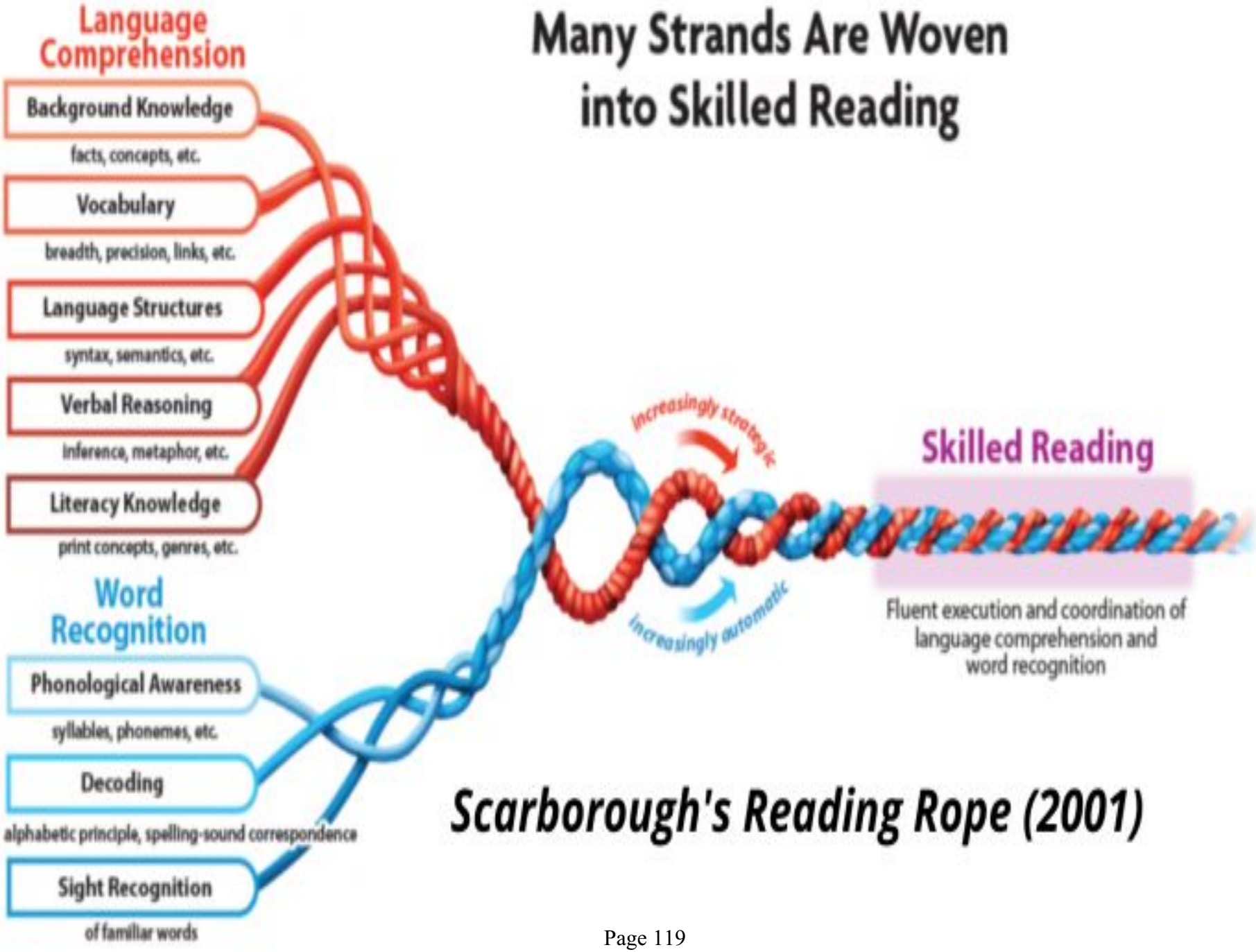
Positives

- Professional development is aligned to district and school goals

Challenges

- Teachers and instructional staff have thorough understanding and working knowledge of grade-level instructional/reading priorities and effective practices.

60%


Many Strands Are Woven into Skilled Reading
Language Comprehension
Background Knowledge
facts, concepts, etc.
Vocabulary
breadth, precision, links, etc.
Language Structures
syntax, semantics, etc.
Verbal Reasoning
inference, metaphor, etc.
Literacy Knowledge
print concepts, genres, etc.
Word Recognition
Phonological Awareness
syllables, phonemes, etc.
Decoding
alphabetic principle, spelling-sound correspondence
Sight Recognition
of familiar words
Increasingly strategic
Increasingly automatic
Skilled Reading
Fluent execution and coordination of language comprehension and word recognition
Scarborough's Reading Rope (2001)

3 Outcomes:

1. Define Tier 1
    a. New Framework

2. Professional Development
    a. Formative Assessment

Next Steps:

3. Toolbox of interventions

New Literacy Framework

Literacy Framework
2022-2023

Kindergarten

Interactive Read Aloud	Shared Reading / Mini lesson	Small Group/ Choice	Writing	Phonological Awareness (Heggerty)	Phonics Whole Group	Total
15	15	70	30	15	25	170 mins

Grades 1 and 2

Interactive Read Aloud	Phonological Awareness (Heggerty)	Benchmark Mini Lesson	Choice Time Rotations Small Group Instruction	Phonics	Writing Mini Lesson	Writing Practice	Total
15	15	15	45	30	15	20	155
15	15	15	45	30	15	20	155

Grades 3 - 4

Read Aloud	Benchmark Mini Lesson	Choice Time Rotations Small Group Instruction	Word Study	Writing	Total
20	15	45	20	30	130

Professional Development

	2022-23 **Year 1:** Teachers choose a different strand each time			**2023-24** **Year 2:** Teachers choose a different strand each time		
	Scarborough: Blue rope, Tier 1 Instruction			Scarborough: Red Rope: Tier 1 Instruction		
August	**Assessment and THE WHY? - break down each assessment that will be given in the fall and the why behind it. Help teachers get a clearer understanding of the importance of the assessments**					
Required PD at PD Days	**K-2 Phonics** **3-4 Word Study**			**Conversation/Language Comp**		
Choice Lit. Strands	**Decodables & Leveled Readers**	**Phonological Awareness**	**High Frequency Words vs Sight Words**	**Vocabulary**	**Bkgrd Knowledge**	**Prompting**
	Assessment included in each choice session. Make a plan for data usage as a follow up, a thread within, how they use to inform next steps after these PD sessions.					
	Intentional review each time PD session and formative check ins through coaching , emails, vidoes, PLCs, or meetings. All sessions are required over the course of 2 years.					

Next Steps

1. Toolbox for Interventions
   a. PLCs
   b. Tier II Interventions
2. Embed Content-Based Literacy (Science, Social Studies)
3. Continual Review of Progress

MOORHEAD AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Memo ASTL.23.02

TO: Dr. Brandon M. Lunak, Superintendent

FROM: Dr. Jeremy Larson, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

DATE: 07/12/2022

RE: 2022-2023 Teaching & Learning Goals and Staff Development Plan

Attached are the Teaching & Learning department goals based on the district's strategic priorities. The department of Teaching & Learning will use the framework created to guide their work in providing quality staff development to meet the goals of the strategic plan.

Suggested Resolution:

JL/tro

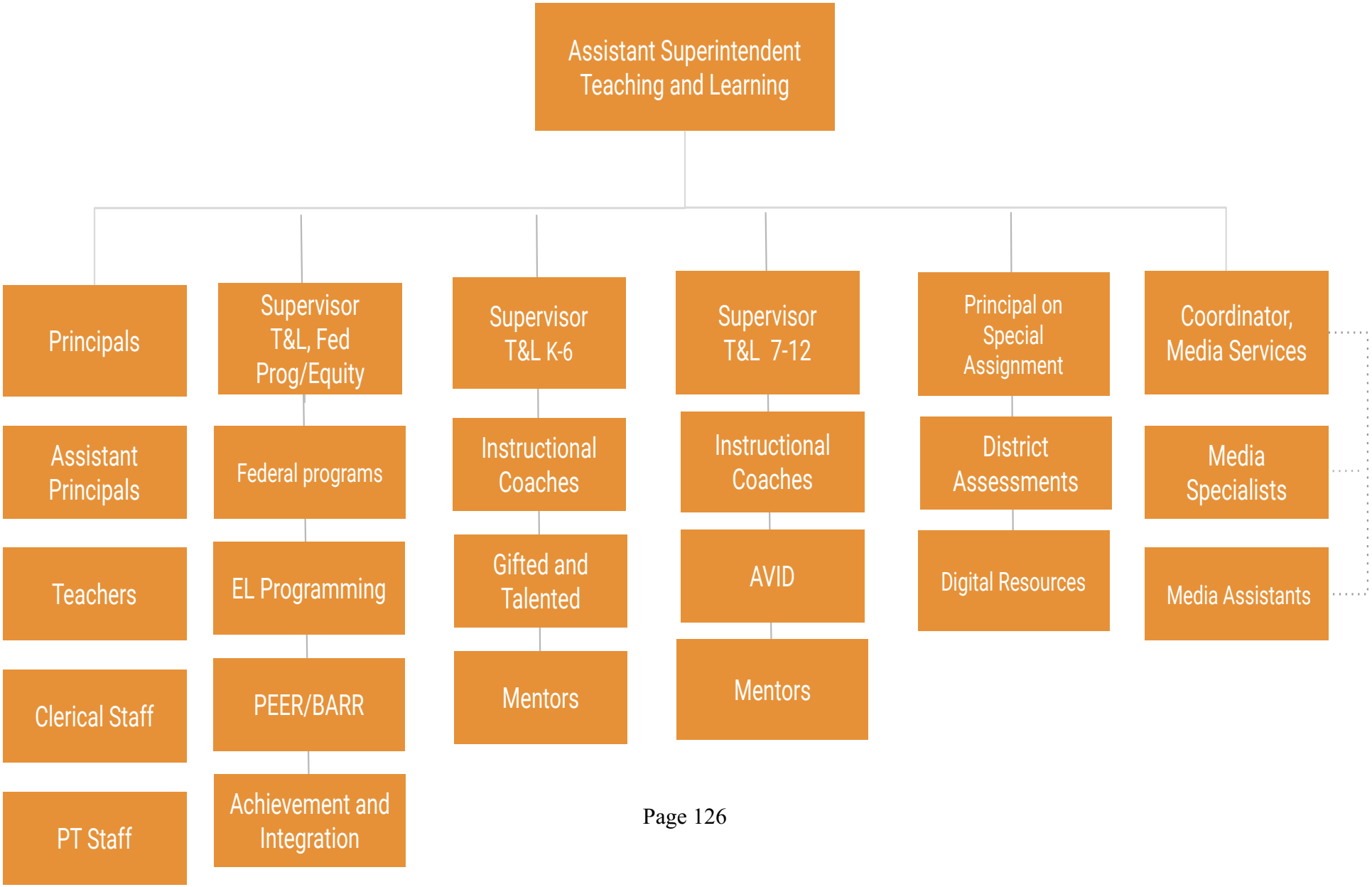
ATTACHMENTS:
Teaching & Learning Goals and Strategic Plan

MOORHEAD
AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2022-2024 Teaching & Learning Department Goals & Strategic Plan

Mission Statement: To Develop the maximum potential of every learner to thrive in a changing world

MEET OUR TEAM



Teaching & Learning Department Goals

MAPS Strategic Plan - Student Achievement Goals

1. We will achieve the goals of the World's Best Workforce (WBWF) for all students in the school district.
2. Increase the academic engagement of all students through authentic and cross curricular experiences aligned to a career pathway of their choosing.
3. Establish an instructional framework that includes the attributes of the portrait, a plan of progress for each student, and relevant curriculum at all levels.
4. Ensure all students receive a guaranteed and viable curriculum with aligned assessments.

We will achieve the goals of the World's Best Workforce (WBWF) for all students in the school district.

World's Best Workforce Areas

1. All children are ready for school
2. All third-graders can read at grade level
3. All racial and economic achievement gaps are closed
4. All students are reach for career and college
5. All students graduate from high school

1.1. PLCs will be trained to review available data sources to adapt their instruction to meet the academic needs of all students. We will continue to provide training and support to our PLC leaders.

1.2. Facilitate consistent math coaching across the K-4 sites to ensure Number Corner is done with fidelity.

1.3. Based on the findings of the K-4 literacy program evaluation, implement a new literacy framework and provided PD based on the gaps that were recognized.

1.4. The teaching and learning department, in collaboration with building leadership teams, will conduct quarterly learning walks to look for fidelity of program implementation.

1.5. Conduct an evaluation of our current federal programs reviewing for improvements in our equity and inclusion of all students.

Increase the academic engagement of all students through authentic and cross curricular experiences aligned to a career pathway of their choosing.

2.1. Create an audit of current course offerings at MHS. Align the courses to pathways at the Career Academy under career clusters that are recognized nationally by CTE.

2.2. Core departments will create career pathways for their courses.

2.3. The Academy Coach will work with community partners to start shaping what the capstone (diploma plus) experiences will be under each pathway.

Establish an instructional framework that includes the attributes of the portrait, a plan of progress for each student, and relevant curriculum at all levels.

Excellence Through Equity: Culturally Relevant Mindsets and Practices		
Guaranteed Viable Curriculum	**Personalized Learning**	**Inclusive Culture**
Content Knowledge, Problem Solving	**Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication**	**Empathy, Resilience**
Representation, multiple perspectives	Embedded representation	Who matters, who's valued, who is celebrated
Curriculum Mapping	Differentiation	Social Emotional Learning
Curriculum Adoption	Voice and Choice	Windows and Mirrors
Standards Based Assessments	Career Pathways	Families as Partners
Evidence-based Practices	Knowing students and families	Proactive Social Practices
Learner Support Services Specific PD		
Standards-based IEPs	Special Education Due Process	Co-teaching model
School Improvement Drivers		
PLC	Instructional Coaches	BARR/MEIRS/SAT
Building SIPS	IGDP	AVID

Ensure all students receive a guaranteed and viable curriculum with aligned assessments.

4.1. K-8 Building level teams will attend the PLC institute in Minneapolis.

4.2. Review the findings of the MTSS audit looking for gaps in our programming.

4.3. District instructional team will participate in a book study on instructional strategies and quality formative assessments.

2022-2023 Staff Development Strategic Plan

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: We expect that ALL students will feel valued and accepted for who they are and see themselves in the curriculum they are engaged with.

Activities	ASLA Goal Area	Begin and End Dates
Culture-Centered Teacher Training Series	Inclusive Culture	September 2022
Culturally Relevant Book Studies	Inclusive Culture	2022-2023
Culturally Relevant Read Alouds	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum, Inclusive Culture	Summer 2022
Understanding the Knowledge Gap	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum, Inclusive Culture	Fall 2022

Literacy Based Instruction: We expect that students will learn the foundational skills to read in their early years so they can transition to reading to learn in their later years.

Activities	ASLA Goal Area	Begin and End Dates
LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling)	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum	Summer 2022 & 2023
Phonics Based Instruction	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum	2022-2023
Writing across the content area	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum	2022-2023
School-wide AVID strategies (WICOR)	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum, Inclusive Culture	Ongoing

Curriculum Mapping/Curriculum at a Glance: We expect that all teachers will have a clear understanding of where they are going instructionally and what the daily objectives/essential questions are for the students.

Activities	ASLA Goal Area	Begin and End Dates
Understanding by Design	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum	ongoing
Scope & Sequence Alignment	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum	ongoing

Assessments for Learning: We expect that the students understand academically their strengths and gaps in understanding and that teachers use data to adjust instruction to fill those gaps or enrich the students through deeper learning.

Activities	ASLA Goal Area	Begin and End Dates
Project Based Learning	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum, Personalized Learning	Summer 2022
Engagement Strategies	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum, Personalized Learning	ongoing
Standards Based Assessment	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum, Personalized Learning	ongoing

Data-Based Decision Making: We expect that PLCs and buildings are using data to check fidelity of their initiatives and modify when needed.

Activities	ASLA Goal Area	Begin and End Dates
PLC (Professional Learning Communities)	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum, Personalize Learning, Inclusive Culture	2021 - ongoing
Quarterly building data meetings	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum	2022-2023
MTSS	Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum, Personalized Learning	2021 - ongoing

Staff Development Year at a Glance

Month	PLC or PD
August 9-11	PLC Leaders
22-25	Workshop Week
September 14	PLC Late Start
October 7	PD Day
November 7	PD Day
December 7	PLC Late Start
January 16	PD Day
February 8	PLC Late Start
March 8	PLC Late Start
April 5	PLC Late Start
May 30	Flex Time
31	Flex Time

Questions

MOORHEAD AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Technology

Memo EDOT.23.002R

TO: Dr. Brandon M. Lunak, Superintendent

FROM: Dan Markert, Executive Director of Technology

DATE: 07/13/2022

RE: Minnesota Student Data Privacy Law

In the past few years educational institutions have continued to become targets for technology software vendors to harvest parent provided and student generated data. This data collected is being sold and/or traded to big data companies, who in turn sell this information to business marketing firms. In the past five years many states have enacted state legislation that defines what student data technology software companies can collect from schools. The Minnesota Legislature passed a Student Privacy bill this past session that mirrors data protection laws enacted in other states.

The Minnesota Department of Education has not yet released their guidance of the new student data privacy law, but the Minnesota Association of School Administrators has shared their understanding of the new laws major tenets. I will provide an update on what we know regarding the Minnesota Student Data Privacy law at the July 18 School Board Work Session.

Suggested Resolution: Presentation

DM:dmb

ATTACHMENTS:
Presentation

2022 MOORHEAD AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2023

MN Student Data Privacy Law

Dan Markert

Executive Director of Technology

Intent of the MN Student Data Privacy Law

- Why did this bill come together?
  - Student privacy
  - Parent choice
  - Technology vendor access to data.

Resource:

- MN Data Privacy Bill

What districts need to know

- This law puts the majority of requirements on technology vendors to ensure privacy and security of student data
- Districts have a responsibility to provide notice of what digital tools are used in their system that contain student data within 30 days of the start of the school year *annually*
    - Only applies to curriculum, testing, or assessment tools
- Districts have to be aware of how they access / monitor district provided devices
- Districts have a requirement to notify within 72 hours if a students digital device/ information was accessed to "*respond to an imminent threat to life or safety*"

What does this mean for current practice?

- This law allow for the continued use of tools to meet state and federal law, including..
  - MN's Safe and Supportive Schools Act
  - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
  - Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
- Students do not have to be allowed to opt out of technical system(s).
- Screen sharing tools can continue to be used for instruction and technical support.

Review back to school communication and ensure there is a plan to include a notice around technology systems

- Many districts have some form of back to school communication
- This law requires notice of platforms being used within 30 days of the start of the school year
- How could you engage existing process and include this new notice

Resources:

- Beginning of the year notification template & 72 hour notification

Reviewing our process for identifying and inventorying technology solutions used for curriculum, assessment, and testing

- Districts need to know what technology is used in your organization and document those tools for public viewing.
- There are tools on the market that gather this tools used in the district but this doesn't tell us how the tools are being used or provide us student data practices.
- MN tech leaders are crowdsourcing a resource that lists software applications Terms of Service and Privacy Policies.

Resources:

- Software Inventory Tool (Sheet)

Develop communication internally around process of utilizing technology solutions

- Make employees aware of these new requirements around what tools can be used and how tools can be used
  - Notification requirements
  - Do's and Don'ts around monitoring tools
- Ensure employees know any processes that have been established for managing software use
  - Software approval/ adoption Processes

Resources:

- **Example:** Osseo Area Schools Digital Resource Standards

Review technology vendor contracts.

- Technology vendors are responsible for compiling with Minnesota Law.
- Best practice is to review vendor contract to ensure their privacy practices are in place.
- Many states have more robust requirements than this current bill requires in terms of the security of the data. Vendors typically write their policies to work in the most stringent privacy policy and populous states. At this time California has the most restrictive student data privacy requirements

Resources:

- General Data Privacy Agreement template for use

Crowdsource Resources

1. Software Inventory Tool (Sheet)
2. MASA SlideDeck (Slides)
3. Outline of the Data Privacy Bill - MN Data Privacy Law: Explained (2022) (Doc)
4. General Data Privacy Agreement template for use (Doc)
5. Beginning of the year notification template & 72 hour notification (Doc)
6. Osseo Area Schools Digital Resource Standards(Doc)