Special Educator Perspectives on Implementation of RTI/MTSS in Maine

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Overview

- Study purpose and method
- Findings
  - Implementation integrity
  - Resource needs
  - Challenges
  - Positive effects
- What’s next?
Study Purpose

• Maine requires tiered support services
• Task Force on Special Education Cost Drivers in place
• How well are schools implementing RTI programs?
Method

• Survey items drafted and reviewed by content experts

• MDOE provided emails for:
  • Special educators
  • Special education directors
  • School psychologists
  • Behavior specialists
  • Literacy/math specialists
  • Coaches

• 571 responses (22%)
Findings Overview

- MTSS/RTI is not all one thing
- Academics and behavior are related but separate
- Differences in who “owns” RTI/MTSS
- Staffing
  - Expertise
  - Availability
  - Teaming
- Universal screening
- Progress monitoring
Academic Supports
Academic Staffing

• 1 out of 7
  • RTI programs for academics are the responsibility of special education staff.

• 58%
  • Schools have adequate expertise to administer RTI for academics.

• 67%
  • Using a team approach for intervention decisions

• 41%
  • Monitoring the integrity of RTI services
Academic Screening

• 83%
  • Using a universal screening assessment to identify students who need academic support.
    • Elementary schools: 92%
    • Middle schools 85%
    • High schools 59%

• Demographics
  • Reported universal screening practices did not vary significantly by poverty rate or school size.
Academic Progress Monitoring

- 62%
  - Systems for tracking student progress in academic interventions are adequate.
Comments and Questions about Academic RTI/MTSS
Behavior Supports
Behavior Staffing

• 1 out of 3
  • RTI programs for behavior are the responsibility of special education staff
  • Compare with 1:7 for academics
• 36%
  • Believed their schools have adequate expertise to administer RTI for behavior
Behavior Screening

- 18%
  - Do not have an process for identifying students in need of behavior support
  - Almost all indicated they are not aware of an RTI program for behavior in their school

- 10%
  - Conducting some type of universal screening
    - Student survey
    - Teacher observations and reports

- 49%
  - Use teacher nomination
    - Nomination methods are susceptible to subjectivity and bias
Behavior Progress Monitoring

• 36% Believed their systems for tracking student progress in behavior interventions was adequate
Comments and Questions about Behavior RTI/MTSS
Resources
Resources

• 37%
  • Have adequate time to provide RTI programs for their students

• 31%
  • Have enough staff.

• Worth noting:
  • Administrators largely support RTI efforts
Challenges

- Lack of classroom teacher buy-in and participation
- Inadequate time
- Inadequate resources
- Increasing frequency and severity of student behavioral support needs
- Inadequate options for behavior interventions
- Unclear or inconsistent expectations
- Lack of suitable data collection or tracking systems
- Inconsistencies in resources and practices across grade levels
- Lack of parent support
 Specific Resource Needs

• Training for teachers to provide specific interventions
• Intervention materials
• Funds designated for RTI programming
• Professional development about RTI for staff
• Clear guidelines for implementing interventions
• Space
Positive Impacts

• Improved student outcomes
  • academics, behaviors, relationships with teachers and peers

• Reduced number and more accuracy in referrals to special education

• Improved instructional practices

• Improved collaboration between and among classroom teachers and specialists

• Students receive help sooner

• Improved communication and consistency of practices
Comments and Questions about Challenges, Resources, and Positive Effects
Recommendations

• Increase resources for schools to implement tiered supports

• Examine and implement funding strategies for MTSS resources

• Additional research to examine promising practices in Maine
Next Steps

• Legislature has commissioned MEPRI to investigate promising practices
  • Let us know if you are interested

• Will share findings when complete
Additional Resources

- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
  - https://casel.org/
- Intervention Central
  - https://www.interventioncentral.org/
- National Center on Intensive Intervention
  - https://intensiveintervention.org/
- Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports
  - https://www.pbis.org/
- RTI Action Network
  - http://www.rtinetwork.org/
- What Works Clearinghouse