
Qualitative Analysis of the PIER Tool Reports

2023-24



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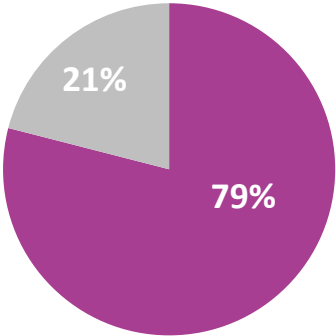
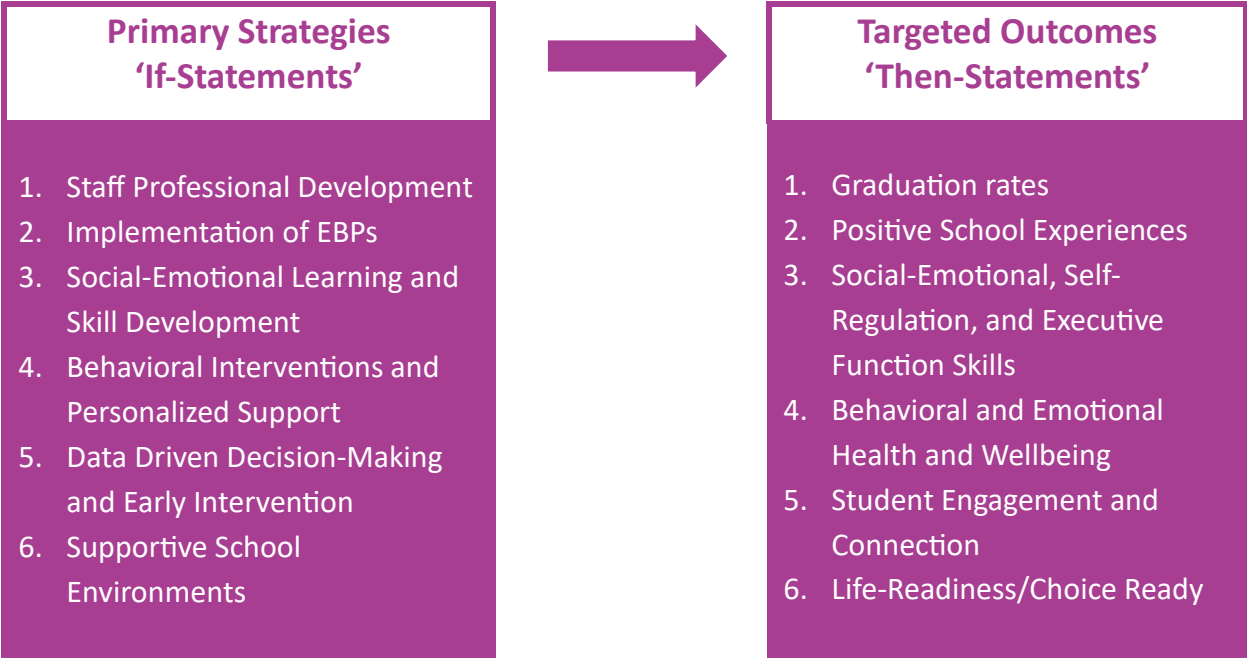
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Executive Summary

This report analyzes the 2023-24 Planning, Implementing, Evaluating Report (PIER) Tool submissions from 29 of 31 special education units (SEUs), focusing on efforts to increase six-year graduation rates for students with an Emotional Disturbance (ED) and other disabilities.

A. Theory of Action (TOA)

Units use TOAs to guide their efforts in improving graduation rates for students with ED. TOAs, structured as If-Then statements, reveal six primary strategies:

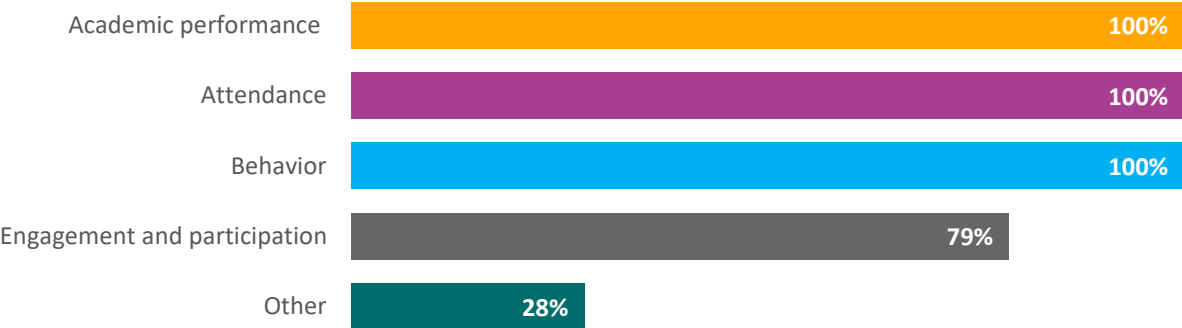


79% of units maintained their TOA from the previous year, while **21%** made strategic adjustments based on identified needs.

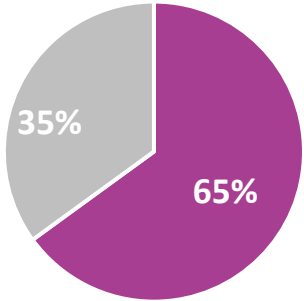
B. Early Warning Systems (EWS)

Implementation of EWS varies, with some units operating fully established systems while others remain in early stages. Units reveal widespread adoption of core indicators and most units also track student engagement and participation. Positive outcomes were noted, with 65% of units reporting positive graduation trajectories and 69% identifying at least one high school excelling in EWS practices.

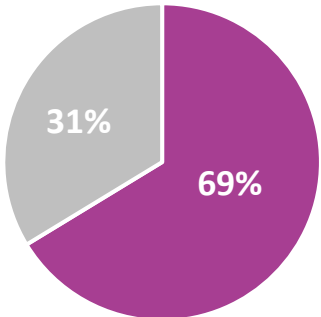
Key Indicators Monitored by EWS Across Units (N = 29)



65% of units reported that EWS data show most students were on the right path to graduation



69% of units reported at least one high school excelling in EWS



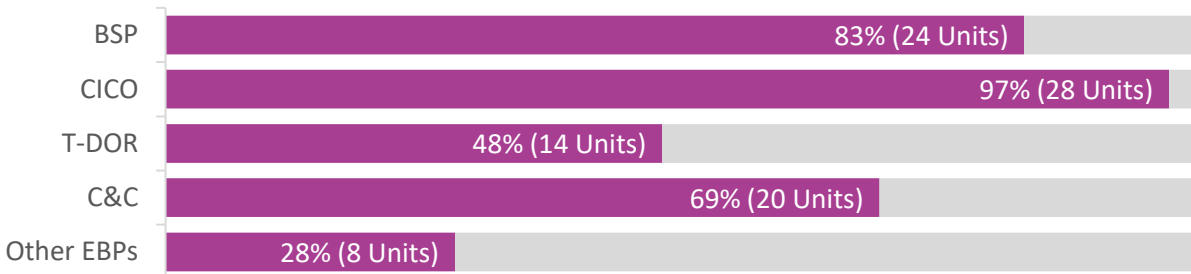
Challenges Implementing EWS

- Chronic absenteeism
- Declining behavioral and cognitive engagement among students with ED
- Inconsistent implementation across schools
- Training needs
- Early identification difficulties
- Gaps in mental health support in rural areas

C. Implementation Status for Evidence-Based Practices

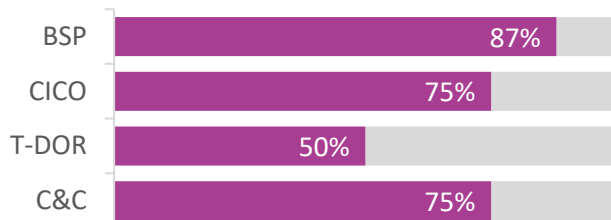
Units reported on the implementation, fidelity, and impact of four Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) supported by NDDPI: Behavior-Specific Praise (BSP), Check-In Check-Out (CICO), Teacher-Directed Opportunity to Respond (T-DOR), and Check and Connect (C&C).

Percent of Units Using a Given EBP Over the Past Year (N = 29)



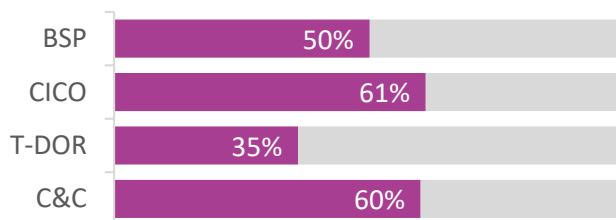
CICO and BSP have achieved widespread adoption (97% and 83% of units respectively), while C&C shows moderate adoption (69%).

Implementation Levels of EBPs Among Users*: Percent Reporting Moderate to Full Integration



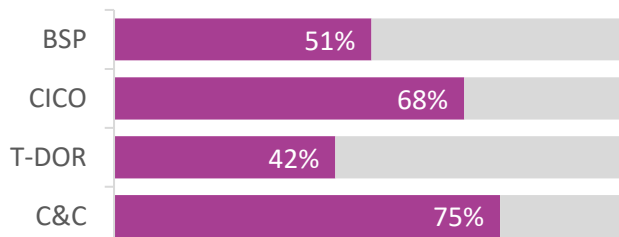
BSP, CICO, and C&C show strong levels of integration, with most reporting moderate-to-full implementation (87%, 75%, and 75% respectively).

Fidelity Levels of EBPs Among Users*: Percent Reporting Moderate to Full Adherence



Implementation fidelity varies across practices, with CICO and C&C achieving the highest adherence at 61% and 60%, respectively.

Impact of EBPs Among Users*: Percent Reporting Moderate to Significant Positive Effects



Perceived impact on students is strongest for C&C and CICO, with 75% and 68% of units, respectively, reporting moderate-to-significant positive effects.

*Rates are among implementing units: BSP (n=24), CICO (n=28), T-DOR (n=14), C&C (n=20)

D. Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Units report moderate success in engaging key stakeholders, with community wraparound supports showing the highest positive ratings (76% rating efforts as "okay" or better), followed by other stakeholder engagement (73%) and family engagement (69%). Many units identify family engagement as an area needing continued development, with none rating their efforts as "great" in this category.

Percentage of Units Rating Stakeholder Engagement as "Okay" or Better (N = 29)



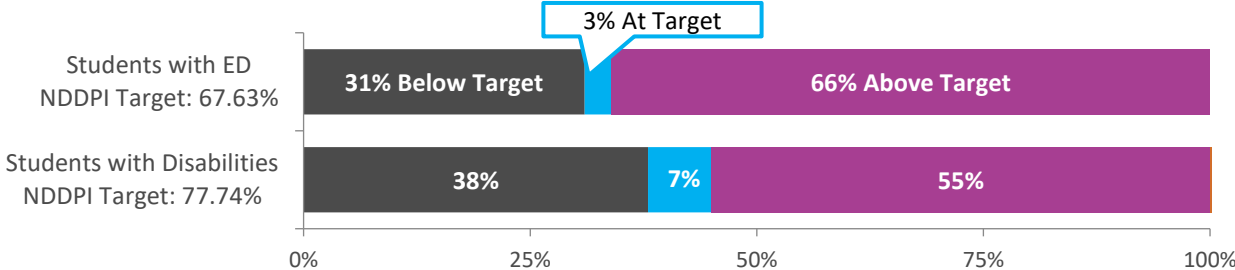
Units employ various strategies to strengthen these connections.

- **Family engagement** includes multi-channel communication, targeted events like family workshops and cultural celebrations, and individualized support planning.
- **Community wraparound** support focuses on mental health partnerships, social services integration, and basic needs assistance, with notable success in programs like transportation support and resource distribution.
- **Other stakeholder engagement** emphasizes business partnerships for work-based learning, collaboration with tribal councils and community organizations, and partnerships with mental health providers and government agencies.

E. Progress Toward the SiMR

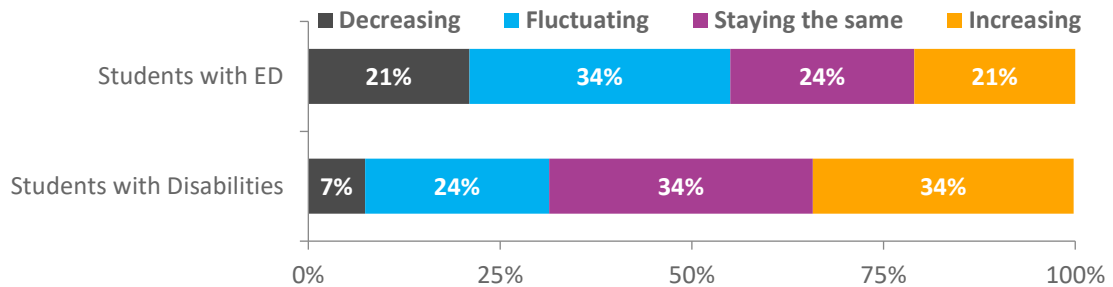
Units reported on their progress toward improving six-year graduation rates for students with ED and students with disabilities (SWD). Most units are making progress toward state graduation rate targets, though results vary. 66% of units exceed the state target (67.63%) for students with ED, while 55% exceed the state target (77.74%) for SWD. About a third of units remain below targets for both groups.

Six-Year Graduation Rate for Students with ED and SWD Compared to NDDPI Targets (N = 29)



Trend analysis shows different patterns between groups. SWD show more stable progress (68% staying the same or increasing) compared to ED students (45% staying the same or increasing). Graduation rates fluctuate more for students with ED (34%) compared to SWD (24%). However, ED data interpretation is challenging due to small cohort sizes, where individual student outcomes can significantly impact percentages.

Trends in Graduation Rates for Students with ED and SWD (N = 29)



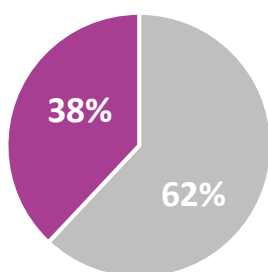
F. Scale-Up Planning for Graduation

Units employ several key strategies to sustain and improve graduation rates:

- EWS are being expanded across grade levels and integrated with frameworks like MTSS and BARR for more effective student monitoring.
- Professional development focuses on equipping both special and general education staff with skills in behavioral management, mental health support, and evidence-based interventions.
- Units are scaling up implementation of state-supported EBPs while emphasizing fidelity monitoring.
- Individual student support has been enhanced through comprehensive IEPs, regular progress monitoring, and targeted academic programs.
- Units also prioritize family and community partnerships, expanded mental health services, and strengthened transition support through career and technical education opportunities.

G. Technical Assistance Needs

38% of units indicated technical assistance needs for the upcoming school year



Technical Assistance Requests
• PD on EWS, MTSS, EBPs, SEL, family engagement, and behavior management strategies
• Support for developing fidelity tools and data platforms
• Assistance with specialized program development
• Information on funding opportunities
• Guidance on staff recruitment and retention
• Continued support for existing initiatives
• PIER tool assistance

Background Information

To align special education and general education continuous improvement strategies, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is focusing on some key initiatives to reduce dropout rates while increasing graduation rates. DPI's goal is to increase districts' capacity around using effective middle and high school tools that will improve outcomes for students with an Emotional Disturbance (ED), which will in turn improve the outcomes for all students with and without disabilities.

The North Dakota Planning, Implementing, Evaluating Report (PIER) is an annual, online reporting tool that special education units complete to detail their efforts to increase six-year graduation rates for ED students. This tool is designed to provide a framework to help organize, contemplate, and report efforts made by the special education units to support the state's ongoing, aligned continuous improvement process.

This report summarizes the 2023-24 PIER Tool reports submitted by the directors of 29 of 31 special education units in June 2024.

A. Theory of Action

North Dakota's special education units were asked to report their Theories of Action (TOA) that they use to guide their efforts in improving graduation rates for students with Emotional Disturbances (ED). These theories, formulated as If-Then statements, outline strategic approaches to address the complex needs of ED students and improve their educational outcomes.

A1. Analysis of Theory of Action Statements

Analysis of the TOAs submitted by units reveal six primary strategies for improving graduation rates for students with ED. While many units incorporate multiple, overlapping approaches, each strategy addresses distinct aspects of student support.

Key Strategies (If-Statements)

Staff Professional Development and Training.

The most common strategy across TOAs aims to equip special education teachers and general education teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to support ED students. Training focuses on several key areas including social-emotional learning, behavior management, evidence-based practices, data-based decision-making, and mental health awareness. This focus reflects the understanding that well-trained staff are essential for effectively supporting the emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of ED students.

“If staff have appropriate training in social, emotional and behavioral health then students will have a positive school experience and we will improve graduation rates for students with ED.”

Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs).

The TOAs highlight specific programs including Zones of Regulation, Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA), Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIP), and Early Warning Systems (EWS), along with the four state-supported EBPs. This strategy involves both increasing the use of EBPs in schools and ensuring these practices are implemented with fidelity to improve student outcomes.

“If we help students develop self-regulation and self-management skills, then they will have skills necessary to succeed in life.”

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Skill Development.

Across TOAs, there is a strong emphasis on teaching SEL and developing students' self-regulation, self-management, and executive function skills. Direct instruction in these areas aims to help students manage emotions, build relationships, and engage in learning. The focus on SEL reflects the understanding that emotional and social competencies form the foundation for academic engagement and successful school completion.

Behavioral Interventions and Personalized Support.

Individualized behavioral support emerged as a key strategy, centered on developing targeted interventions through FBAs and corresponding BIPs. Responses emphasized implementing these plans with fidelity and using data to inform personalized interventions. Family collaboration was highlighted as crucial for ensuring consistency between school and home environments, creating a comprehensive support system for students with ED.

“If all learners are supported through a continuum of **evidence-based practices** that promote academic, behavioral, and mental health, and by enhancing **personalized education experiences**, then graduation rates for students with disabilities will improve.”

"If the **school** builds a **safe and supportive environment** that is **welcoming** to our students and guardians with an emphasis on establishing **relationships**, then students will feel more comfortable and learning will be optimized, increasing graduation rates."

Data-Driven Decision Making and Early Intervention.

TOAs emphasized the use of data to identify and support struggling students early. This approach often involves using Early Warning Systems (EWS) to track indicators like attendance, behavior, and academic performance, allowing for timely interventions. Staff training ensures interventions are evidence-informed and responsive to individual student needs. By systematically collecting and leveraging data, schools aim to provide proactive support and address challenges before they impact graduation outcomes.

Safe and Supportive School Environments. While less common, another notable strategy focuses on creating safe and supportive school environments. Responses emphasized fostering welcoming atmospheres where students feel connected to their school through strong relationships with staff. This approach extends to building partnerships with families, recognizing that trust and consistent support between school and home settings are essential for improving student engagement and graduation rates.

Expected Outcomes (Then-Statements)

While primarily targeting improved graduation rates for students with ED, TOA strategies are expected to impact other immediate and long-term outcomes. In the immediate term, units focus on enhancing social-emotional skills, self-regulation abilities, and behavioral health; increasing student engagement; fostering student-staff relationships; and creating positive school experiences. Long-term outcomes extend beyond graduation to developing lifelong learning capabilities, ensuring students are "choice ready," and building essential life skills for ongoing success.

The TOAs vary in scope of their target populations: some focus specifically on students with ED, others encompass all students with disabilities, and many extend to the entire student population, including those in general education settings. This inclusive approach reflects units' understanding that effective strategies for supporting students with ED often enhance the educational experience for all students.

A2. Changes in Theories of Action in Past Year

Units were asked if their TOA had changed in the past year.

79% of units maintained their TOA from the previous year

The majority of special education units (79%) maintained their existing Theory of Action from the previous year, indicating confidence in their current approaches. This consistency across the state suggests that most schools believe their approaches are effective and aligned with best practices for supporting students with ED.

21% updated their approach with changes to their TOA

However, some units (21%) made strategic adjustments to their approaches. For example, one unit shifted focus from direct attendance intervention to creating more welcoming school environments after root-cause analysis revealed underlying trust barriers affecting student attendance and graduation rates.

Summary of Findings

Analysis of units' TOA reveal six key strategies to improve graduation rates for students with ED: (1) staff professional development, (2) implementation of EBPs, (3) SEL and skill development, (4) individualized behavioral interventions, (5) data-driven decision making and early intervention, and (6) supportive school environments.

While targeting improved graduation rates, TOAs emphasize both immediate outcomes (enhanced social-emotional skills, self-regulation, behavioral health, positive school experiences) and additional long-term outcomes (lifelong learning capabilities, "choice ready" graduates). The scope of target populations varies, with some TOAs focusing specifically on students with ED, while others extend to all students with disabilities or the entire student population.

Most units (79%) maintained their TOAs from the previous year, indicating stability in approaches, while those making changes (21%) demonstrate responsiveness to identified needs. By addressing academic, social-emotional, and environmental factors, ND's special education units are working towards creating more inclusive and effective educational environments for all students.

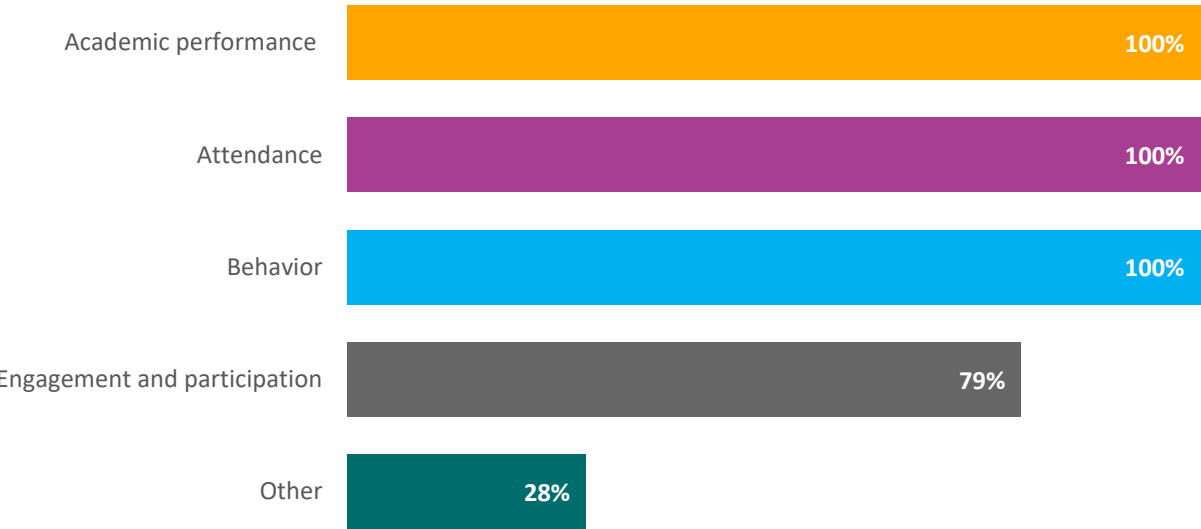
B. Early Warning Systems (EWS)

EWS are data collection and monitoring tools used to track student progress toward graduation. This section presents data from units regarding EWS implementation and outcomes.

B1. Key Indicators of EWS

Units were asked to indicate which key indicators comprise their EWS.

Figure B1: Key Indicators of EWS (N = 29)
Q: Which key indicators comprise your EWS? (select all that apply)



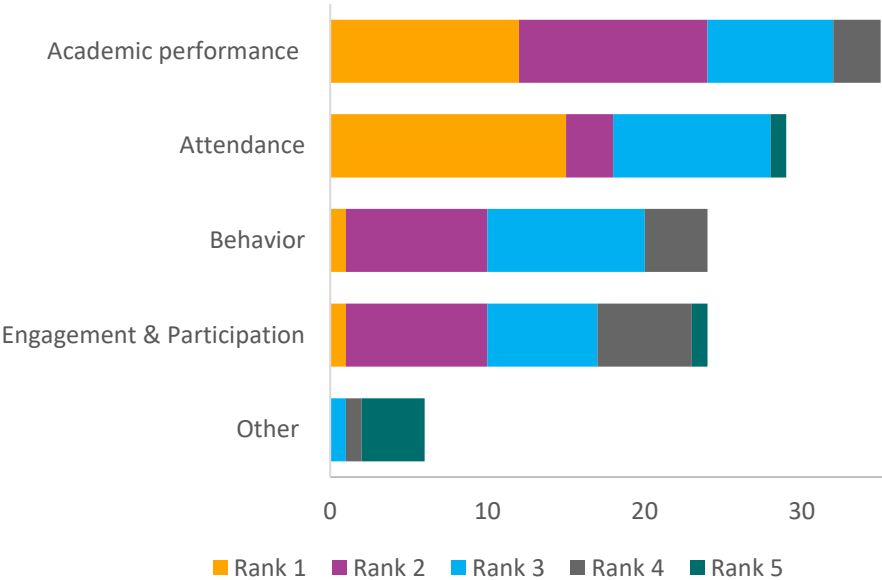
All 29 units reported their EWS monitor three key indicators: attendance, academic performance, and behavior. Most units (79%) also track student engagement and participation metrics. Some units (28%) incorporate other measures such as: special education goal progress, social worker and external agency collaboration/referrals, course selection/tiering, mobility, relationship mapping, and student survey and wellness data.

B2. Ranking of Most Important Indicators for Tracking Graduation Progress

Units were asked to rank the most important indicators to determine if students were on track to graduating.

Figure B2: EWS Indicator Ranking (N = 29)
Q: Of the indicators you use, which are the 3-5 most important indicators to determine if students are on-track to graduation and/or straying off the graduation path.

The number of units who selected a given rank for each indicator



ATTENDANCE

Ranked #1 by majority of respondents

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Consistently ranked in top 3

BEHAVIOR

Often ranked 2nd or 3rd

ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION

Similar importance to Behavior

OTHER SPECIALIZED INDICATORS

Play a minor but noteworthy role

The data show a tiered structure of indicator importance, with attendance and academic performance emerging as primary indicators. Attendance tops the list, with 15 units ranking it as the most important factor. Academic performance follows closely, and is the only indicator ranking in the top three levels of importance across responses.

Behavior and engagement/participation metrics form a secondary tier, requiring more subjective evaluation and often used in conjunction with primary indicators. Specialized indicators, such as special education goals and response to interventions, constitute a tertiary level, offering additional context for identifying at-risk students.

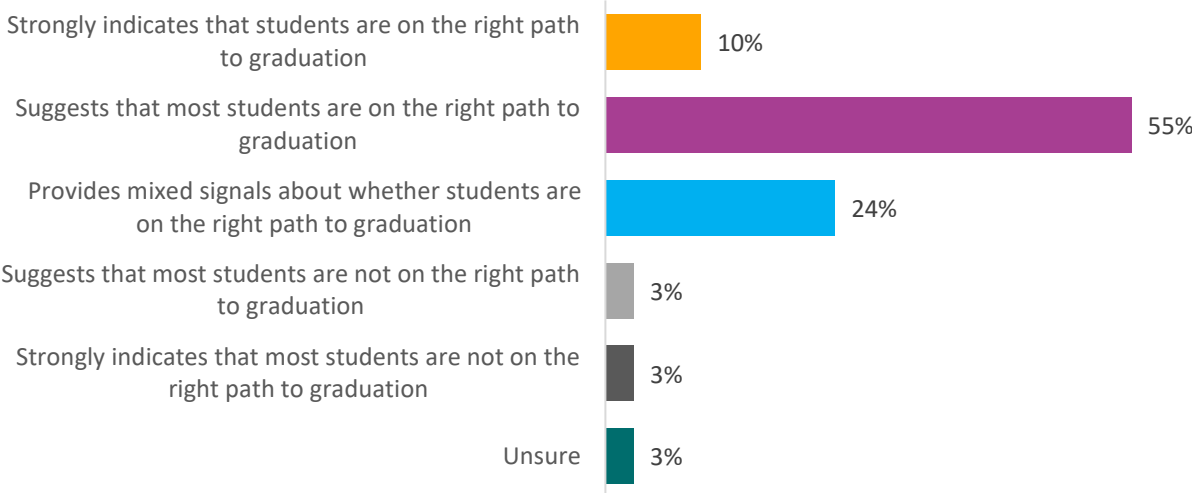
Many EWS appear to prioritize quantifiable metrics, such as attendance and grades, while incorporating more nuanced assessments of student behavior, engagement, progress, and individual needs.

B3. Interpreting the Signals of EWS Indicator Data

Units were asked to evaluate the signals their EWS data provides regarding students' paths to graduation.

Figure B3: EWS Indicators of Student Progress Toward Graduation (N = 29)

Q: Which of the following statements best describe your EWS indicator data? The key indicator data of our EWS:



Most units (65%) report positive graduation trajectories, with 55% suggesting and 10% strongly indicating students are on track for graduation. However, one-quarter of units (24%) observe mixed signals in their indicator data, while a small percentage (6%) report negative trajectory. A single unit (3%) expressed uncertainty in interpreting their EWS data.

These findings indicate that while EWS implementation is yielding clear, actionable data in most units, nearly one-third of units may benefit from additional support in either data interpretation or intervention strategies.

B4. Qualitative Summary of Data Surrounding EWS Indicators

When asked to summarize their data surrounding their EWS indicators, units reported a diverse range of practices and outcomes.

System Implementation

The implementation of EWS varies significantly, with some units operating fully established systems while others are in the early stages of adoption. For example, one unit reported that of their three reporting schools, one has achieved full implementation and has maintained it for several years, another reports consistent implementation of targeted interventions but only partial implementation of other

components (such as universal interventions and team processes), and the third is just beginning EWS implementation.

Data Collection and Review Processes

Data collection and review processes are generally consistent across units, typically occurring weekly to quarterly. Many units involve multiple stakeholders (teachers, counselors, administrators) using data teams, Professional Learning Communities (PLC), and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) meetings to regularly review and act on EWS data. Data collection methods include spreadsheets, databases, regular performance reviews, progress monitoring, surveys, file reviews, and state reporting systems. These tools are typically used to gather information on student attendance, behavior, and academic performance, with the specific combination of methods varying by unit based on resources and needs. Some units have expanded their indicators to include factors like homelessness, guidance referrals, and foster care status. Regarding interventions and support systems, many units have implemented MTSS as part of their EWS. There's an increasing emphasis on implementing EBPs and SEL curricula. Some districts are also focusing on improving IEP goal-setting and progress monitoring, particularly for behavioral goals. Professional development on EWS, interventions, and data analysis is ongoing in many units as well.

Positive Trends

EWS are generally reported as beneficial for early identification and intervention of at-risk students. Many units report positive trends in attendance and graduation rates, with several noting attendance rates above the state average. Academic performance shows mixed results, with some units reporting improvements and others identifying areas needing attention. Dropout rates show improvement in some areas, with one unit reporting a decrease from 27.3% to 8.6% over several years. However, higher dropout rates persist for certain subgroups, particularly students with ED.

Ongoing Challenges

Chronic absenteeism emerges as a persistent challenge across multiple units, with some reports indicating it as a key factor in student dropout rates. For example, one unit reported that "100% of the students that dropped out missed more than 50 days of school." Notably, the issue is particularly concerning for students with IEPs, with some units reporting chronic absenteeism rates as high as 29% for this group. Student engagement data shows mixed results, with some districts reporting positive trends in emotional engagement but declining behavioral and cognitive engagement, especially in high schools and among students with ED.

The data reveals several areas for improvement and ongoing challenges:

- **Inconsistent Implementation:** Many units reported uneven implementation of EWS, with some units only partially implementing key components like data tracking, progress monitoring, and team-based interventions. The frequency and fidelity of data reviews also differ between schools, impacting the system's effectiveness.
- **Training Needs:** There's a desire for additional EWS training. One unit reported that 73.33% of districts are requesting more training in this area, highlighting a widespread need for professional development.

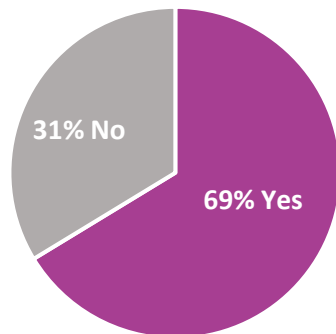
- **Early Identification Challenges:** Some units reported limitations in early identification practices. For example, one unit noted that relying solely on teacher recommendations for identifying at-risk students can result in students being overlooked or "lost in the shuffle." Using MTSS teams at the start of the year was suggested as a more effective alternative.
- **Mental Health Support:** Mental health challenges emerge as a critical issue, particularly in rural districts where they are identified as a leading cause of student dropouts. These districts are actively seeking more resources and support to address students' mental health needs but are struggling to find adequate solutions within their constraints.
- **School Size Disparities:** One unit reported that smaller schools benefit from close student-staff relationships, enabling earlier identification and support for at-risk students. Larger districts face challenges in maintaining these connections, making it harder to identify and intervene with at-risk students in a timely manner.

B5. Celebrating Success: High Schools Leading in EWS Excellence

Units were asked whether any high schools within their unit were excelling in EWS implementation and, if so, to name those schools.

Figure B5: Units Reporting Exemplary EWS Practices in High Schools (N = 29)

Q: Is there a high school(s) within your special education unit that is doing a particularly good job with its EWS?



69% of units reported at least one high school excelling in EWS

A majority of units identified at least one high school demonstrating strong EWS implementation. These schools represent diverse settings across North Dakota, from smaller rural schools (Killdeer, Larimore, Westhope) to larger urban districts (Bismarck, Fargo). The data suggests that effective EWS implementation is achievable across different school contexts and sizes.

B5a. Notable Schools and Practices

- **Killdeer High School:** Implementing MTSS practices and school-wide training.
- **Larimore High School:** Providing individualized support for struggling students.
- **Westhope High School:** Fully implemented an EWS team, effectively uses data for dropout prevention.

- **Bismarck School District:** Multiple high schools (Bismarck, Century, and Legacy) noted for effective EWS implementation.
- **Fargo School District:** Davies, South, and North high schools recognized for their EWS efforts.
- **St. John School:** Recognized for achieving the highest graduation rate among Native American schools in the state through its implementation of the BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) program.

Summary of Findings

Analysis of EWS implementation across units reveals widespread adoption of core indicators (attendance, academic performance, and behavior) with 100% of units tracking these metrics. While 65% of units report positive graduation trajectories based on their EWS data, implementation varies significantly across units. Key challenges include chronic absenteeism (particularly among students with IEPs), declining engagement in high schools, inconsistent implementation across settings, and gaps in mental health support, especially in rural areas. Despite these challenges, 69% of units identified at least one high school demonstrating excellence in EWS implementation, suggesting that effective implementation is achievable across diverse school settings.

C. Implementation Status for Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) and Fidelity Data

This section analyzes North Dakota's four state-supported Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs): Behavior-Specific Praise (BSP), Check-In Check-Out (CICO), Teacher-Directed Opportunity to Respond (T-DOR), and Check & Connect (C&C). The analysis first compares implementation, fidelity, and student impact across all practices, followed by detailed examination of each individual EBP.

Comparison of EBPs: Implementation Levels

Units rated the extent to which each EBP had been implemented in the past year.

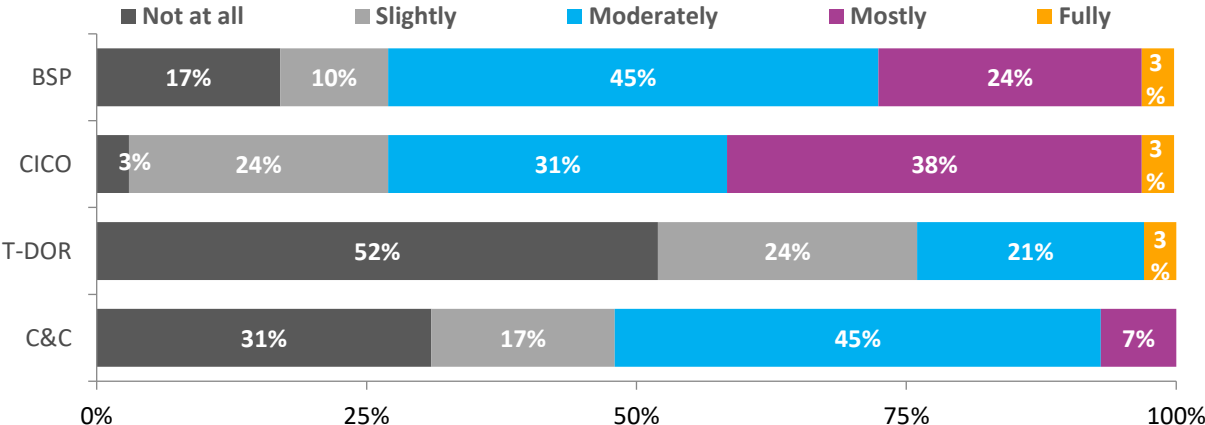
Across units, CICO shows the highest rate of implementation, with 72% of units reporting moderate to full implementation and only 3% reporting no use. BSP follows with similar implementation levels, as 72% of units report moderate to full use, though 17% indicate they do not use this practice at all. C&C shows lower levels of implementation, with 52% of units reporting moderate to full use, while 31% report no use. T-DOR has the lowest adoption rate, with 52% of units reporting no use and only 24% reporting moderate or higher levels of implementation. Notably, very few units (3% or less) report full systematic implementation of any practice across all settings and staff members.

Figure C-1: The number and percent of units using a given practice at least "moderately:"

Moderate-to-Full Implementation		
Practice	N	%
BSP	21	72%
CICO	21	72%
T-DOR	7	24%
C&C	15	52%

Figure C-2: Comparison of EBP Implementation Levels

Q: Rate the extent to which a given EBP has been implemented in the past year.



Rating Scale: **Not at all;** **Slightly** (i.e., minimal or occasional use); **Moderately** (i.e., used consistently but may not be a widespread practice across all settings or staff members); **Mostly** (i.e., common practice and is consistently used across various settings and staff members, but there may still be some variability in its implementation); **Fully** (i.e., systematically and consistently implemented across all settings and by all staff members, indicating a high level of integration into the school's culture and practices).

Comparison of EBPs: Fidelity of Implementation

Units rated the extent to which each EBP had been implemented with fidelity using a given practice.

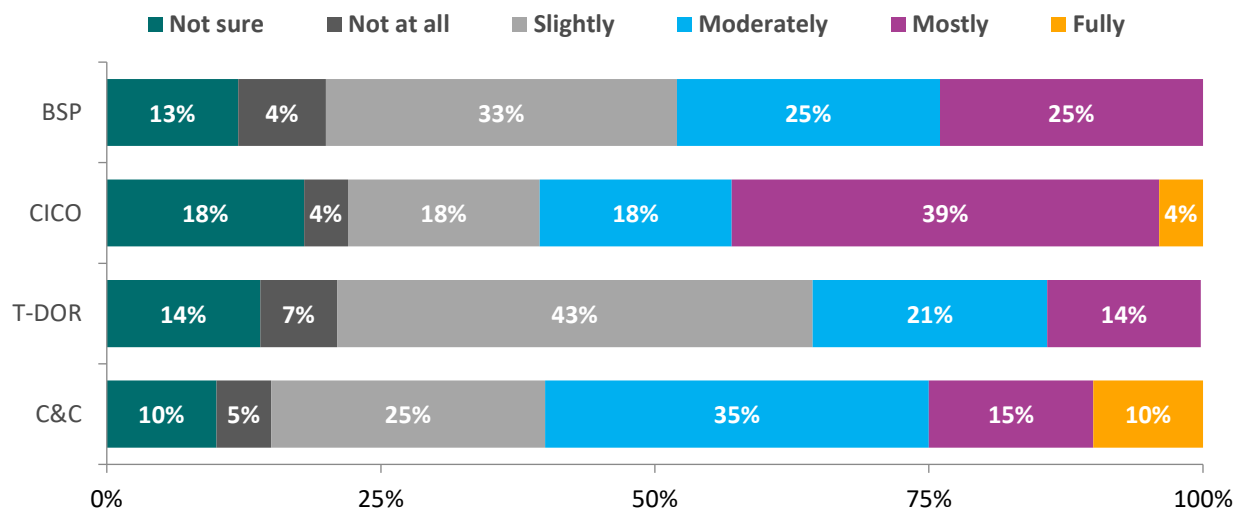
Among units that reported using each practice, CICO and C&C show the highest implementation fidelity. About 60% of CICO and C&C users report implementing with moderate to full fidelity, meaning they follow prescribed procedures with only minor deviations. C&C has the highest rate of full implementation (10%; which represents 2 units), with units reporting they adhere closely to guidelines without deviation. CICO follows at 4% full implementation, though it has the highest uncertainty rate (18%). BSP shows moderate fidelity levels, with 50% reporting moderate to most fidelity but no units achieving full adherence to guidelines. T-DOR demonstrates the lowest fidelity, with 43% reporting only occasional implementation with significant deviations, and 35% achieving moderate to most fidelity.

Figure C-3: The number and percent of units implementing a given practice with at least “moderate” fidelity

Moderate-to-Full Fidelity		
Practice	N	%
BSP	12	50%
CICO	17	61%
T-DOR	5	35%
C&C	12	60%

Figure C-4: EBP Implementation Fidelity Levels

Q: Are you implementing a given EBP with fidelity?



Rating Scale: **Not sure**; **Not at all** (i.e., not implemented as intended or rarely used with fidelity); **Slightly** (i.e., occasionally implemented with fidelity, but there are significant deviations or inconsistencies); **Moderately** (i.e., implemented with moderate fidelity; however, there are some deviations or inconsistencies in its application); **Mostly** (i.e., mostly implemented with fidelity, with occasional minor deviations from the intended approach); **Fully** (i.e., fully implemented with fidelity, adhering closely to the prescribed procedures and guidelines without deviation)

Comparison of EBPs: Perceived Positive Impact on Students

Units rated the extent to which each EBP is having a positive impact on students.

Among units using each practice, both C&C and CICO demonstrate strong positive impact. C&C shows the most consistent results, with 75% of units evenly distributed across moderate, mostly, and significant positive impact (25% each). CICO shows similar overall effectiveness (68% reporting moderate to significant impact), with the highest rate of significant impact (29%), though 4% report minimal impact.

BSP and T-DOR show more limited effectiveness. While 51% report moderate to significant impact for BSP, nearly half of users (46%) are unsure of its impact. T-DOR shows the weakest results, with 42% reporting moderate to significant impact and the highest rate of minimal impact (14%).

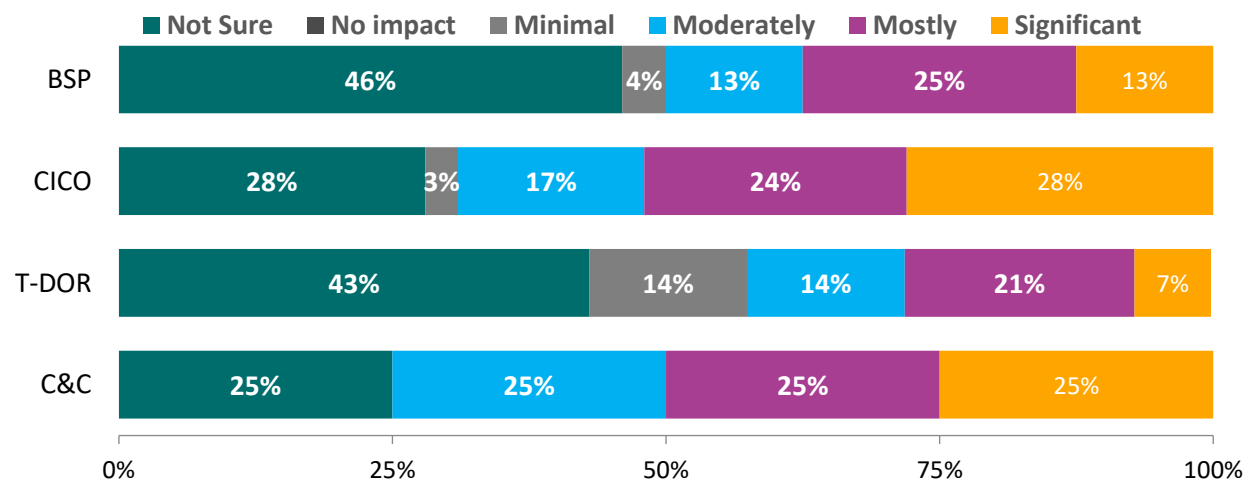
A notable finding across all practices is the high level of uncertainty about impact, ranging from 25% (C&C) to 46% (BSP) of users reporting they are unsure of the practice's effectiveness. No units report that any practice has no positive impact on students.

Figure C-5: The number and percent of units rating a given practice as having at least a moderate positive impact on students

Moderate-to-Significant Positive Impact		
Practice	N	%
BSP	12	51%
CICO	19	68%
T-DOR	6	42%
C&C	5	75%

Figure C-6: Perceived Impact of EBPs on Students

Q: Rate the extent to which a given EBP is having a positive impact on students.



Rating Scale: Not sure; it's not having a positive impact on students; it's having a minimal positive impact on students; It's having a moderately positive impact on students; It's having a mostly positive impact on students; It's having a significant positive impact on students

Summary of Findings

CICO and BSP show the highest implementation, with 72% of units (i.e., 21 units) reporting moderate to full implementation. C&C follows with 52% reporting moderate to full implementation (i.e., 15 units), while T-DOR shows limited implementation with 52% reporting no use (i.e., 15 units). Full systematic implementation across all settings remains rare (3% or less; i.e., 1 unit) for all practices.

Among units using each practice, CICO and C&C demonstrate the strongest fidelity (about 60% moderate to full adherence). C&C achieves the highest full fidelity rate (10%, i.e., 2 units), while CICO follows at 4%, i.e., 1 unit). BSP shows moderate fidelity levels (50% moderate to full adherence, i.e., 12 units), while T-DOR has the lowest, with only 35% (i.e., 5 units) reporting at least moderate fidelity.

C&C and CICO show the strongest positive impacts on students. C&C users report consistent results (75% moderate to significant impact, evenly distributed; i.e., 5 units), while CICO shows similar overall effectiveness (68%; i.e., 19 units) with the highest rate of significant impact (29%; i.e., 8 units). BSP and T-DOR demonstrate more limited impact. High uncertainty about impact persists across all practices (25-46% unsure, i.e., 5-11 units), suggesting challenges in measuring outcomes.

C1. Behavior-Specific Praise (BSP)

BSP is one of the four EBPs supported by NDDPI. This section examines units' responses regarding the use of BSP including levels of implementation, fidelity, and perceived impact on student outcomes.

C1a. Level of BSP Implementation

Units were asked to rate the extent to which BSP has been implemented in the past year.

The adoption of BSP has increased, with 24 units (83%) now implementing BSP compared to 44% the previous year. Of the implementing units, 54% used BSP consistently but not widely across settings, 29% used it as a common practice with some variation, 13% reported occasional limited use, and 4% (one unit) implemented it systematically across all staff/settings.

Figure C1-1: Percentage of Units Implementing BSP in Past year (N = 29)

Q: Rate the extent to which BSP has been implemented in the past year.

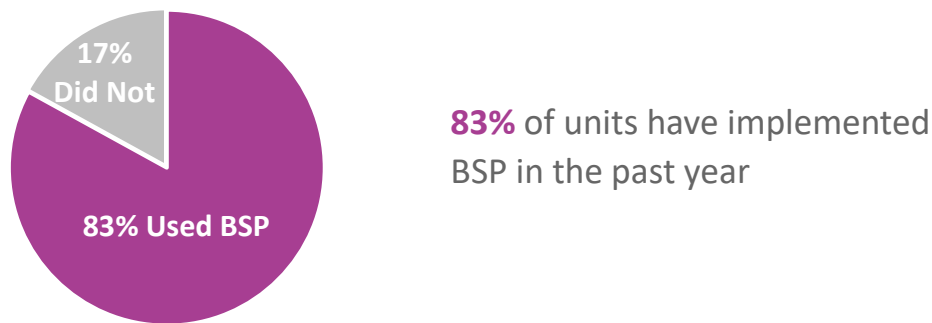
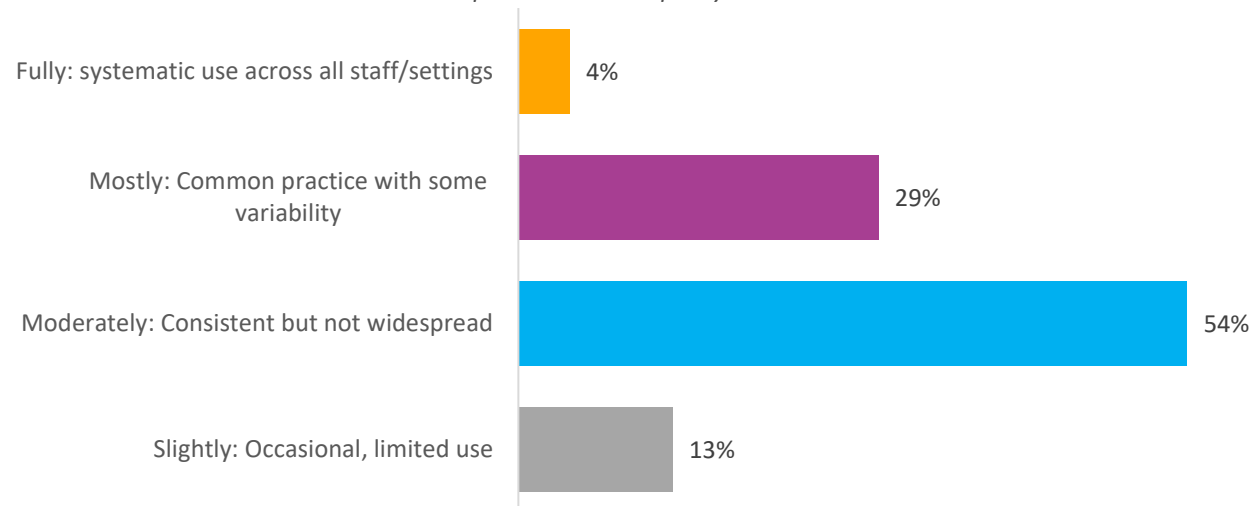


Figure C1-2: Level of BSP Implementation Among Current Users (N = 24)

Q: Rate the extent to which BSP has been implemented in the past year.



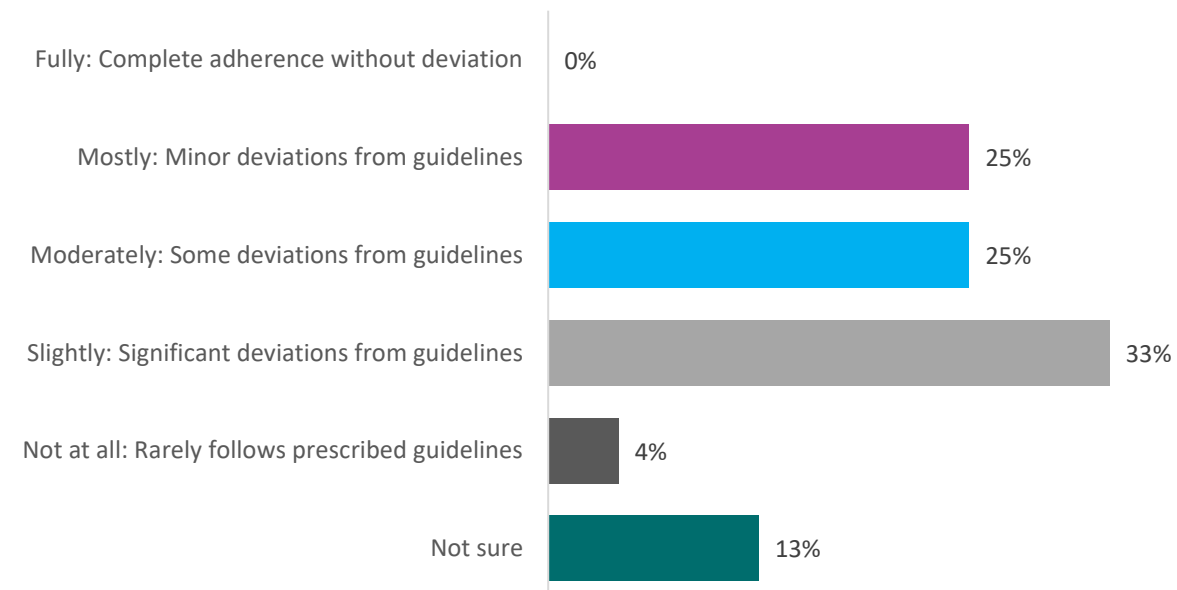
C1b. Fidelity of BSP Implementation

Units were asked to evaluate their implementation fidelity of BSP and identify the tools used to measure this fidelity. These questions aimed to understand both the quality of BSP implementation and the methods used to assess adherence to guidelines.

Units rated the extent the BSP is being implemented with fidelity. Units reported varying levels of adherence to prescribed guidelines. While 25% reported mostly implementing BSP with only occasional minor deviations, and another 25% indicated moderate implementation with some inconsistencies, a third (33%) reported only slight implementation with significant deviations in application. Notably, 4% were not or rarely implementing BSP as intended, and 13% were unsure of their level of fidelity. No units reported fully implementing BSP with complete adherence to the prescribed guidelines.

Figure C1-3: Fidelity of Implementation (N = 24)

Q: Are you implementing BSP with fidelity?



C1c. Fidelity Tools and Methods

Units were asked what fidelity tool they are using to measure the fidelity of implementation of BSP. Nearly half of the units reported not using a fidelity tool or lacking sufficient data to measure BSP implementation. However, many are in the process of developing or planning to implement fidelity measures next year.

Current fidelity assessment methods vary, including standardized tools (Behavior-Specific Praise Observation Tool), checklists aligned with BIPs or IEPs, walkthroughs using predefined criteria (benchmarks of quality), data platforms (Behavior Advantage), self-monitoring (tallying BSP frequency), and observations, complemented by coaching feedback and monthly consultations with special education directors and school psychologists. Efforts to embed fidelity measures within broader

educational frameworks like MTSS, BIPs, and IEPs are emerging, reflecting a trend towards a more integrated and collaborative approach to ensure consistent BSP application.

C1d. Data Collected to Determine BSP Impact on Students

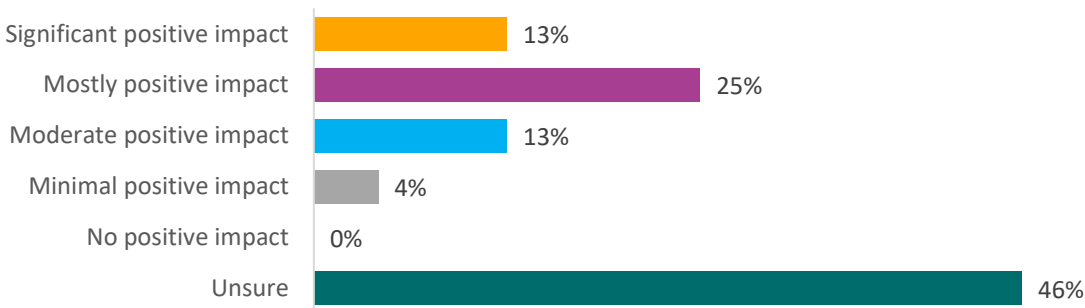
Units were asked what data they are collecting to determine if BSP is having an impact on students. Schools are using various methods to assess BSP impact on students. These methods encompass behavioral data, such as recorded incidents and office referrals, academic performance indicators like grades and GPA, attendance records, and progress towards IEP and BIP objectives. Additionally, they consider broader educational outcomes, including graduation rates and student engagement levels. While some schools have established structured systems for this data collection, others do not collect data or are in the preliminary phases of creating more organized approaches.

C1e. Ratings of Perceived Impact of BSP on Students

Units were asked to rate the extent to which BSP is having a positive impact on students. Just over half of the units (51%) report that BSP is having a moderate to significant positive impact on students. However, a substantial portion (46%) is unsure about its impact, suggesting a need for further clarity or data. No respondents reported that BSP is having no positive impact, and only 4% indicated a minimal positive effect.

Figure C1-4: Perceived Impact of BSP on Students (N = 24)

Q: Rate the extent to which BSP is having a positive impact on students.



Based on their initial impact ratings, units received targeted follow-up questions: those reporting moderate to significant positive impact (51%) were asked to describe specific benefits, while those indicating minimal or no impact (4%) were asked to identify needed improvements.

C1e1. Observed Areas for Improvement

Only one unit reported minimal impact of the BSP. This unit identified two barriers:

- Inconsistent implementation of BSP across staff members and settings
- Need for a coordinated approach among student-facing staff to ensure consistent application throughout the student's day

C1e2. Observed Benefits

Units reporting moderate to significant positive impact highlighted several key outcomes:

- Improved graduation rates, particularly among ED students
- Reduced disciplinary issues and better classroom behavior
- Enhanced academic performance and grades
- Increased classroom engagement and attendance
- Lower dropout rates
- Stronger social-emotional connections, with students showing greater confidence and motivation

Summary of Findings

Implementation of BSP has expanded significantly, with 83% of units now using this practice compared to 44% the previous year. Most units (54%) implement BSP consistently but not widely across settings, while only 4% achieve systematic implementation. Fidelity measures show mixed results: 50% report mostly or moderate adherence, while 33% note significant deviations, and no units report full adherence. About half lack formal fidelity tools. Impact data shows 51% of units reporting moderate to significant positive outcomes, including improved graduation rates, behavior, and academic performance. However, 46% remain unsure of BSP's impact, suggesting a need for better data collection methods.

C2. Check-In Check-Out (CICO)

CICO is one of the four EBPs supported by NDDPI. This section examines units' responses regarding the use of CICO including levels of implementation, fidelity, and perceived impact on student outcomes.

C2a. Level of CICO Implementation

Units were asked to rate the extent to which CICO has been implemented in the past year. CICO has been widely adopted, with 28 out of 29 units (97%) reporting some level of implementation. This is a slight increase from last year, with 18 out of 25 units reporting use of CICO.

Among users of CICO, results show varied levels of implementation across units. The largest proportion (39%) report CICO as a common practice with some variability in implementation. About a third (32%) use CICO consistently but not as a widespread practice across all settings, while 25% report only occasional, limited use. Just 4% of units have achieved systematic implementation across all staff and settings.

Figure C2-1: Percentage of Units Using CICO in the Past Year (N = 29)

Q: Rate the extent to which CICO has been implemented in the past year.

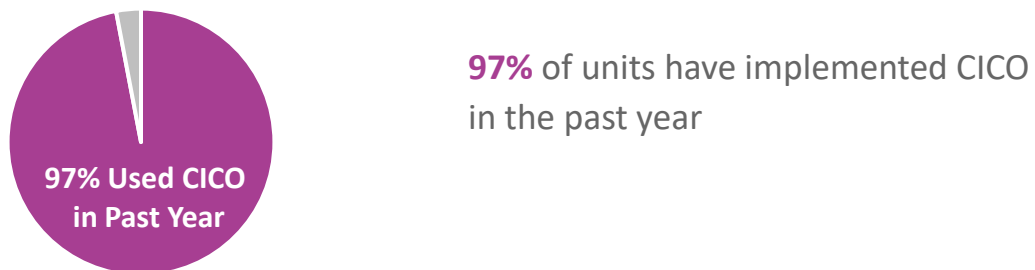
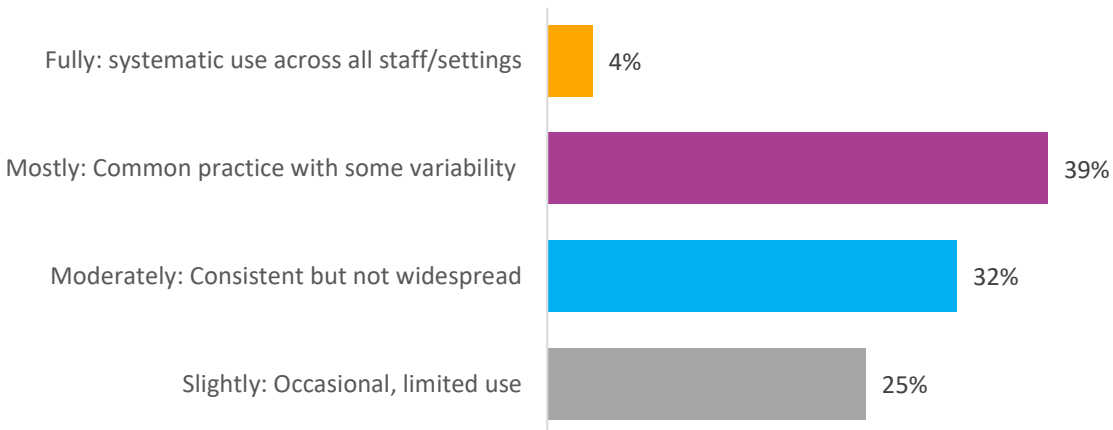


Figure C2-2: Level of CICO Implementation Among Current Users (N = 28)

Q: Rate the extent to which CICO has been implemented in the past year.



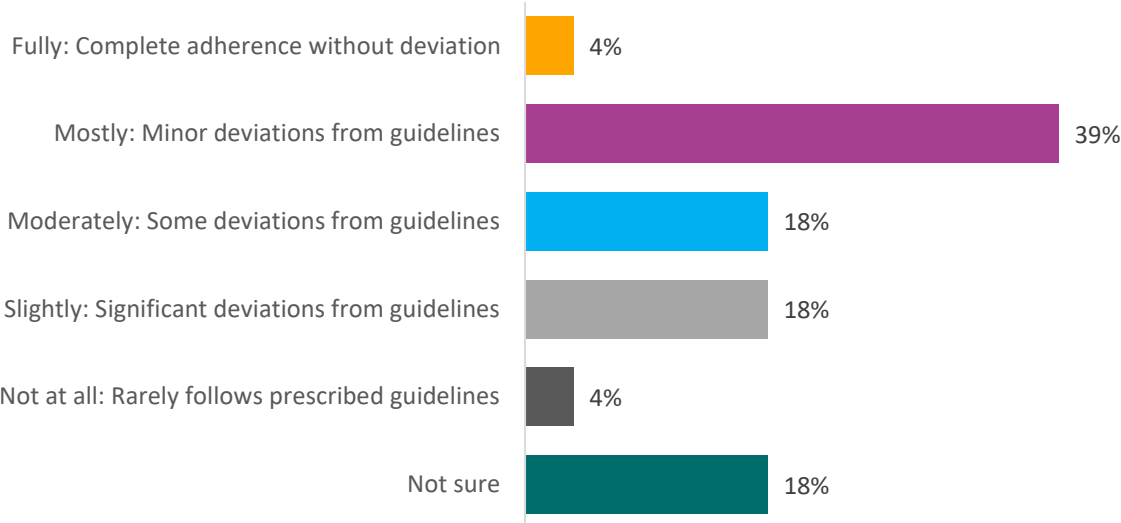
C2b. Fidelity of CICO Implementation

Units were asked to evaluate their implementation fidelity of CICO and identify the tools used to measure this fidelity. These questions aimed to understand both the quality of CICO implementation and the methods used to assess adherence to guidelines.

The data shows varying levels of implementation fidelity across units. The largest group (39%) reports mostly implementing the program as intended, with only occasional minor deviations. Equal proportions (18% each) report slight fidelity (with significant deviations), moderate fidelity (with some inconsistencies), or are unsure about their fidelity levels. Only 4% report full implementation without deviation, matching the 4% who report not implementing the program as intended at all.

Figure C2-3: Fidelity of CICO Implementation (N = 28)

Q: Are you implementing CICO with fidelity?



C2c. CICO Fidelity Tools and Methods

Units were asked what fidelity tool they are using to measure the fidelity of implementation of CICO. Units report diverse methods for measuring fidelity, with 63% reporting specific tools and practices. Common approaches include the Behavior Advantage Platform, CICO fidelity checklists, direct observations, student logs, and monthly consultations. However, units report challenges across districts. Some lack formal tools or are in the process of developing them, while others struggle with inconsistent monitoring due to staffing issues or data collection gaps.

C2d. Data Collected to Determine CICO Impact on Students

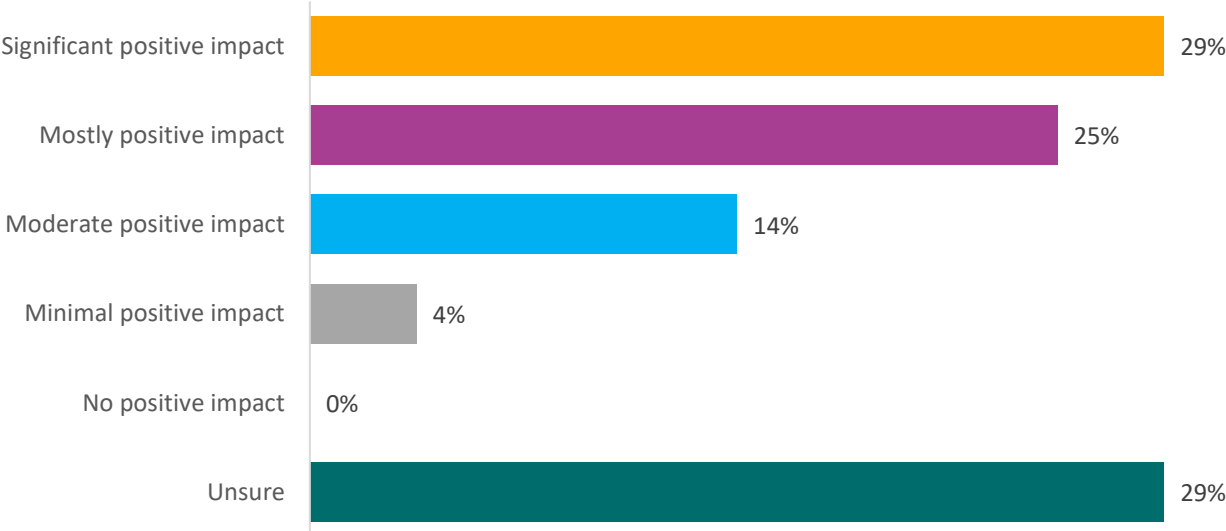
Units were asked what data they are collecting to determine if CICO is having an impact on students. The data collected to assess the impact of CICO is primarily focused on behavioral, academic, and attendance metrics, with several schools also tracking IEP goal progress and using daily monitoring tools. While some schools have established formal data collection processes using platforms like Behavior Advantage and PowerSchool, others are still in the early stages or using informal observations. A few units report challenges with consistency in data collection or are in the process of developing more formalized systems for the future.

C2e. Rating of Perceived Impact of CICO on students

Units were asked to rate the extent to which CICO is having a positive impact on students. The perceived impact of CICO is generally positive, with 68% of respondents reporting moderate to significant positive effects. Only 4% reported minimal positive impact, and no units reported no positive impact. However, 29% were unsure about CICO's impact on students, indicating a need for further clarity or data on its outcomes.

Figure C2-4: Perceived Impact of CICO on Students (N = 28)

Q: Rate the extent to which CICO is having a positive impact on students.



Based on their initial impact ratings, units received targeted follow-up questions: those reporting moderate to significant positive impact (68%) were asked to describe specific benefits, while those indicating minimal or no impact (4%) were asked to identify needed improvements.

C2e1. Observed Areas for Improvement

The unit reporting minimal impact suggested several ideas to increase CICO's effectiveness:

- Enhanced staff training to ensure consistent implementation
- More customized student support plans
- More frequent data review to identify trends and make timely program adjustments

C3e2. Observed Benefits

Units reporting moderate to significant positive impact emphasized several benefits:

- Improved student-staff relationships
- Enhanced trust and accountability
- Increased student motivation
- Better self-management, including improved organization in daily tasks
- Enhanced academic performance
- Higher attendance rates
- Decreased behavioral referrals

Summary of Findings

CICO demonstrates the highest adoption rate at 97% (28 out of 29 units), an increase from the previous year. Implementation levels vary, with 39% reporting it as a common practice, 32% using it consistently but not widely, and only 4% achieving systematic implementation. Regarding fidelity, 39% report mostly implementing as intended, while equal groups (18% each) report significant deviations, moderate implementation, or uncertainty. About 63% use specific fidelity tools. Impact assessment is positive, with 68% reporting moderate to significant positive impacts, particularly in student-staff relationships, motivation, and self-management. However, 29% remain unsure about CICO's impact.

C3. Teacher-Directed Opportunity to Respond (T-DOR)

T-DOR is one of the four EBPs supported by NDDPI. This section examines units’ responses regarding the use of T-DOR including levels of implementation, fidelity, and perceived impact on student outcomes.

C3a. Level of T-DOR Implementation

Units were asked to rate the extent to which T-DOR has been implemented in the past year. T-DOR shows limited adoption across units, with only 14 out of 29 (48%) units reporting some level of implementation. However, this is an increase from last year (2 out of 25). Among those who implemented T-DOR, half indicated that T-DOR was used only occasionally, while 43% reported moderate usage. However, no units reported widespread or mostly consistent use across settings, and only 7% reported full, systematic implementation.

Figure C3-1: Percentage of Units Using T-DOR in Past year (N = 29)

Q: Rate the extent to which T-DOR has been implemented in the past year.

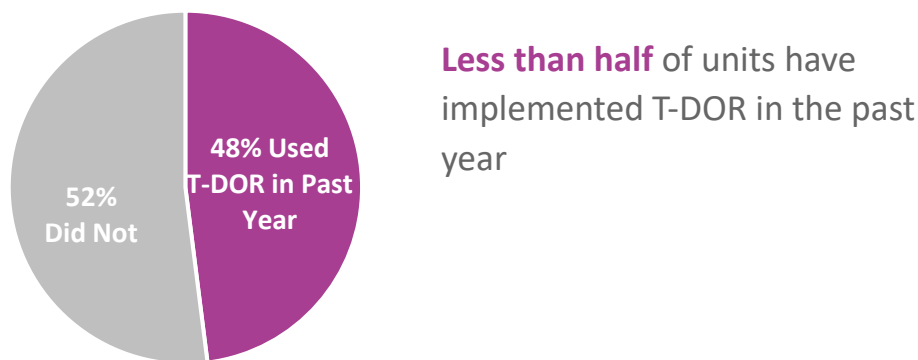
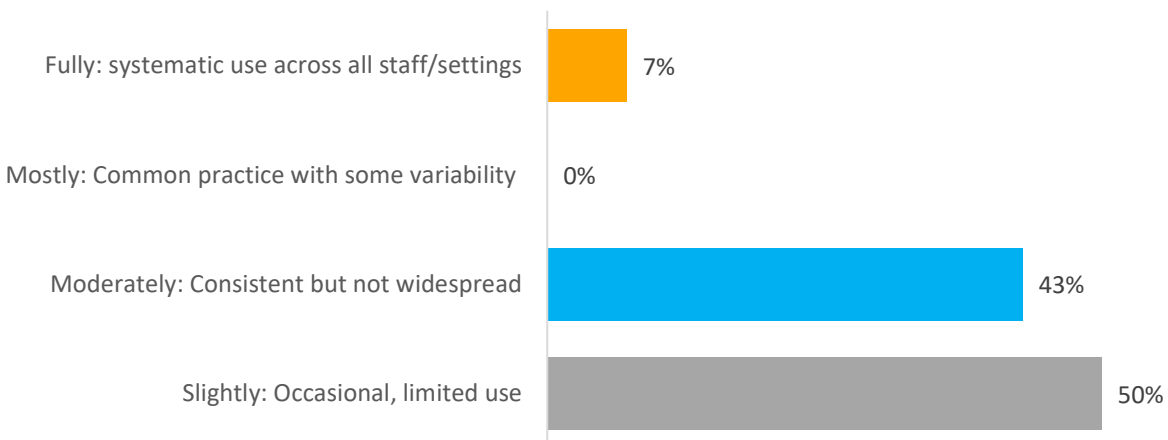


Figure C3-2: Level of T-DOR Implementation Among Current Users (N=14)

Q: Rate the extent to which T-DOR has been implemented in the past year.

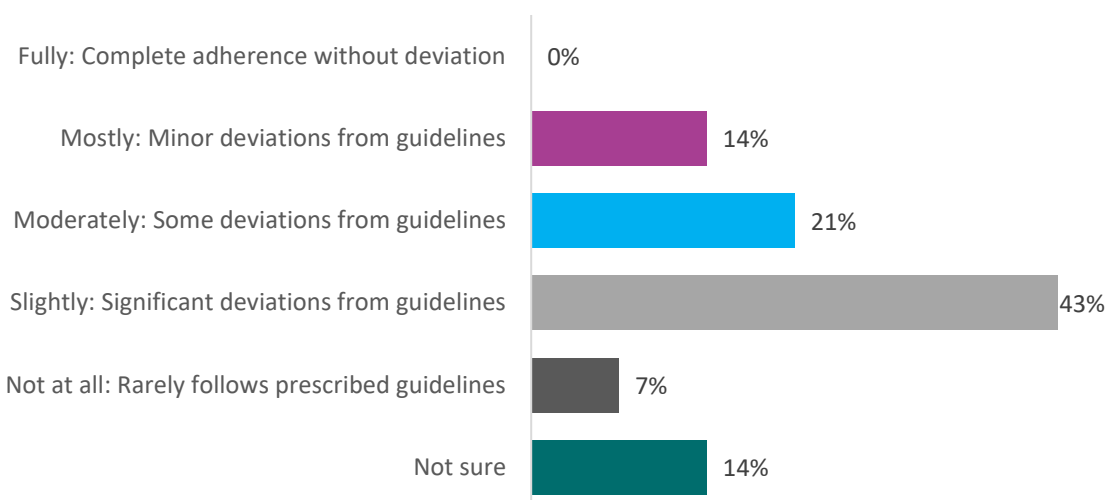


C3b. Fidelity of T-DOR Implementation

When asked about the fidelity of T-DOR implementation, 43% reporting only slight fidelity, indicating significant deviations or inconsistencies, while 21% indicated moderate fidelity with some deviations. Only 14% reported mostly implementing T-DOR with fidelity, and 7% rarely followed prescribed guidelines. Notably, 14% were unsure of their fidelity level, and no units reported complete adherence to guidelines. The data indicate that fidelity of implementation is a concern. Even where T-DOR is being used, it is often not be implemented as intended.

Figure C3-3: Level of T-DOR Implementation Among Current Users (N = 14)

Q: Are you implementing T-DOR with fidelity?



C3c. T-DOR Fidelity Tools and Methods

Units were asked what fidelity tools they are using to measure the fidelity of implementation of T-DOR. Many districts lacked formal fidelity tools, with some planning to adopt such tools in the next school year. Those that did measure fidelity often used classroom observations, feedback from staff, and BIP to track the consistency of implementation. A few districts employed a checklist or used data collected through meetings and IEP processes, but these approaches were not widespread or standardized.

C3d. Data Collected to Determine T-DOR Impact on Students

Units were asked what data they are collecting to determine if T-DOR is having an impact on students. Data collection related to T-DOR was sporadic and informal in most districts. Some districts collected data through progress reports linked to IEPs, focusing on academic performance, attendance, and behavior. Others relied on informal teacher and administrator reports, noting that T-DOR helped improve classroom engagement and listening behaviors. A few schools reported collecting specific behavioral data, such as office referrals and participation metrics, but many admitted to not collecting data

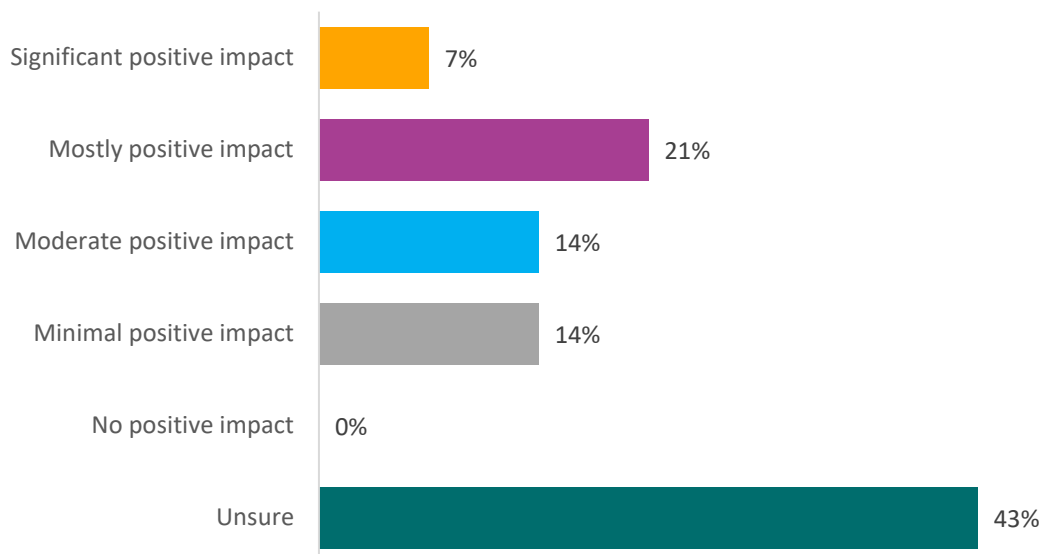
consistently at this time. Some educators used engagement surveys, exit tickets, and bell-ringer activities to track student responses.

C3e. Rating of Perceived Impact of T-DOR on students

Units were asked to rate the extent to which T-DOR is having a positive impact on students. A combined 42% report that T-DOR is having moderate to significant positive impact on students. However, a substantial portion (43%) is unsure about its impact, suggesting a need for better impact measurement systems. While no respondents reported zero positive impact, 14% indicated minimal positive effect.

Figure C3-4: Perceived Impact of T-DOR on Students (N = 14)

Q: Rate the extent to which BSP is having a positive impact on students.



Based on their initial impact ratings, units received targeted follow-up questions: those reporting moderate to significant positive impact (42%) were asked to describe specific benefits, while those indicating minimal or no impact (14%) were asked to identify needed improvements.

C3e1. Observed Areas for Improvement

Units reporting minimal impact identified several key areas for improvement:

- Need for broader implementation beyond special education staff
- Limited buy-in from general education teachers
- Need for additional staff training, particularly for those outside special education
- Early implementation stage with 53% of schools requesting additional training
- Consistency challenges across different educational environments

C3e2. Observed Benefits

Units reporting moderate to significant positive impact highlighted several key outcomes:

- Academic improvements: Increased GPA/grades and work completion
- Behavioral gains: Improved behavior and reduced referrals
- Enhanced engagement: More active listening and classroom participation
- Notable success with ED students: 100% graduation rate reported
- Lower dropout rates across participating units
- Reduced student stress through inclusive response opportunities

Summary of Findings

T-DOR shows the lowest adoption rate at 48% (14 out of 29 units), though this represents an increase from the previous year. Among implementing units, half report only occasional use, 43% report moderate usage, and 7% achieve systematic implementation. Fidelity is a significant concern, with 43% reporting only slight adherence and no units reporting complete adherence. Data collection is largely sporadic and informal. While 42% report moderate to significant positive impact, including academic improvements and behavioral gains, 43% are unsure of its impact, indicating a need for better measurement systems.

C4. Check & Connect (C&C)

C&C is one of the four EBPs supported by NDDPI. This section examines units' responses regarding the use of C&C including levels of implementation, fidelity, and perceived impact on student outcomes.

C4a. Level of C&C Implementation

Units were asked to rate the extent to which C&C has been implemented in the past year.

Out of 29 units, 20 reported using C&C, showing an increase from the previous year's 12 out of 25. Despite the majority adopting C&C, implementation levels remain mostly moderate or lower. Specifically, 65% of units report moderate implementation, indicating consistent but not widespread use across all settings or staff members. Additionally, 25% report slight implementation, suggesting minimal or occasional use. Only 10% report mostly implementing the practice, with some variability. No units reported full implementation of C&C

Figure C4-1: Percentage of Units Using C&C in Past year (N = 29)

Q: Rate the extent to which C&C has been implemented in the past year.

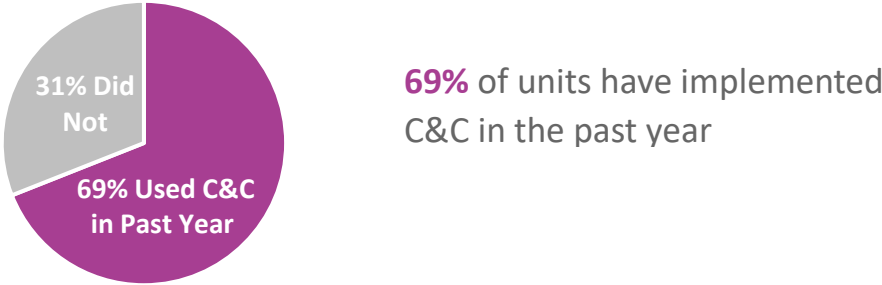
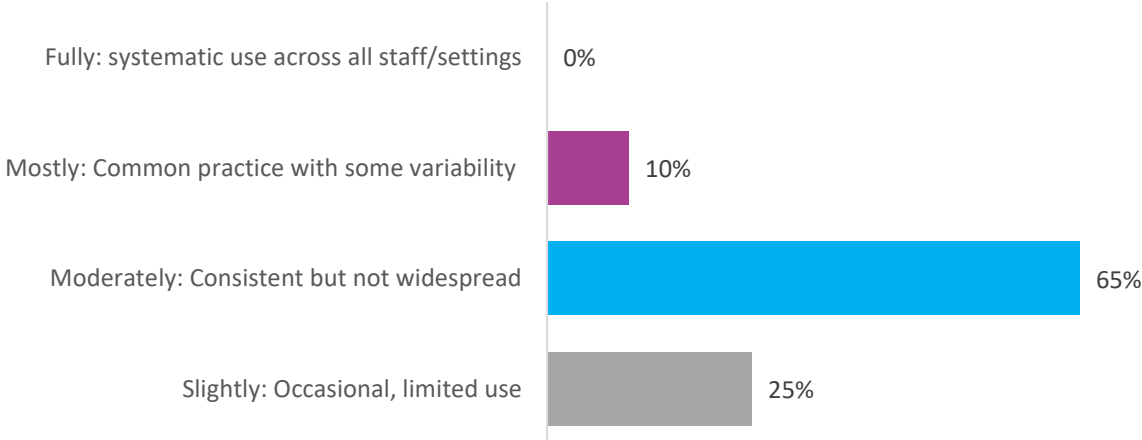


Figure C4-2: Level of C&C Implementation Among Current Users (N=20)

Q: Rate the extent to which C&C has been implemented in the past year.

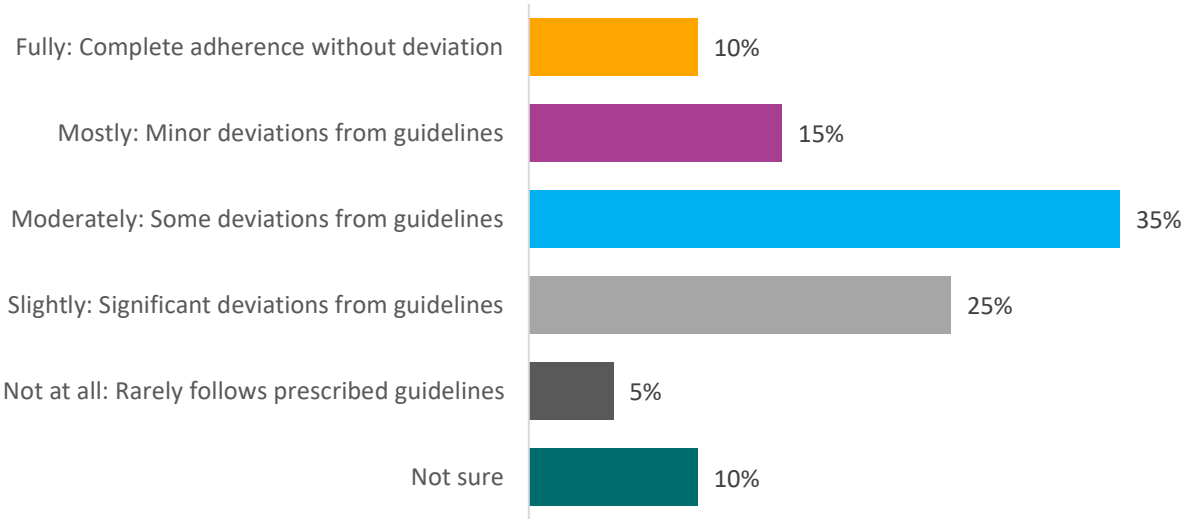


C4b. Fidelity of C&C Implementation

Units rated the extent to which C&C is being implemented with fidelity. The majority of units (60%) report moderate to full implementation fidelity with C&C, with 35% indicating moderate implementation, 15% mostly implementing with fidelity, and 10% reporting full implementation. However, a notable portion (30%) report minimal or no fidelity, with 25% implementing slightly and 5% not at all. The remaining 10% are unsure about their implementation fidelity.

Figure C4-3: Fidelity of Implementation (N = 20)

Q: Are you implementing C&C with fidelity?



C4c. C&C Fidelity Tools and Methods

Units were asked what fidelity tool they are using to measure the fidelity of implementation of C&C.

The approaches to measuring fidelity vary significantly across units, with 70% of units identifying a specific fidelity tool and method. Some districts used formal tools, such as the C&C Fidelity Checklist, to track mentor-student relationships, student progress monitoring, and family involvement. Other districts reported using informal methods, including classroom observations and tracking data through applications. However, many districts either lacked a fidelity tool altogether or were still in the process of developing one, leading to inconsistent fidelity checks. Several districts mentioned the need for more training to ensure that C&C is implemented with fidelity and that data are consistently tracked.

C4d. Data Collected to Determine C&C Impact on Students

Units were asked what data they are collecting to determine if C&C is having an impact on students.

Schools are collecting various types of data to determine the impact of C&C. The program's impact is measured through multiple data points, including attendance records, behavioral data, academic performance metrics, engagement levels, relationship quality assessments, family engagement tracking,

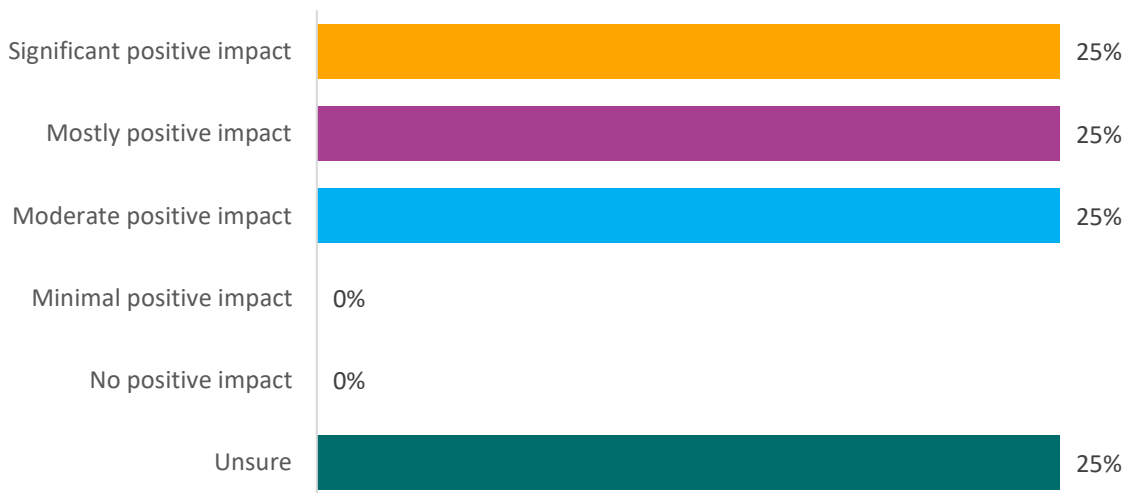
and post-secondary outcome surveys. Some units utilize specific platforms like the C&C electronic application, Panorama, or Behavior Advantage for data compilation. However, data collection methods are inconsistent across units, with several reporting they are not collecting data or are in early implementation stages.

C4e. Rating of Perceived Impact of C&C on students

The data shows a notably balanced distribution of perceived impact, with exactly 75% of units reporting positive effects (split evenly with 25% each reporting moderate, mostly, and significant positive impact). The remaining 25% are unsure about the impact. Notably, no units reported minimal or no positive impact, suggesting that when implemented, C&C tends to show some level of effectiveness.

Figure C4-4: Perceived Impact of C&C on Students (N = 20)

Q: Rate the extent to which C&C is having a positive impact on students.



Based on their initial impact ratings, units received targeted follow-up questions: those reporting moderate to significant positive impact (75%) were asked to describe specific benefits.

C4e1. Observed Areas for Improvement

No units reported no or minimal impact. However, qualitative responses highlighted several challenges and areas for improving the impact of C&C:

- Inconsistent implementation across school sites
- High demand for additional training, with 60% of schools in the early stages requesting more training next year
- Ongoing staffing challenges affecting program delivery
- Limited systematic data collection processes in some units hinders evaluation of impact

C4e2. Observed Benefits

Units reporting moderate to significant positive impact highlighted several key outcomes:

- Improved graduation rates for ED students and SWD with some exceeding state averages
- Improvements in attendance, including a 74% decrease in absences and a 50% decrease in suspensions in one unit
- Improved student self-management and assignment accountability
- Enhanced relationships between students and teachers
- Strengthened family-school connections, with parents expressing appreciation for additional support

Summary of Findings

Twenty out of 29 units report using C&C, an increase from the previous year. Implementation levels show 65% reporting moderate use, 25% reporting slight implementation, and 10% mostly implementing the practice. Fidelity measures are encouraging, with 60% reporting moderate to full implementation fidelity. Seventy percent of units use specific fidelity tools. Impact assessment is notably positive, with 75% reporting positive effects, including improved graduation rates, attendance, and student-teacher relationships. Key challenges include inconsistent implementation and staffing issues, with 60% of schools requesting additional training.

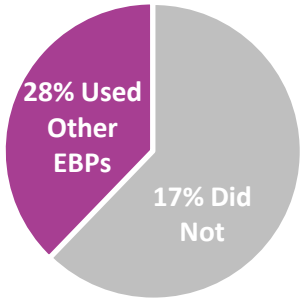
C5. Other EBPs

C5a. Implementation of Other EBPs

Units were asked if they are using any other EBPs other than the four supported by NDDPI.

Figure C5-1: Usage of Additional EBPs Beyond NDDPI-Supported Programs (N = 29)

Q: Are there any other EBPs that you are using (other than the four supported by NDDPI)?



28% of units reported using additional EBPs in the past year

While most special education units report using only the four EBPs supported by NDDPI, eight (28%) units have implemented additional evidence-based practices to support student needs. These additional practices primarily focus on social-emotional learning, behavior management, and alternative educational approaches.

Specific practices included BARR, the Nurtured Heart Approach, and Safety Care Crisis Prevention Training. Some units report comprehensive implementation of multiple EBPs across various intervention tiers. The focus of these additional practices tends to be on social-emotional learning, behavior management, and alternative education options, suggesting these are key areas of concern.

Many responses emphasized the importance of staff training in these EBPs, highlighting a commitment to proper implementation. Additionally, several of the reported practices allow for more individualized interventions, such as functional behavior assessments and positive behavior support plans.

Summary of Findings

Beyond the four state-supported EBPs, eight (28%) units report implementing additional evidence-based practices. These supplementary practices focus primarily on social-emotional learning, behavior management, and alternative educational approaches, including programs such as BARR, the Nurtured Heart Approach, and Safety Care Crisis Prevention Training. Units implementing these additional practices emphasize staff training and individualized interventions, suggesting a commitment to comprehensive student support beyond core practices.

D. Stakeholder Engagement Activities

This section reviews how units engage families, community resources, and other stakeholders to support student graduation outcomes. A comparison across these three areas highlights engagement levels, followed by specific findings on activities and strategies.

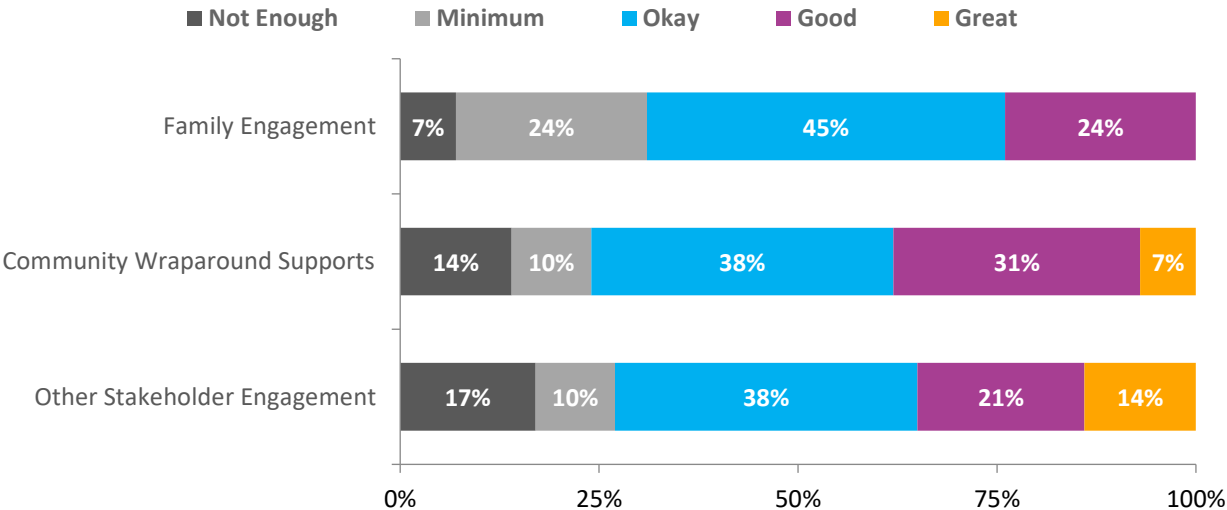
Comparison of Stakeholder Engagement Efforts

Units rated their stakeholder engagement efforts surrounding graduation. Across all three areas, many units report “okay” engagement levels (38-45%), indicating a baseline of engagement but also room for more effective partnerships to support graduation outcomes.

- Family Engagement:** This area shows the most room for improvement. While 69% of units rated their efforts as “okay” or “good,” none rated their efforts as “great.” Additionally, 31% of units indicated that their engagement efforts were minimal or lacking.
- Community Wraparound Supports:** This area received the highest overall positive ratings, with 76% of units rating their efforts as “okay” or better. Among these, 38% rated their performance as “good” or “great,” indicating solid engagement with community resources.
- Other Stakeholder Engagement:** This area shows the most variation. While 73% rated their engagement as “okay” or better, 35% rated their efforts as “good” or “great,” and 17% reported they were “not doing nearly enough.” This range suggests both strengths and gaps in engaging stakeholders outside of families and community resources.

Figure D-1: Comparison of Stakeholder Engagement (N = 29)

Q: How would you rate your [stakeholder engagement] efforts surrounding graduation?



Rating Scale: **Not Enough:** We are not doing nearly enough in this area; **Minimum:** We are doing only the minimum in this area; **Okay:** We are doing an okay job in this area; **Good:** We are doing a good job in this area; **Great:** We are doing a great job in this area.

D1. Family Engagement

Family engagement plays a critical role in supporting students' academic progress and ensuring graduation success. Units are leveraging various strategies to enhance communication, strengthen school-family connections, and provide tailored support for students at risk of not graduating.

D1a. Qualitative Summary of Family Engagement Efforts

Units were asked to describe their family engagement efforts surrounding graduation. The analysis revealed that units employ a variety of strategies, including multi-channel communication, family events, individualized planning, and strategic initiatives aimed at involving families in supporting student graduation outcomes.

Communication and Information Sharing. Schools are prioritizing regular and multichannel communication to keep families informed about their students' progress towards graduation. This includes the use of newsletters, emails, texts, phone calls, online portals, and meetings to share important information about academic progress, deadlines, graduation requirements, support opportunities, and school events. Some districts have implemented dedicated newsletters to showcase senior class achievements, while others are leveraging social media to maintain a positive community presence. The adoption of common communication platforms across schools within districts is helping to streamline information flow. These efforts aim to ensure that families are well-informed and can actively participate in their children's journey towards graduation.

"We are in contact in multiple ways with our families. We email, call and text them important information regarding their students."

"All schools engage in their own targeted family engagement activities, which are tailored to the culture and needs of their community."

Events and Activities. Schools organize a variety of events to engage families in the graduation process and school community. These range from informal gatherings like family BINGO nights, movie nights, and dinner talks, to more focused events such as parent nights with educational components. Award ceremonies and senior nights recognize student achievements and celebrate progress, while transition fairs, college tours, job site visits, and informational workshops help prepare students and families for post-graduation life. Some districts host annual retreats for families of students with disabilities, providing a unique opportunity for families to network, share experiences, and learn strategies to better support their

children. Many schools organize events that honor the cultural heritage of their students and families, such as Mandan's eagle feather ceremony for Native American students, celebrations for Hispanic families of graduating students, and cultural days, like "Chieftain Day," where students, families, and community members participate in events and share meals. These culturally-tailored activities help to create a more inclusive environment and strengthen the connection between schools and diverse families.

Individualized Support and Planning.

Recognizing that each student's path to graduation is unique, schools are emphasizing individualized support and planning. This includes regular IEP meetings with a strong focus on graduation requirements and post-secondary goals. For students at risk of not graduating, schools are developing personalized support plans that may include academic interventions, tutoring, and counseling services. Many districts are conducting individual senior meetings with counselors to ensure students are

on track for graduation and to discuss post-secondary plans. Collaboration with agencies like Vocational Rehabilitation is helping to provide comprehensive transition planning for students with disabilities. Some schools have used grant funding to hire social workers and parent mentors to offer targeted support to families, particularly those facing challenges that may impact a student's path to graduation.

"Our school district has secured grant funds to support 2 full time parent mentors who work directly with families to overcome barriers to school attendance."

Many districts are also developing transition portfolios and resource folders to equip families with the information and tools they need to support their children through graduation and beyond. This personalized approach aims to address each student's specific needs and challenges on the path to graduation.

Strategic Initiatives and Staff Development. Family engagement is increasingly being incorporated into broader strategic planning efforts. Many districts have developed comprehensive plans involving various stakeholders, including families. Some have set specific school improvement goals related to family engagement. Parent advisory committees ensure that family voices are included in decision-making processes, providing valuable feedback on engagement efforts and helping shape future strategies. There's also evidence of districts adopting established family engagement frameworks, such as Steve Constantino's practices, and a focus on professional development to

equip educators with family engagement skills. To gauge the effectiveness of these efforts, some schools are tracking parent engagement activities and participation rates, allowing for continuous improvement of their strategies.

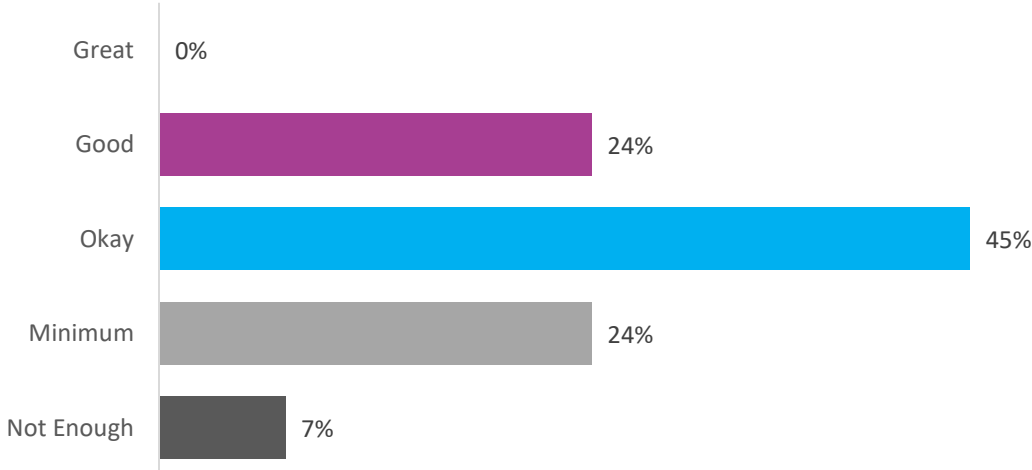
"Educators work with families to develop personalized support plans for students at risk of not graduating on time, including academic interventions, tutoring, and counseling services, with regular check-ins to monitor progress."

"Each school writes and submits a Family Engagement plan to the superintendent outlining how families will be included in the school community throughout the school year."

D1b. Rating Family Engagement Efforts

When asked to rate their family engagement efforts related to graduation, 45% of units reported that they are doing an "okay" job, and 24% rated their efforts as "good." However, 31% of respondents indicated they are either doing the minimum (24%) or not nearly enough (7%). Notably, no unit rated their efforts as "great", suggesting a recognition that there's still work to be done in this area. These results indicate room for improvement in family engagement efforts across the state.

Figure D1-1: Family Engagement (N = 29)
Q: How would you rate your family engagement efforts surrounding graduation?



Summary of Findings

Units are implementing diverse strategies to strengthen family engagement in support of student graduation. While 69% of units rate their family engagement efforts as "okay" or better, none consider their efforts "great," indicating significant room for improvement. Units are focusing on four key areas: multichannel communication systems, inclusive community events, individualized student support planning, and strategic organizational initiatives. Cultural responsiveness is emphasized through targeted programs for diverse communities, while personalized approaches include dedicated support staff and comprehensive transition planning.

D2. Community Wraparound Support

Community wraparound supports play an important role in enhancing students' academic success by addressing factors both inside and outside the classroom. These supports involve a collaborative approach between schools, families, and community organizations to meet students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs.

D2a. Qualitative Summary of Community Wraparound Support Efforts

Units provided detailed descriptions of their districts' community wraparound support efforts, reflecting a variety of approaches and levels of support. Several districts reported strong community collaboration, while others indicated none or very limited external support systems. Among respondents who reported on their community wraparound support efforts, several support strategies emerged.

Community Partnerships and Resource Networking.

Schools are developing partnerships with external agencies and systematically cataloging community resources. These collaborations, ranging from mental health providers and community health centers to government agencies and local businesses, allow schools to offer comprehensive support addressing students' diverse needs. Services offered through these collaborations often include mental health support, career preparation, basic needs assistance, and specialized services for at-risk students. Some units report creating centralized lists of local supports and resources to share with families, making it easier to access a full range of community services.

"Our unit has assembled a list of community supports and resources that staff can share with families. This list includes counseling/therapy services, basic needs support, and advocacy."

"Youthworks, a community-based organization, provides mental and behavioral health support for families and students, which helps students engage in their education."

Mental Health and Behavioral Support. Schools are prioritizing mental health services through partnerships with local health centers, agencies, and tribal resources. These collaborations bring counseling, therapy, and crisis intervention services directly into schools, improving accessibility for students. Programs like IMPACT and Therapeutic Learning Centers offer intensive support for high-need students. Some districts are using behavioral health grants to cover service costs for families facing financial difficulties.

Integrated Social Services and Basic Needs Support.

Schools are increasingly integrating social services and basic needs support into their systems. This includes hiring social workers and partnering with social service agencies and community organizations to provide comprehensive support and resource coordination. Support ranges from providing transportation for mental health appointments to offering food assistance, clothing, and other essentials. For example, a high school provides transportation for students to attend mental health and medical appointments, while also distributing McKinney Vento resources such as toiletries, clothing, and phone cards. Additionally, through collaboration with Pathfinders of ND, the school provides peer mentors to assist students at risk of homelessness, ensuring they receive necessary resources to maintain stability in their lives. These efforts aim to remove practical barriers that might otherwise prevent students from fully engaging in their education.

"Our high school committed to transportation services for students this past year. Transportation staff would distribute any food pantry resources and McKinney Vento resources needed. This included clothing, phone cards, toiletries (basic needs)."

Vocational Rehabilitation and Career Preparation.

Districts are actively collaborating with Vocational Rehabilitation services, local businesses, and Career and Technology Centers to prepare students for post-graduation life. These partnerships facilitate work experience opportunities, job shadowing, internships, and transition support, particularly beneficial for students with disabilities. Many schools have implemented work-study programs allowing students to gain real-world experience while earning high school credits. Career fairs, college tours, and partnerships with trade schools further expand students' awareness of post-secondary options.

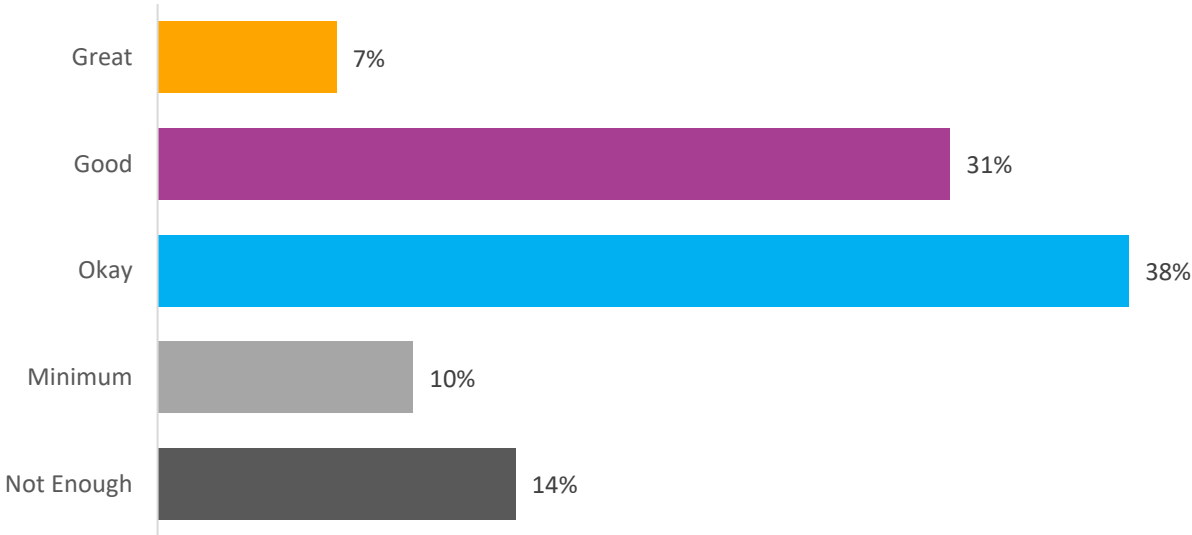
"We develop partnerships with local businesses, colleges, and trade schools to offer internships, mentorships, and scholarship opportunities that prepare students for post-graduation success."

D2b. Rating Community Wraparound Support Efforts

When asked to rate their community wraparound support efforts for graduation, 38% of units rated their efforts as "okay," and 31% indicated they are doing a "good" job. However, 24% acknowledged they are doing only the minimum (10%) or not nearly enough (14%). Notably, only 7% of units rated their efforts as "great."

Figure D2-1: Community Wraparound Supports (N = 29)

How would you rate your other community wraparound support efforts surrounding graduation?



Summary of Findings

Units are leveraging community partnerships to provide comprehensive wraparound support for students. While 76% of units rate their efforts as "okay" or better, with 7% rating as "great," nearly a quarter acknowledge doing the minimum or less. Units are focusing on: community partnerships and resource networking, mental health services, integrated social services, and vocational rehabilitation programs. These efforts range from basic needs assistance to career preparation, with some districts implementing innovative programs like peer mentoring for at-risk students and work-study opportunities.

D3. Other Stakeholder Engagement

Other stakeholder engagement at schools refers to the inclusion and active participation of individuals or groups beyond educators and families in the educational process. Stakeholders are individuals or entities that have an interest or concern in the success and outcomes of the school. In addition to teachers and parents, various stakeholders may include community members, businesses, local government officials, non-profit organizations, and others who can contribute to the overall well-being and success of students and the school community.

D3a. Qualitative Summary of Other Stakeholder Engagement Efforts

Units provided detailed descriptions of their districts' other stakeholder engagement efforts. While some districts report limited resources or minimal engagement, several key partners and engagement strategies emerged among those actively involved.

Business and Workforce Partnerships. School districts frequently collaborate with local businesses, Vocational Rehabilitation services, and Career and Technology Centers to provide students with work-based learning experiences, internships, and job readiness programs. These partnerships aim to develop job skills, engage students in real-world work environments, and facilitate school-to-employment transitions. Many of these programs allow students to gain hands-on work experience while also earning high school credits.

"Programs within our schools provide work-based experiences that allow students to earn credit while obtaining real-world work experience."

Community Partnerships. Schools are expanding their reach by partnering with various community entities, including non-profit organizations (e.g., United Way, Rotary Club, American Legion, and Dollars for Scholars), tribal councils, local groups (e.g., PTO groups, churches). These collaborations provide additional resources, such as financial support, advocacy for supportive policies, and volunteer

assistance. For example, the Spirit Lake Tribal Council offers monetary incentives for students who make the honor roll or graduate. Community involvement extends to various activities and events that foster a culture of support for students, including graduation celebrations, school carnivals, guest speaker programs, and community meetings. Some districts have also developed innovative programs with local businesses to support students with disabilities, like the collaboration with TNT Fitness to create adaptive physical education courses and inclusive extracurricular activities.

"Each individual district hosts different community activities throughout the school year such as school carnivals, coffee with the community, community guest speakers."

Mental Health and Social Services

Collaboration. Districts are collaborating with local mental health agencies, behavioral health coalitions, and human services organizations to address students' emotional and social needs. These partnerships have led to the implementation of programs like day treatment for students with emotional disturbances and on-site mental health counseling. Some districts are utilizing grants to supplement medical costs for students whose families cannot afford counseling. There's also a trend towards expanding these services, with some districts increasing contracts with mental health providers and adding addiction counseling for youth.

"We are continually expanding our efforts to support additional services in this area, including increased number of contracts with mental health providers and the addition of addiction counseling for youth."

"We maintain ongoing conversations with local politicians to advocate for policies and funding that benefit our students."

Government and Interagency Collaboration. Districts are working closely with local government entities, law enforcement, juvenile courts, and human service agencies to create a broader support network for students. These partnerships aim to advocate for policies and funding that directly benefit students and their graduation outcomes. In some cases, local politicians and councils are engaged in ongoing conversations to secure resources that help schools meet their goals. A notable example is the monthly partnership between BPS and five community agencies, including the Police Department, Human Service Zone, and Juvenile Courts, to discuss gaps and supports needed for students and families.

Stakeholder Input and Feedback Mechanisms.

Districts are increasingly implementing formal structures to gather input from various stakeholders, ensuring their perspectives are considered in decision-making processes related to graduation and student support. These include advisory committees, regular surveys, focus groups, and community feedback sessions. These efforts demonstrate a commitment to transparency and continuous improvement based on community feedback.

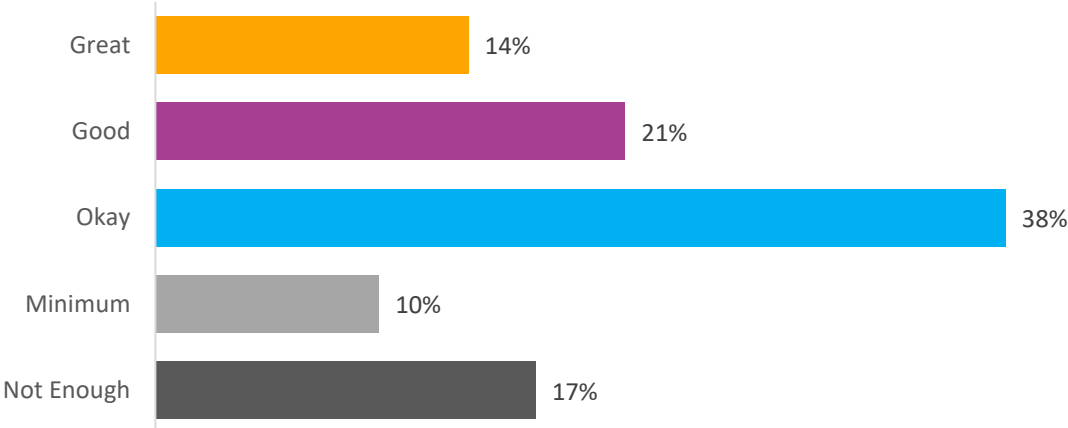
"As a district and special education unit, parents and stakeholders are provided the opportunity to complete surveys offering feedback and participate in focus groups"

D3b. Rating Other Stakeholder Engagement Efforts

When rating their engagement efforts with stakeholders other than families and educators, 38% of units said they are doing an "okay" job, and 21% rated their efforts as "good." However, 27% of units acknowledged doing the minimum (10%) or not enough (17%). Additionally, 14% rated their engagement as "great." This suggests that while many units are making significant efforts, there's still room for improvement in stakeholder engagement across the state. The presence of units reporting "great" performance indicates potential best practices that could be shared to enhance overall efforts.

Figure D3-1: Other Stakeholder Engagement (N = 29)

Q: How would you rate your other stakeholder engagement efforts surrounding graduation?



Summary of Findings

Units are actively engaging with diverse stakeholders beyond families and educators. While 73% of units rate their stakeholder engagement as "okay" or better, with 14% achieving "great" status, 27% acknowledge doing only the minimum or less. Units focus on five key areas: business partnerships, community organizations, mental health services, government collaboration, and formal feedback mechanisms. Notable innovations include adaptive physical education partnerships and coordinated multi-agency support systems for students and families.

E. Progress toward the SiMR

Units provided data on their progress toward North Dakota's State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) targets for six-year graduation rates among students with ED and students with disabilities. This section presents units' graduation rates compared to NDDPI targets, trends over time, and strategies for meeting the state's 2025-26 targets, highlighting areas of success and potential need for support.

E1. Graduation Rate for Students with ED

E1a. Description of Graduation Rates for Students with ED

Graduation rates for students with ED vary across districts, with reported rates ranging from 46.2% to 100%. Many units report that students with ED graduate at lower rates than both the general education population and all students with disabilities. For example, one unit reported ED students graduating at 46.2% compared to 87.9% for students without disabilities (SWOD) and 73.9% for SWD overall. However, this pattern is not universal - several units report ED graduation rates matching or exceeding their overall special education graduation rates.

However, this data must be interpreted cautiously as many units serve very small ED populations, often just 1-5 students per cohort, meaning individual student outcomes can dramatically impact overall percentages. Some units even report having no ED students in certain years, making trend analysis challenging. Several units noted this challenge in terms of identifying consistent trends or make meaningful comparisons between student groups and districts.

Rural units also highlight challenges in supporting ED students through graduation, specifically noting limited access to mental health services as a barrier to success. This lack of support often contributes to higher dropout rates and lower graduation rates for students with ED. For example, one unit noted "[Being so rural], one thing our districts really struggle with is the mental health needs of the students. We have very limited and few resources that can provide our students with ED mental health services which has led to some of the drop-outs that have occurred." In addition, units report that ED students often require extended time to complete graduation requirements. Many units describe successes using alternative pathways to graduation and targeted support systems to increase graduation rates for students with ED.

E1b. Comparison of Six-Year Graduation Rates for Students with ED to NDDPI Targets

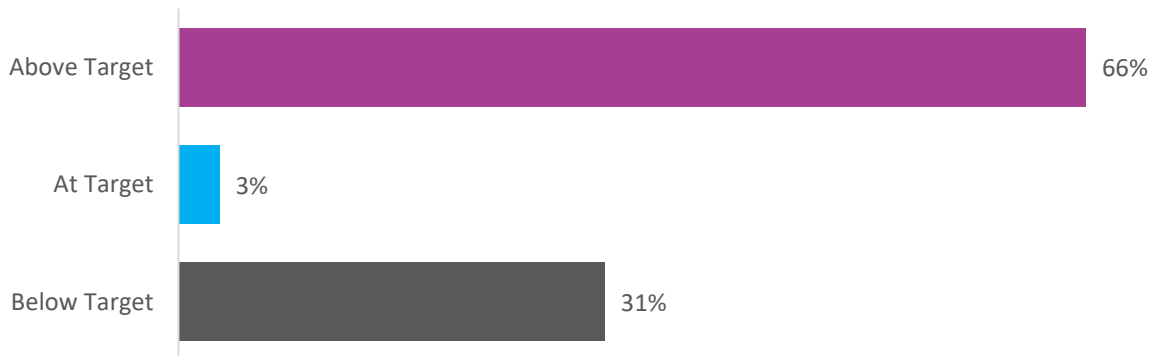
Units were asked if their most recent six-year graduation rate for students with ED is at, above, or below the NDDPI's 2025-26 target of 67.63%.

The majority of units (66%) report exceeding the target, while 3% are meeting it. However, 31% of units fall below this goal, highlighting areas that may require additional support. This distribution suggests that

while many units have developed effective strategies for supporting students with ED, there remains room for improvement in about one-third of the units.

Figure E1-1. Six-Year Graduation Rate for Students with ED Compared to NDDPI Target (N = 29)

*Q: The NDDPI has set a 2025-26 target of 67.63% for the six-year graduation rate for **students with ED**. Is your most recent six-year graduation rate for students with ED at, above, or below this target?*



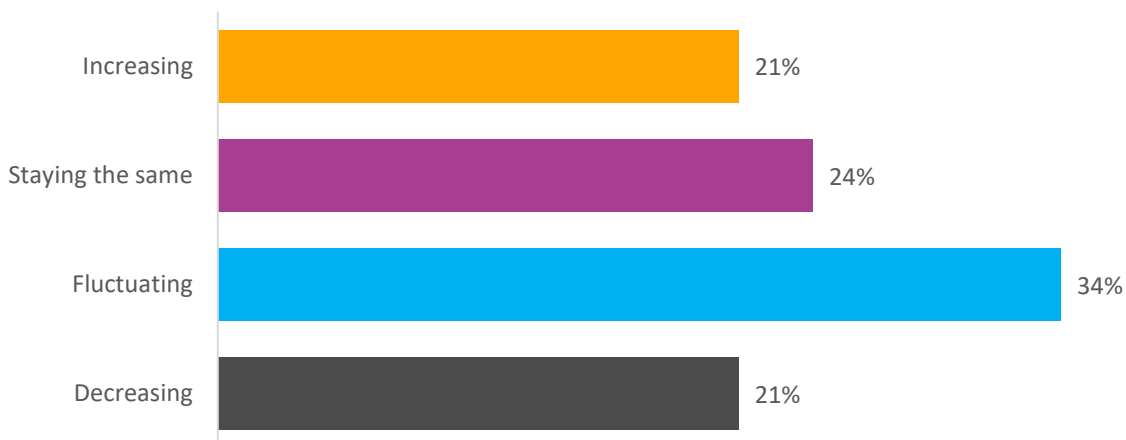
E1c. Trends in Graduation Rates for Students with ED

Units described trends in ED graduation rates over time, revealing a mixed picture: 21% reported increasing rates, 21% reported decreases, 24% reported stable rates, and 34% reported fluctuating trends.

The high rate of fluctuation may largely result from the small cohort sizes in many districts, where the success of even a single student can notably shift percentages. As one unit explained, “District-level data varied more from year to year, which is common for small districts that often have low numbers that can skew percentages.”

Figure E1-2: Trends in Graduation Rates for Students with ED (N = 29)

Q: When you look at your trend data for students with ED, is the trend over time:



E1d. Plans to Improve or Maintain Graduation Rates for Students with ED

Units report implementing multiple strategies to improve graduation rates for students with ED.

- **Early identification and intervention** form the foundation of many units' approaches, with widespread adoption of EWS and regular monitoring practices. Units conduct monthly team meetings to track attendance, grades, and overall progress, allowing for timely adjustments to student support.
- **Evidence-based programs** feature prominently in unit plans. Units focus on implementing state-supported practices (C&C, CICO, BSP) along with programs like BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks). **Alternative learning options** include specialized programs like RenewED, Social and Academic Intervention Learning (SAIL) centers, and School-Within-a-School programs providing flexible pathways to graduation.
- Units are expanding **mental health and behavioral support** through several channels. Some are implementing school-based Medicaid to increase access to behavioral health services, while others are developing partnerships with mental health agencies. Units provide clinical support through programs like Behavior Advantage and emphasize the development and implementation of comprehensive behavior intervention plans.
- **Professional development** forms another key component, with units providing staff training in EBPs, behavior intervention strategies, and trauma-informed approaches. This training extends to specialized coaching for ED teachers and support for implementing transition activities and goals.
- **Career and technical education** play an increasing role in graduation support. Units report expanding PAES labs, developing partnerships with career and technical centers, and creating opportunities for work training and job placement. Several units now offer high school credits for vocational programming and community-based learning experiences.
- **Family and community engagement** is also emphasized, with units strengthening home/school relationships through family workshops and agency partnerships to create comprehensive support networks.

Summary of Findings

Graduation rates for students with ED vary across districts, with reported rates ranging from 46.2% to 100%. Units show varied performance against the NDDPI 2025-26 target (67.63%), with 66% of units exceeding the target, 3% meeting it, and 31% falling below. Analysis of graduation trends reveals mixed patterns: 21% of units report increasing rates, 21% report decreases, 24% report stable rates, and 34% report fluctuating trends. Many units note that small ED student populations (often 1-5 students per cohort) significantly impact percentage calculations. Units report implementing multiple improvement strategies, including EWS, EBPs, expanded mental health services, and alternative learning pathways. Rural units specifically identify limited access to mental health services as a barrier to graduation success for students with ED.

E2. Graduation Rate for Students with Disabilities (SWD)

E2a. Description of Graduation Rates for SWD

Graduation rates for SWD generally show a higher and more consistent range compared to ED students, with reported rates ranging from 63.5% to 100%. Most units maintain rates near or above the state average, though performance varies both between districts and within districts over time. For example, one unit showed significant improvement of over 20 percentage points from one year to the next, while other units maintained consistently high rates above 90%. Graduation rates for SWD generally lag behind those of SWOD, but the gap varies.

The data reveals notable differences across disability categories. For example, one unit reported 100% graduation rates for students with an Orthopedic Impairment, 86% for Other Health Impaired students, 84% for students with Specific Learning Disabilities, and 33% for students with Intellectual Disabilities. This highlights the importance of considering different disability categories when analyzing graduation rates.

As with ED students, many districts noted the impact of small sample sizes on their data. One unit explained, "With most districts having small class sizes, 1 student can change the graduation rate from 100% to below 70% which can skew the important work districts are doing to increase/maintain graduation rates." This underscores the need for caution when interpreting data, especially from smaller districts.

E2b. Comparison of Six-Year Graduation Rates for SWD to NDDPI Targets

The majority of special education units are exceeding the NDDPI's 2025-26 target of 77.74% for SWD, with 55% of units reporting graduation rates above the target. However, a significant portion (38%) remain below the target, while 7% are at target. This suggests that while progress is being made, nearly 40% of units may need additional support to meet future targets.

Figure E2-1: Six-Year Graduation Rate for SWD Compared to NDDPI Target (N = 29)

Q: The NDDPI has set a 2025-26 target of 77.74% for Indicator 1. Is your most recent six-year graduation rate for students with disabilities at, above, or below this target?

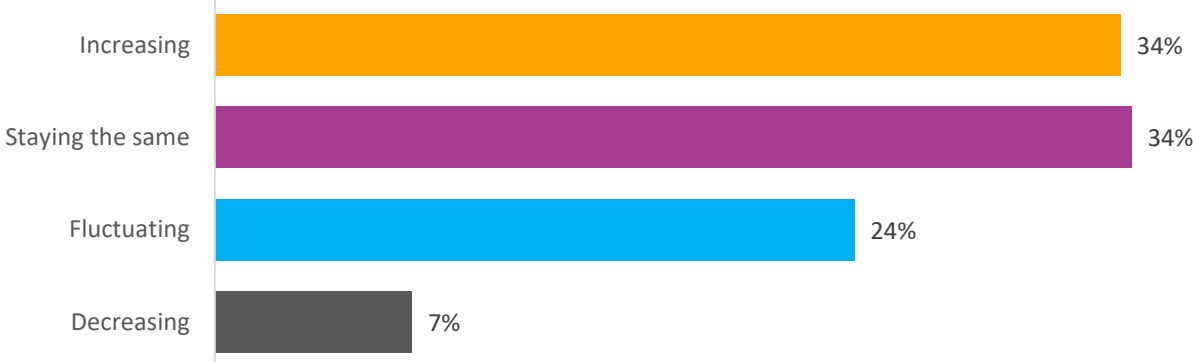


E2c. Trends in Graduation Rates for SWD

Analyzing trends over time reveals a more positive picture compared to ED students. Equal proportions of units (34% each) report either increasing graduation rates or rates staying the same, indicating stability or improvement in most cases. Only 7% report decreasing rates and 24% report fluctuating rates. This distribution suggests that many districts are maintaining or improving their graduation rates for SWD, with fewer districts experiencing decreases or fluctuations compared to ED students.

Figure E2-2: Trends in Graduation Rates for SWD (N = 29)

Q: When you look at your trend data for students with disabilities, is the trend over time:

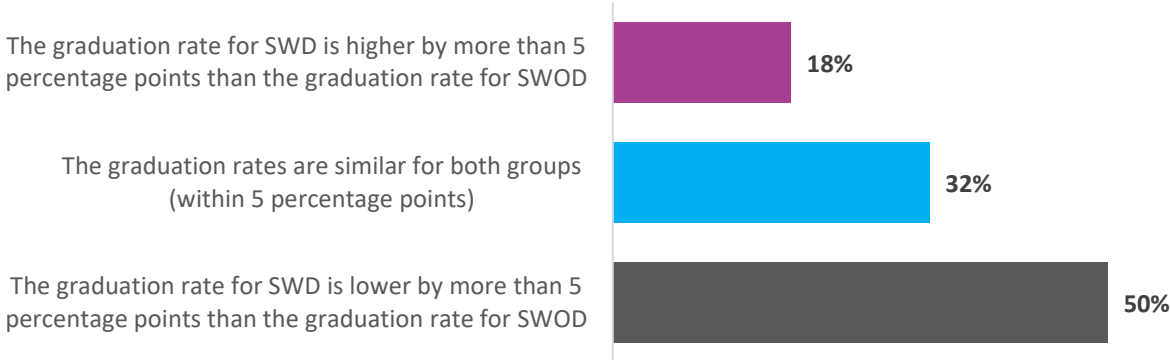


E2d. Comparison of Six-Year Graduation Rates: SWD vs. SWOD

The comparison between students with and without disabilities reveals gaps in graduation rates. Half of the units (50%) report that students with disabilities graduate at rates more than 5 percentage points lower than their peers without disabilities. About one-third (32%) report similar graduation rates between the two groups. Notably, 18% of units actually show higher graduation rates for students with disabilities, which could provide insights into successful practices.

Figure E2-3: Comparison of Six-Year Graduation Rates: SWD vs. SWOD (N = 29)

Q: Indicate how your most recent six-year graduation rate for students with disabilities compares to your six-year graduation rate for students without disabilities.



E2e. Plans to Improve or Maintain Graduation Rates for SWD

Units identify several key approaches to support graduation rates for SWD, with implementation varying across units.

- **Early identification systems** feature prominently, with units implementing enhanced assessment teams, EWS, and regular progress monitoring. Units track key indicators including attendance, grades, behavior referrals, and credit accumulation through monthly team meetings and systematic reviews. Many units plan to implement or improve on these efforts.
- **Alternative earning pathways** provide flexible routes to graduation. Units report implementing School-Within-a-School programs, Social and Academic Intervention Learning (SAIL) centers, and alternative high school options. These programs offer credit recovery, online coursework, dual credit options, and opportunities to earn credits through work experience.
- **Transition support** emerges as another key strategy. Units employ Transition Coordinators to facilitate practical skill development through internships, job training, and career exploration. Several units report partnerships with vocational rehabilitation services and career/technical centers for work training and job placement.
- Units emphasize **evidence-based practices** in their improvement plans, including C&C, CICO, BSP, and structured behavioral interventions.
- **Professional development** focuses on implementing EBPs with fidelity, along with training in social-emotional learning, behavior intervention plans, trauma-informed practices, and Prevent-Teach-Reinforce methods.
- Units emphasize **student-centered programming** focused on student voice/choice, personalized learning opportunities, career-ready practices, and building a sense of belonging.
- **Mental health support** features in many plans, with units expanding access to counseling services, mental health coordinators, behavioral analysts, and school psychologists.
- **Family and community engagement** forms part of units' comprehensive approach. Units report increasing parent communication, offering family workshops, and developing community partnerships.

Summary of Findings

Graduation rates for SWD range from 63.5% to 100% across units, showing higher and more consistent performance compared to ED students. Regarding the NDDPI's 2025-26 target of 77.74%, 55% of units exceed this target, 7% meet it, and 38% fall below. Trend analysis shows 34% of units report increasing rates, 34% report stable rates, 7% report decreases, and 24% report fluctuating rates. When comparing SWD to students without disabilities, 50% of units report graduation rates more than 5 percentage points lower for SWD, 32% report similar rates, and 18% report higher rates for SWD. Units report varying rates across disability categories, with some groups achieving higher graduation rates than others. Many units note that small sample sizes significantly impact percentage calculations. Improvement strategies include EWS, alternative learning pathways, transition support programs, and EBPs.

F. Scale-Up Planning for Graduation

F1. Sustaining and Improving on Efforts Surrounding Graduation

Units were asked how they will sustain or improve on their efforts surrounding graduation.

Key Strategies

Units are employing a multifaceted approach to sustain and improve graduation rates for students. The strategies reflect a comprehensive approach, focusing on enhancing educator training, improving data use, strengthening family and community engagement, sustaining evidence-based practices, providing individualized support, expanding mental health services, and preparing students for critical transitions. Below are the key strategies units are employing.

Expanding and Improving EWS and Data-Driven Decision-Making. Many units are focusing

"Increasing the use and fidelity of EWS and the Check & Connect program along with an increase of behavior specific tools through the MTSS-B schoolwide system. An increase of engagement interventions at the middle school level to better prepare students for high school."

on expanding and improving their EWS and data collection processes to identify at-risk students sooner and with greater accuracy. This involves expanding EWS across different grade levels, more frequent data reviews, using platforms like Panorama for comprehensive analysis, and training staff on data interpretation. Alongside these efforts, districts are implementing comprehensive frameworks like MTSS, Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR), and High Reliability Schools. These integrated approaches enable more accurate identification of at-risk students, facilitate data-driven decision-making, and provide structured support across all levels of intervention, ultimately enhancing districts' capacity to improve graduation outcomes.

Enhanced Professional Development and Training. Units are prioritizing professional development to equip educators with the skills and knowledge to implement evidence-based interventions effectively. Training focuses on EWS, behavioral management strategies, mental health and trauma-informed practices, targeted interventions, like Zones of Regulation, C&C, CICO, BSP, T-DOR, as well as FBA and BIP training. Many units are planning to extend this training beyond special education staff to include general education teachers, administrators, and other school personnel. The focus is on building capacity within schools by ensuring all staff members are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills to support ED students and SWD effectively.

Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) and Interventions.

Units are placing a strong emphasis on implementing and scaling up EBPs across districts. This includes increasing the adoption of the four EBPs supported by NDDPI (BSP, C&C, CICO, and T-DOR) while also exploring new EBPs to address specific needs. Efforts are being made to refine data collection processes and strengthen fidelity monitoring to ensure that these interventions are applied accurately and effectively. Regular fidelity checks are conducted to verify that interventions are being implemented as intended, accompanied by ongoing support and coaching for staff to maintain high-quality practices. By focusing on both implementation and fidelity monitoring, districts aim to maximize the impact of these evidence-based interventions on student outcomes.

"We need to improve data collection on the fidelity of programs and practices. Frequent data reviews will help monitor student progress more closely and ensure that we are addressing the needs of at-risk students effectively."

Individualized Support and Targeted Interventions. Units are adopting more individualized approaches to support ED students and SWD. This includes developing comprehensive, frequently updated IEPs with specific, measurable goals, implementing individualized graduation plans for at-risk students, and conducting quarterly or annual progress monitoring meetings to review and adjust these plans. In addition, some schools have implemented programs like the Social and Academic Intervention Learning (SAIL) to provide intensive, small-group support to address specific academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs. This personalized approach aims to address each student's unique challenges and provide targeted support to keep them on the path to graduation.

"[Our unit] will continue frequent attempts for communication throughout the school year, in addition to quarterly progress reports and annual IEP meetings. School staff continue to make family engagement a top priority."

Strengthening Family and Community Engagement.

Family and community engagement plays a pivotal role in supporting SWD. Districts are intensifying efforts to engage families through frequent communication, training and workshops, and collaborative activities that provide resources for supporting children's academic and emotional needs. Initiatives like the Portrait of a Graduate program align expectations between schools, families, and communities. Districts are also forming partnerships with community organizations to offer additional resources such as counseling services, extracurricular activities, and mentoring opportunities, all of which contribute to creating a strong support network.

"Develop and implement individualized support plans that address the unique needs of each student, including academic, behavioral, and emotional support."

Improved Mental Health and Social-Emotional Support.

Schools are prioritizing mental health and social-emotional support by increasing access to services and expanding staff capacity. This includes hiring more school psychologists and mental health counselors, integrating mental health strategies into existing frameworks like MTSS, implementing school-wide SEL curricula and programs, and providing trauma-informed care. Ongoing professional development, such as ACEs training, ensures staff are equipped to address students' social-emotional needs alongside academic goals. There's also a focus on creating more supportive school environments that address students' holistic needs. The goal is to address students' mental health and social-emotional needs as an integral part of supporting their academic success and graduation prospects.

"Our intention is to continue to support growth in the area of school-based mental health by continuing our supports for mental health counselors providing services in schools. We are increasing our school psychologist department by one FTE in the 2024-25 school year."

Supporting Transitions and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Opportunities.

"We will continue to implement PAES labs at the high school level. We have created a new Transition Specialist position to provide a higher level of support and vision for our learners with Transition IEPs to improve post-secondary outcomes."

Units are preparing students for key transitions from middle to high school and beyond, ensuring they are equipped for post-secondary education or employment. Transition Specialists are working directly with students to develop individualized Transition IEPs and connect them with work-based learning opportunities. Programs such as PAES (Practical Assessment Exploration System) labs and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs provide students with hands-on experience in various career fields. Additionally, districts are offering flexible learning pathways through dual credit and online learning options to cater to diverse student needs. Collaboration with career and technical centers for work training and job placement is also a key component of this strategy.

Summary of Findings

Units have developed comprehensive strategies to sustain and improve graduation rates. These efforts focus on expanding EWS across grade levels and integrating them with frameworks like MTSS and BARR. Professional development emphasizes evidence-based practices and behavioral management for all staff. Units are scaling up state-supported EBPs while strengthening individualized student support through targeted IEPs and academic programs. Additional priorities include expanding mental health services, enhancing family-community partnerships, and strengthening transition support through career and technical education opportunities.

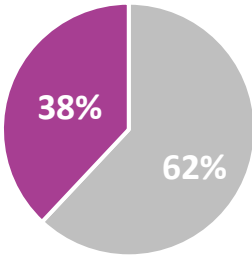
G. Technical Assistance Needs

G1. Identifying Technical Assistance Needs for the Upcoming School Year

Units were asked if they have any technical assistance needs that they would like NDDPI to address in the upcoming school year.

Figure G1-1: Technical Assistant Needs (N = 29)

Q: Do you have any technical assistance needs that you would like NDDPI to address in the upcoming school year?



38% of units (11 units) indicated they have technical assistance needs for the upcoming school year

G1a. Technical Assistance Requests

Analysis of the qualitative responses reveals several key areas where units are seeking support from NDDPI.

Key areas where technical assistance is requested include:

- **Professional Development:** Respondents expressed the need for training on EWS, MTSS, the four state-supported EBPs, family engagement, SEL, behavior management strategies. There was a suggestion for whole-school training during early out sessions.
- **Fidelity Tools:** Request for support developing fidelity checklists and tools for tracking EBP implementation, as well as pre-developed tools to track fidelity of various activities, strategies, or systems.
- **Data Platforms:** Respondents noted the need for district-wide data platforms capable of analyzing learner data at various levels, integrating academic and SEL data for continuous improvement, and tracking intervention impacts. Clarification is also requested on whether PowerSchool will continue as the primary data system so districts can move forward.
- **Specialized Program Development:** Assistance was requested for developing and implementing family engagement activities, mental health support programs, and alternative education options.
- **Funding Opportunities and Staffing Support:** Some units expressed a need for information on available grants and funding opportunities, as well as support for recruiting, hiring, and retaining special education staff.

- **Continued Support for Existing Initiatives:** Some units emphasized the importance of ongoing support for existing initiatives, such as EWS and MTSS, and funding for Goalbook.
- **Office Hours for PIER Tool:** A request was made for office hours to guide the completion of the PIER Tool and other tools for staff training available on the Educator Hub. A request was also made for disseminating ideas for how to improve moving forward.

Summary of Findings

Thirty-eight percent of units identified specific technical assistance needs from NDDPI. Primary requests focused on professional development for early warning systems and evidence-based practices, tools for measuring implementation fidelity, and support for data platforms and analysis. Units also sought guidance on program development, particularly for family engagement and mental health support initiatives. Additional needs included information about funding opportunities, support for staff recruitment and retention, and continued assistance with existing initiatives. Units specifically requested office hours support for PIER Tool completion and guidance on improvement strategies.