

MTSS in Secondary Schools: Examining Changes in Implementation Practices Over Time

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Introduction

- Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) have been associated with positive academic and behavioral outcomes in students (Freeman et al., 2016). However, effective MTSS implementation may take several years to achieve (Moir, 2018).
- Most Nebraska school districts adopting MTSS have started in elementary schools, with few implementing MTSS in middle or high schools. Consequently, it is essential to identify effective MTSS implementation processes in Nebraska secondary schools.
- The purpose of this study was to examine the changes in MTSS implementation practices of five secondary schools approximately two years after MTSS training and more specifically, compare changes in implementation practices between previously PBIS-trained and non-trained schools.

Methods

Participants

- School leadership teams (SLTs) from five Nebraska secondary schools (1 high school, 3 middle schools, 1 secondary school (grades 6-12)) participated. Three secondary schools were previously trained in PBIS and had been implementing PBIS for 2+ years.

Measures

- The Nebraska MTSS (NeMTSS) Self-Assessment (2018)** was used to measure implementation of practices aligned with core MTSS principles. The NeMTSS Self-Assessment is comprised of 26 Likert-type items (0 = No implementation; 3 = Full implementation) and yields six subscales reflective of NeMTSS Essential Elements: Shared Leadership, Communication, Collaboration & Partnership, Evidence-Based Practices, Building Capacity & Infrastructure, Layered Continuum of Supports, and Data-Based Problem Solving & Decision Making.
- PBIS Implementation Status** was determined by Nebraska Department of Education's (NDE) PBIS Network Schools List and NDE PBIS Coordinator.

Procedures

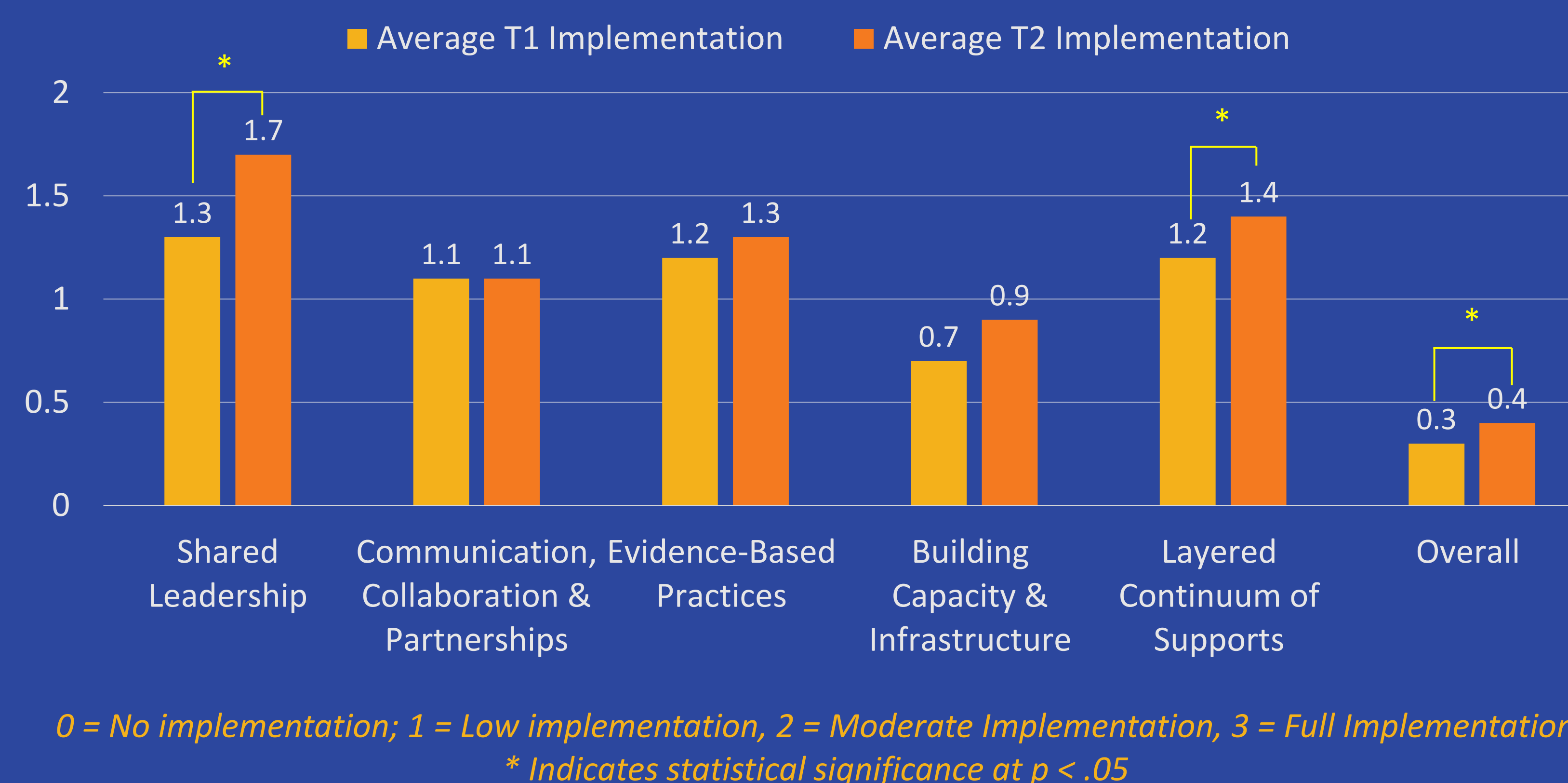
- Prior to MTSS training delivered by one Educational Service Unit (ESU) in 2020, SLTs completed the Self-Assessment. Two years later, SLTs completed the survey a second time.
- Paired sample *t*-tests were used to test for significant differences in implementation scores between time 1 and 2. Independent sample *t*-tests were used to identify significant differences in implementation scores between PBIS and non-PBIS schools at times 1 and 2.

This study investigated:

(1) Changes in MTSS implementation practices of five Nebraska secondary schools approximately two years after MTSS training and (2) differences in implementation practices between PBIS-trained and non-trained secondary schools.

Results Indicated:

(1) Overall, schools showed a statistically significant increase in average implementation of MTSS practices after two years of implementation.



(2) PBIS-trained schools consistently rated their implementation of MTSS practices higher than non-PBIS-trained schools prior to MTSS training and two years later.

	Shared Leadership	Communication, Collaboration & Partnerships	Evidence-Based Practices	Building Capacity & Infrastructure	Layered Continuum of Supports	Data Based Problem Solving & Decision Making	Overall
PBIS Schools T1	1.33	1.11	1.33	0.75	1.44	1.08	0.39
Non PBIS Schools T1	1.13	1	1	0.63	0.83	0.25	0.27
PBIS Schools T2	1.91	1.11	1.53	1	1.67	1.08	0.46
Non PBIS Schools T2	1.37	1	1.05	0.75	1.08	0.82	0.34

* Indicates statistical significance at $p < .05$

Nebraska MTSS Self-Assessment

NeMTSS Self-Assessment Items Showing Most Improvement

Self-Assessment Item	T1 Average (St.Dev.)	T2 Average (St. Dev.)
A plan for MTSS implementation is developed and aligned with the school improvement plan.	0.8 (.45)	1.6 (.55)
Support teams use a systematic problem-solving process to plan interventions for students.	0.6 (.55)	1.2 (.45)
There is a representative MTSS leadership team.	2.0 (0)	2.5 (.5)

NeMTSS Self-Assessment Items Showing Decreases in Implementation

Self-Assessment Item	T1 Average (St.Dev.)	T2 Average (St. Dev.)
Core behavior and social-emotional practices exist that clearly identify school-wide expectations, social-emotional skills instruction, classroom management practices, and school-wide behavior and social-emotional data.	2.0 (.70)	1.8 (.45)
Integrated data-based problem solving for student academic, behavior and social-emotional outcomes occurs across content areas, grade levels, and continuum.	1.2 (.83)	1.0 (0)

Scan the QR code to visit the NeMTSS website:



Discussion

- Overall, secondary schools in this study showed improvement in implementation of core MTSS practices after two years. However, several areas of implementation remained low.
- Having previous training and experience with PBIS implementation can facilitate more comprehensive MTSS implementation.
- Educators and administrators can support secondary school MTSS implementation by participating on school leadership teams to monitor implementation efforts and identify areas of strength and need. Educational agencies can support implementation by evaluating and monitoring MTSS implementation over time to identify areas needing additional support or technical assistance.