Michigan's Integrated Behavior & Learning Support Initiative

Report on Cohort 1-7 School Support Model

April 2014

From 2004 to 2013, 512 elementary and middle schools completed the three-year Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) training series with MiBLSi. The schools applied and were then selected to participate as project partners. In addition to MTSS training, schools were asked to collect data on student behavioral and reading outcomes as well as program implementation fidelity. This report provides summative information about MiBLSi's School Support Model and is intended as a resource document of MiBLSi's early work with schools for current project partners and stakeholders. It will also show how results of the School Support Model informed our current partnerships with Intermediate School Districts and Local Education Agencies.

Impact on Student Outcomes

MiBLSi supports the implementation of a Multi-Tier System of Supports for reading and behavior. The purpose of MTSS is to improve student achievement and reduce problem behavior by accurately identifying students' needs, preventing academic and behavioral problems, and providing research-based instruction within a positive school climate.

> Student reading scores increased and behavioral issues generally decreased over the course of MiBLSi participation.
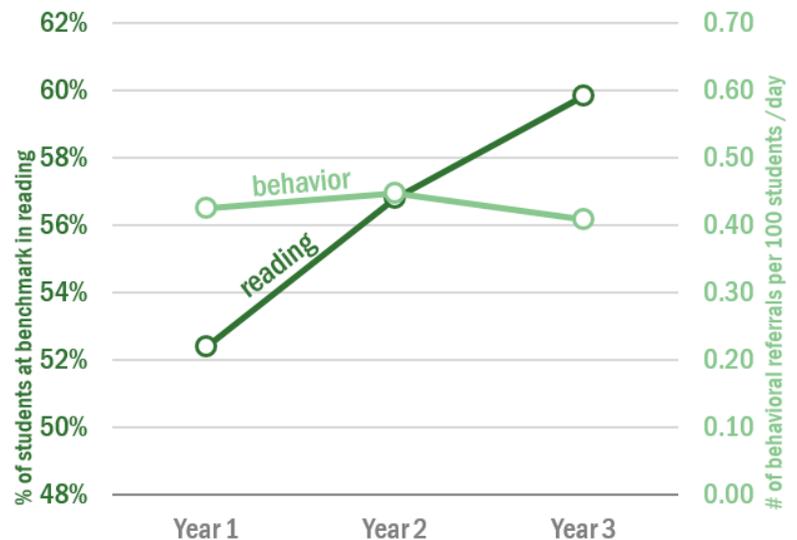
We saw significant improvements in our DIBELS data as a result of this adoption. For example, 1 building went from around 50% proficient in kindergarten to 75% proficient in just 1 benchmark period. Their winter data had already surpassed the end of year data from the previous year.   -MiBLSi Participant

Combined student outcomes from schools that participated with MiBLSi show consistent improvements in reading scores and an overall downward trend in problem behaviors across 3 years. Individual school performance varied each year, with some achieving student outcomes showing 80% or more students on track in reading and rates of discipline referrals well below the national median. Academic gains were more consistent than reductions in discipline referrals. This may, in part, be due to the variability in the collection of discipline referrals. Schools frequently observed an increase in discipline referrals across time because they improved their data collection process and got better at using the data for instructional planning. To prevent spikes in discipline referrals between Year 1 and 2, MiBLSi has worked to ensure that schools are supported by a certified SWIS facilitator who helps them to ensure readiness for the use of SWIS and ongoing support with data collection, interpretation, and planning.
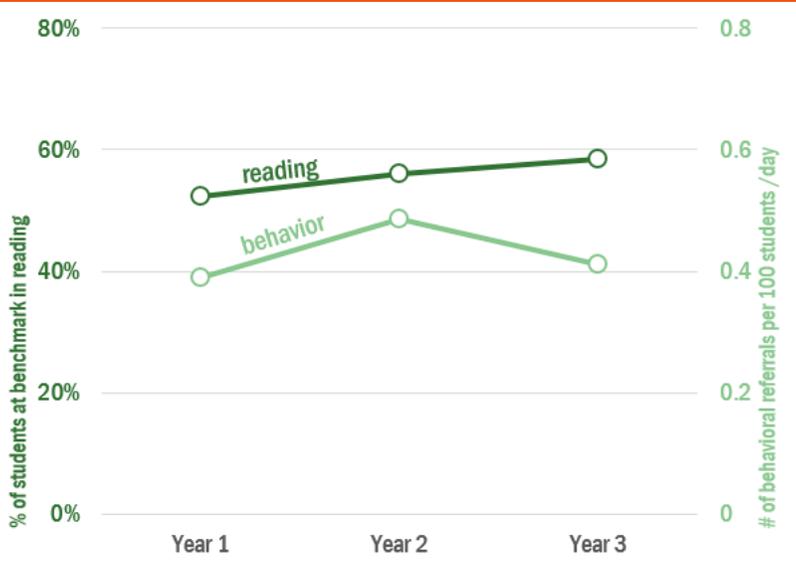
Implementation Fidelity Matters

MiBLSi's goal in working with schools to implement an integrated MTSS is to improve student outcomes. Yet, we know that when implementing any practice or reform initiative in schools, impact on student outcomes is tempered by the fidelity or quality of implementation.

Schools with High Fidelity

Schools that implemented MTSS with high fidelity saw reading scores increase and behavior issues generally decline.
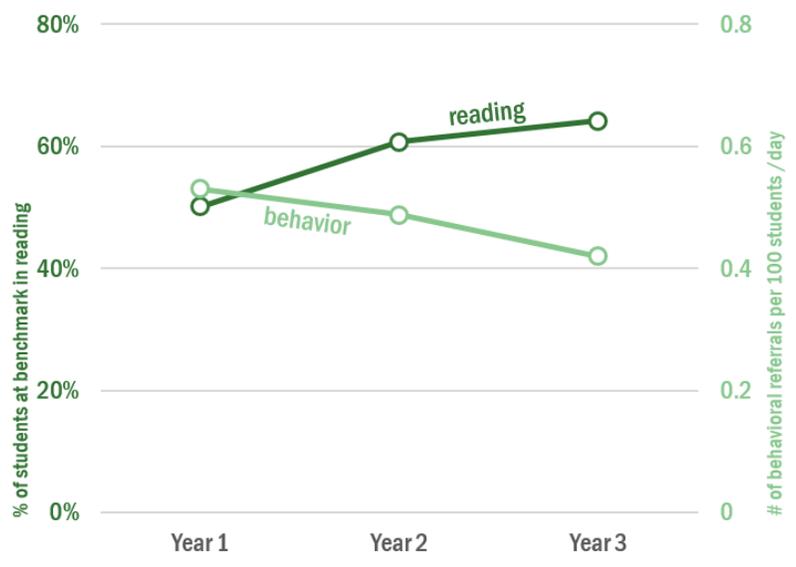

Schools with Low Fidelity

Schools that did not implement MTSS with fidelity saw less dramatic increases in reading scores and inconsistent reductions in discipline referrals.

This is why MiBLSi has always worked with participating schools to collect and use implementation fidelity data for planning and decision-making. Fidelity data tell us about staff behavior, specifically, whether an intended practice was implemented as intended. Training for Cohorts 6 and 7 focused more heavily on the importance of fidelity data. Schools made substantial gains with implementation fidelity for school-wide behavior and reading practices, most notably between Years 1 and 2. The graphs on the previous page show that when schools implemented with fidelity, more robust and consistent improvements in student outcomes were attained. Still, many schools reported challenges with understanding how to effectively use the fidelity data. For example, one challenge with the Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs is that it does not always correlate strongly with student reading outcomes. This may be due to general limitations of using fidelity measures that are based on self-assessment and/or that participating schools with high SES student populations are also more likely to have high student achievement. Another possible explanation for limited differences in reading outcomes between schools that implemented with fidelity and those that did not is that conducting universal screening for reading alone led to changes in instructional practices without making other systemic changes to reading instruction.

> ### Schools made great progress with implementation fidelity, with the largest gains occurring between Year 1 and 2.
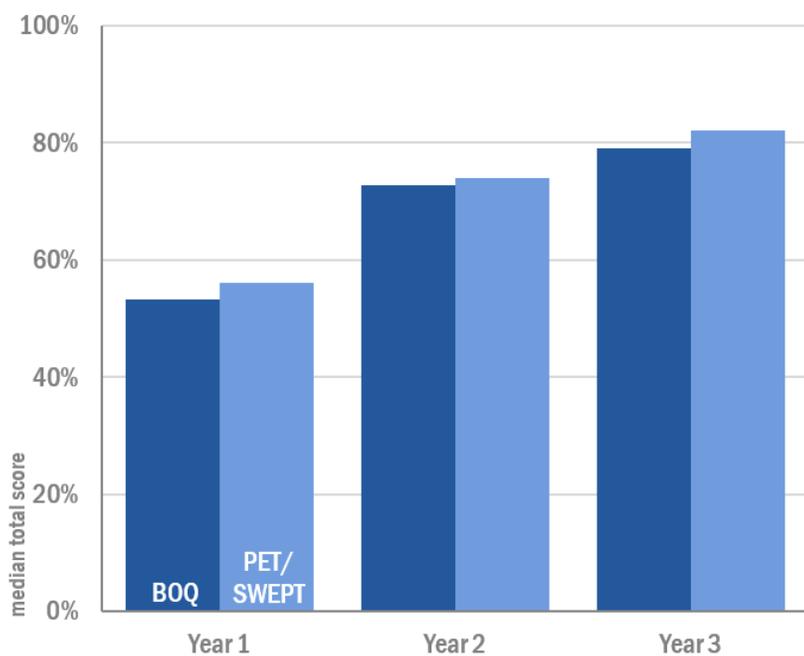
About the Measures

Participating schools were required to submit data during their three years of formal participation with MiBLSi. Data are median scores based on all schools that submitted data for each measure during a given year and do not necessarily represent the same group of schools from year to year.

Student Outcomes

Schools collected reading curriculum-based measures (CBM) and discipline referral data to examine student outcomes in reading and behavior. Reading CBM data were either Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (Good & Kaminski, 2002) or AIMSweb (Shinn & Germann, 2006). Discipline referral data were entered and analyzed using the School-wide Information System (SWIS; May et al., 2002).

Implementation Fidelity

Schools completed the Benchmarks of Quality (Kincaid, Childs & George, 2005), an annual self-assessment of the implementation of School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. A total score of 70% on the BOQ is considered a minimum threshold for implementation fidelity. To examine the fidelity of a School-wide Reading Model, leadership teams annually self-assessed using the Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective School-wide Reading Programs-R (Kame'enui & Simmons, 2002) at the elementary level, or the Secondary School-wide Evaluation and Planning Tool (MiBLSi, 2007) at the middle school level. A total score of 80% on the PET-R or SWEPT is considered a minimum threshold for implementation fidelity.

Implementing with Fidelity is Hard Work

While implementing with fidelity may increase the likelihood that students will benefit from an integrated Multi-Tier System of Supports, attaining fidelity requires substantial focus and hard work on the part of school staff. Signing up with MiBLSi and attending trainings alone did not ensure that schools would be able to implement with fidelity. Implementing with fidelity at one point also did not ensure that schools would be able to sustain high levels of implementation.

Reading Fidelity

Even though more schools met fidelity requirements in the first several years, overall, schools stopped submitting data.
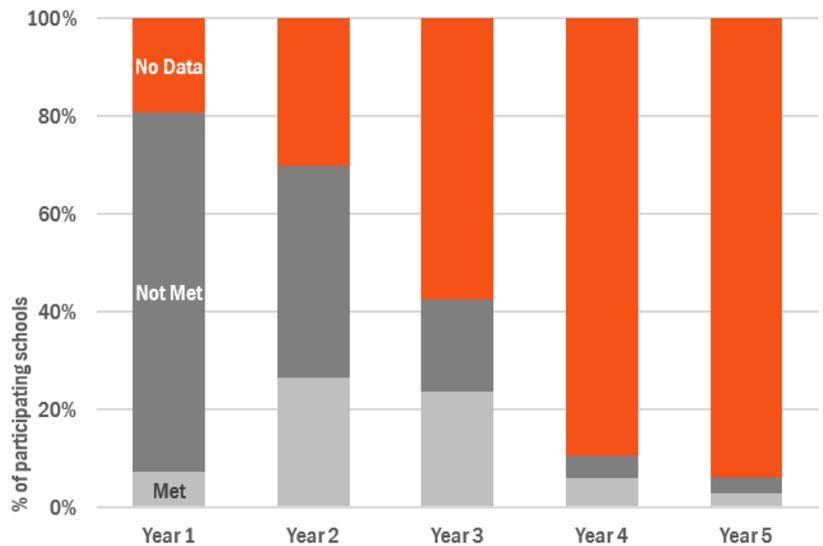
Schools were most likely to submit PET-R/SWEPT data during Year 1, which may have been because school leadership teams completed the measure during a training session. In subsequent years, teams were asked to complete the PET-R/SWEPT prior to attending Data Review Trainings and submit their scores during or after the training. The most gains in schools reaching the minimum threshold for implementation fidelity (80% total score) occurred between Years 1 and 2. By year three, data submission rates dropped substantially. It is difficult to know exactly whether schools continued to improve fidelity but lacked the scores to show it, or whether the absence of PET-R/SWEPT data reflected a decline in fidelity in and of itself.

Behavior Fidelity

Those schools meeting behavior fidelity requirements increased through Year 3, but again we experienced significant issues with obtaining data from schools on this measure each year.
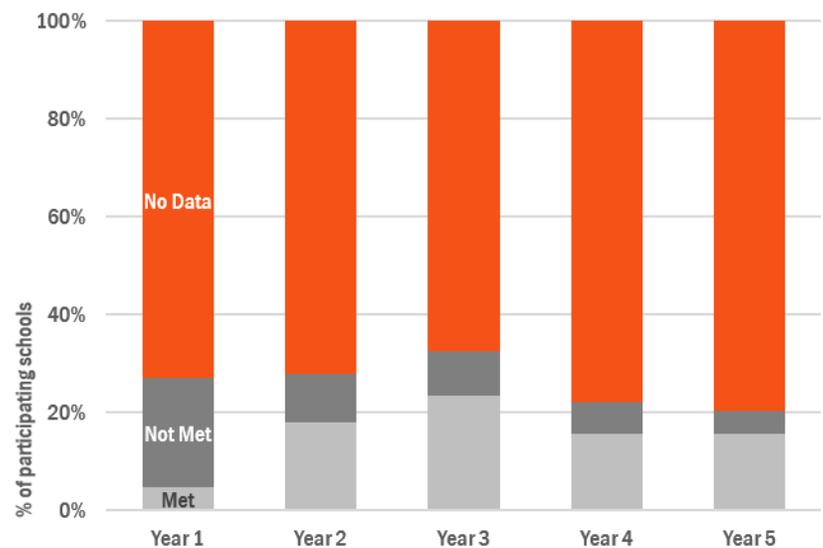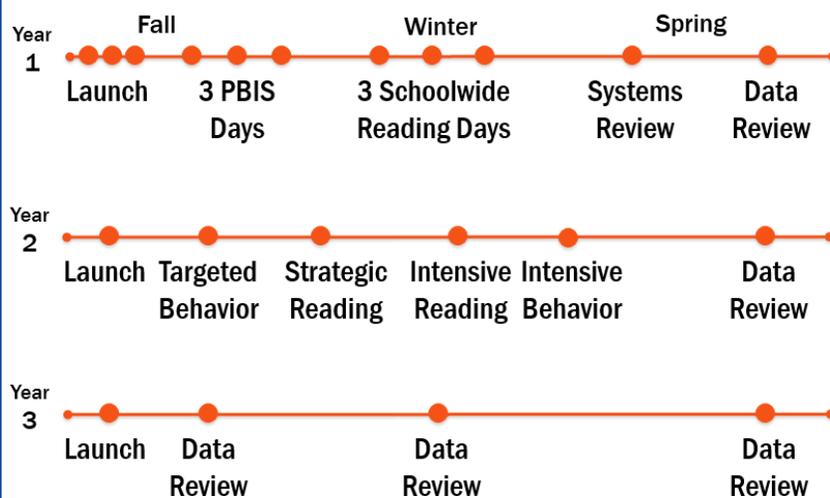
Lower overall rates of data submission for the Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ) are reflective of a different behavior fidelity measure that was used prior to 2010—the PBIS Team Implementation Checklist (TIC). The BOQ was used for this report because it is a more comprehensive fidelity measure, with more precise scoring standards than the TIC. It also allowed us to include behavior fidelity data from the most recent cohorts of schools that participated with MiBLSi. Between Years 1 and 3, increasing numbers of schools were able to reach the minimum threshold for implementation fidelity (70% total score). After Year 3, a trend similar to PET-R/SWEPT data was seen as fewer schools sustained use of the BOQ to measure fidelity. MiBLSi hoped that schools would be able to independently continue implementation after three years of support. However, data and follow up conversations reveal that initial implementation is fragile and sustained support must be provided to expect sustained implementation.

Supports

School Cohort Training Series Depicted for Cohort 7

We provided 21 days of training to school leadership teams across three years of support.

Year 1	Fall			Winter		Spring	
	Launch	3 PBIS Days		3 Schoolwide Reading Days		Systems Review	Data Review

Year 2							
	Launch	Targeted Behavior	Strategic Reading	Intensive Reading	Intensive Behavior		Data Review

Year 3				
	Launch	Data Review	Data Review	Data Review

The professional development series included training and coaching supports on implementing an integrated model of MTSS. The primary audience for MiBLSi professional development was self-selected school leadership teams, consisting of six to ten school staff, including the principal, teachers, and at least one systems coach, whose role was to support the school leadership team with implementation efforts. Coaches held a variety of job titles within schools, but they were most often school psychologists, school social workers, and reading specialists.

Trainings were organized regionally across the state to allow schools to participate as a cohort of schools from the same geographic region and start year. At the time, MiBLSi staff served as the primary trainers for school leadership teams. The project also worked to develop a cadre of over 100 local trainers across the state. These trainers included consultants, principals, teachers, and retired educators. Developing a cadre of local trainers was one way that MiBLSi began increasing capacity across the state to sustain implementation of MTSS.

Year 1 of professional development focused on implementation of Tier 1, universal supports for both reading and behavior. Eleven full days of training were spread across the school year. Teams were introduced to the data, systems, and practices that comprise school-wide PBIS and a school-wide reading model. Teams were successively introduced to new content throughout the year and asked to implement specific components in between each training session. Coaching meetings were held approximately three times per year to help coaches prepare for next

steps and get support to address implementation barriers. Year 1 culminated with data review trainings that supported teams to systematically apply a problem solving process using the implementation fidelity and student outcome data they had been collecting throughout the year. Data review trainings were designed to align with Michigan's Continuous School Improvement Process and help teams develop fluency with analyzing data to identify successes and determine next steps that would be most likely to yield improved implementation and student outcomes.

In the second year of professional development, schools continued implementing and enhancing Tier 1 implementation while also layering on data, systems, and practices for reading and behavior at Tiers 2 and 3. This support included 8 days of training, as well as coaching meetings and focused trainings (i.e., REWARDS, CHAMPS, etc.). Year three provided additional support for schools to strengthen their systems at Tiers 1, 2, and 3. The number of formal training days was faded to just three data review sessions. More information about the 3-year training series for Cohorts 1-7 can be found on the MiBLSi website: miblsi.cenmi.org/MiBLSiModel/ProfessionalDevelopment/BuildingTrainingScopeandSequence

Context

521 schools from across the state partnered with MiBLSi between 2004 and 2013.
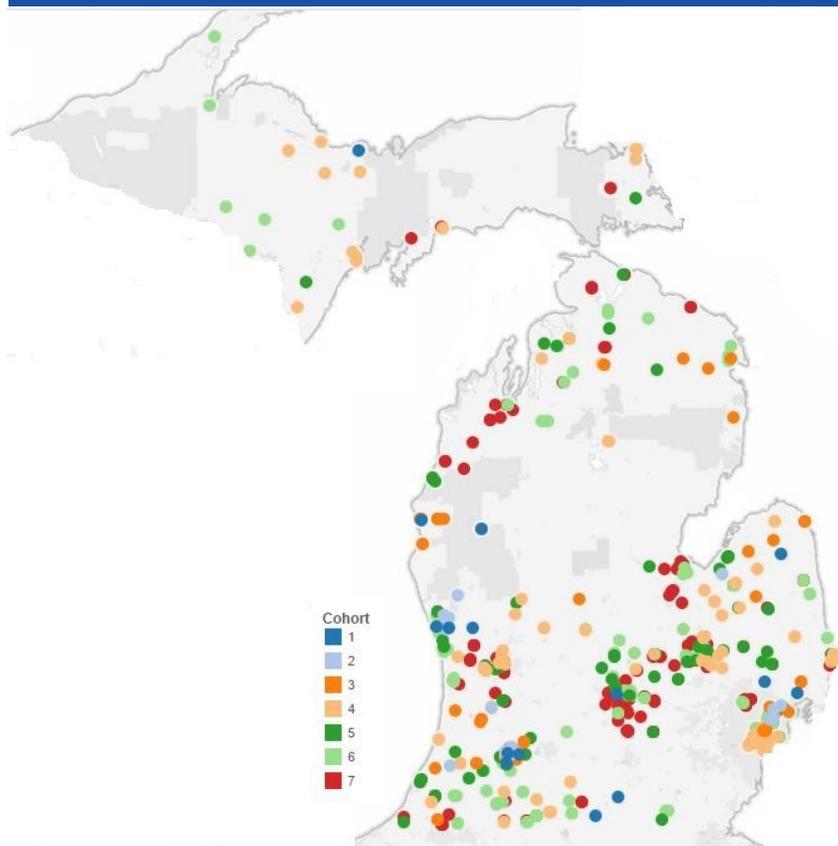
About MiBLSi

MiBLSi has been providing professional development and technical assistance for the implementation of a Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) since 2000.

Mission

Scale-up a statewide structure to create local capacity to implement an integrated behavior and reading MTSS with fidelity, that endures over time and utilizes data-based decision making at all levels of implementation so that students become better readers with the social skills necessary for success.

Project Goals

1. Participating intermediate school district and local school district implementation teams will develop their capacity to support implementation of MTSS.

2. Schools that have access to high quality district implementation supports will implement an integrated Multi-Tier System of Supports with fidelity or demonstrate improved implementation fidelity over time.

3. Schools that implement an integrated Multi-Tier System of Supports with fidelity or demonstrate improved implementation fidelity over time will demonstrate annual reductions in the incidences of student problem behavior (discipline referrals) and increases in academic achievement (school-wide DIBELS/AIMSweb scores).
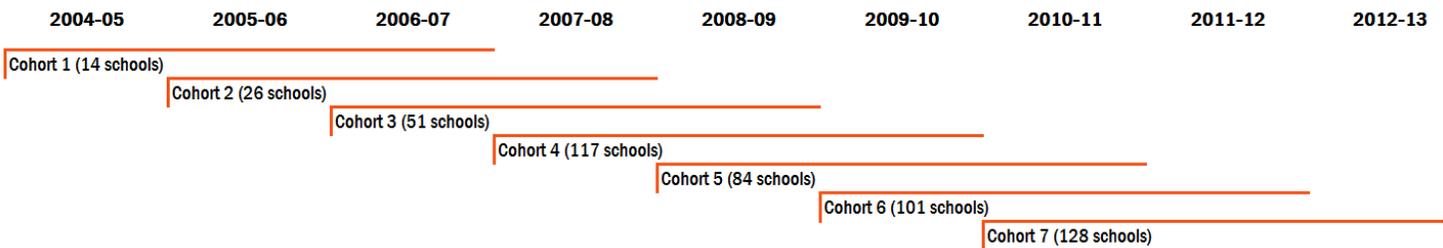
Project Director

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The 521 elementary (n = 535) and middle schools (n = 86) that partnered with MiBLSi submitted a formal application process, were selected as project partners, and completed a 3-year professional development series. Within this model, schools and districts across Michigan embedded MTSS data, systems, and practices within their school improvement plans. Schools modified discipline policies to align with PBIS and best practice aimed at keeping students in the classroom and engaged in effective instruction, and therefore learning. Schools and districts also began taking best practices for intervention and data collection and generalizing their systems-level work to writing and math.

For a listing of additional research & publications related to MiBLSi, please visit the project website at

miblsi.cenmi.org/About/ MiBLSiRelatedPublications

Seven cohorts of schools completed the three year training series with MiBLSi.

MiBLSi Cohort 1-7 Schools

2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13

Cohort 1 (14 schools)
Cohort 2 (26 schools)
Cohort 3 (51 schools)
Cohort 4 (117 schools)
Cohort 5 (84 schools)
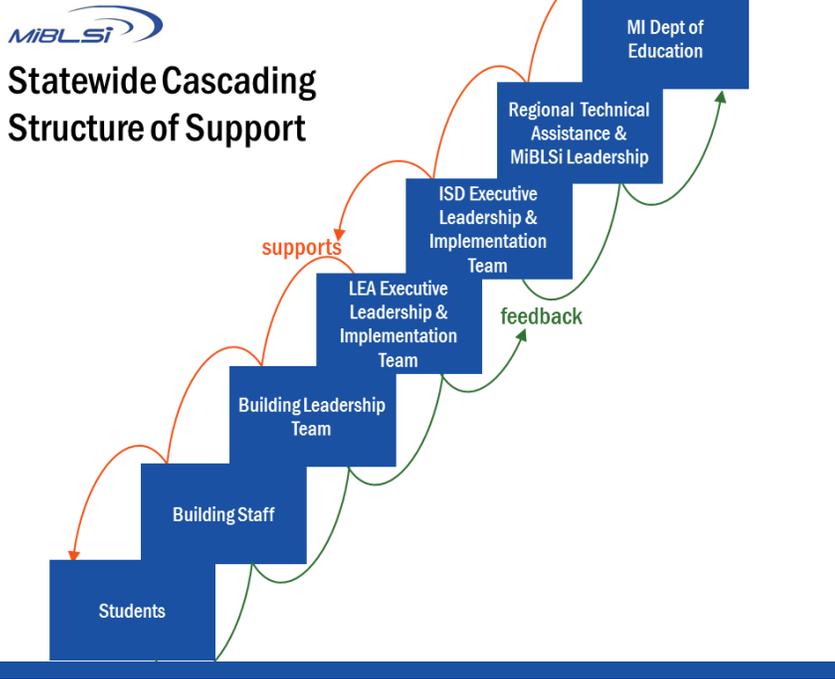Cohort 6 (101 schools)
Cohort 7 (128 schools)

Next Steps

A commitment to continuous improvement of MTSS implementation efforts has been essential as MiBLSi has moved from supporting the first 50 schools, to the next 500 schools, to the current scale-up demand across the state as MTSS becomes standard practice of how educational systems function in Michigan. With scale-up in mind, in 2009, MiBLSi, along with the Michigan Department of Education, entered into a partnership with the OSEP Center on State Implementation and Scaling Up of Evidence-Based Practices (SISEP) to take formal steps to apply implementation science to MTSS. This partnership, coupled with the demand to have a larger and more sustainable impact across the state, has greatly influenced the way MiBLSi is structured and how outcomes of MiBLSi are measured. Rather than solely focusing on increasing the number of educators across the state "doing MiBLSi," the focus is on how to develop an MTSS framework within educational systems that will endure through time with a focus on fidelity across stages of implementation.

While many schools in Cohorts 1-7 had great MTSS implementation success and saw meaningful improvements for students, too many schools also reported that they were not able to sustain their efforts. Barriers to sustained implementation were often out of the control of individual schools, but could be addressed at a district or ISD level. For example, when there was turnover in school leadership, district hiring committees were not always knowledgeable of

MTSS and how to select new leadership with the background knowledge and strong skill set to support ongoing implementation efforts. Other times, there were too many other initiatives and new learning competed for resources necessary to focus on strong implementation of MTSS.

> ### Our work with school districts ensures layers of support from the classroom to the capital.

MiBLSi
Statewide Cascading Structure of Support

- MI Dept of Education
- Regional Technical Assistance & MiBLSi Leadership
- ISD Executive Leadership & Implementation Team
- LEA Executive Leadership & Implementation Team
- Building Leadership Team
- Building Staff
- Students

supports

feedback

Common expectations were developed, taught & rewarded. Although the data show an increase in ODRs (due to lack of baseline data) the overall culture of the school changed and was much more positive.

-MiBLSi Participant

helping students become better readers with social skills necessary for success

Partnerships

Funding Agencies

> **MiBLSi will work to develop local capacity to ensure the sustainability and durability of MTSS implementation.**

2003	Direct Professional Development & Technical Assistance to schools
2005	Added capacity for project implementation
2007	Expanded project capacity for regional implementation
2011	Added direct PD & TA to ISDs and LEAs to develop local capacity
2017	Continue PD & TA across the cascade to develop local capacity
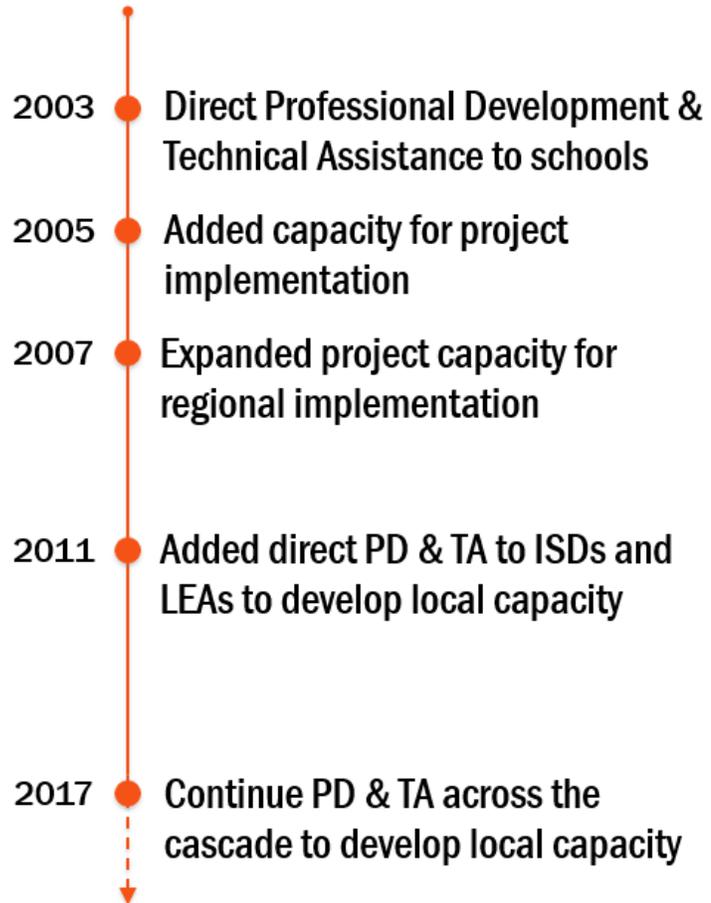
In 2011, MiBLSi shifted to a District Support Model with the intention of flowing support more systematically across the cascading model of educational support in Michigan and to increase the capacity of local districts and ISDs to support MTSS implementation. Our aim in shifting the focus of project supports to the ISD and district level is to learn from our experience with Cohort 1-7 so that even more students are able to benefit both academically and behaviorally from attending schools that are successfully implementing MTSS. Under the District Support Model, MiBLSi initially works with ISD and district implementation teams to set up the organizational structures necessary to support MTSS. Teams are guided through the stages of implementation based on assessments and criteria that indicate readiness for implementation. Rather than sending districts and schools through a pre-determined training sequence, MiBLSi and ISDs/Districts work to sequence research-based training content in a way that is best matched to local need, fit, and capacity.

Our References

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