



# Results from An Evaluation of a School District's Student Support Team Effectiveness

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## Introduction

- For many years, schools have utilized problem-solving teams as a method of generating pre-referral intervention ideas. However, recent changes in school functioning associated with Response to Intervention (RtI) are requiring schools to evaluate the efficacy of their problem-solving teams.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Pre-referral intervention teams, known as Student Support Teams (SSTs) in this school district, were created to provide a forum where staff could collaborate to develop intervention strategies to support a student's academic or behavior needs.<sup>3,4</sup>
- In best practice, SSTs follow problem-solving guidelines and work with the referring person, which is generally a teacher, to discuss the concern or problem, work on developing interventions, and then evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions after implementation.<sup>5</sup>
- While some literature exists regarding the evaluation of SSTs perceived effectiveness, most of the research has focused on teacher perceptions and has ignored the perspectives of other school members that participate on these teams.<sup>6,7</sup>
- In addition, evaluations of SSTs as related to standards of best practice (ie. NASP Best Practices) has been missing from previous studies on this topic.<sup>8</sup>

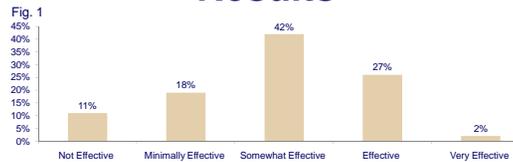
## Purpose

- This study adds to the literature by exploring multiple school personnel's perceptions of the effectiveness of Student Support Teams.
- The study will compare a school district's SST process to best practice models NASP as identified in Kovaleski (2002).

## Method

- 862 certified school staff members were emailed the Student Support Team Survey, which was completed online.
- The Student Support Team Survey is a 24 item survey that was developed by the authors and designed to model NASP best practice standards for pre-referral intervention teams.
- 43% of those surveyed responded.
- 51% of the participants were general education teachers and 18% were special education teachers.
- The remaining 30% of the participants were pupil services staff, principals, specialists, and other related staff.

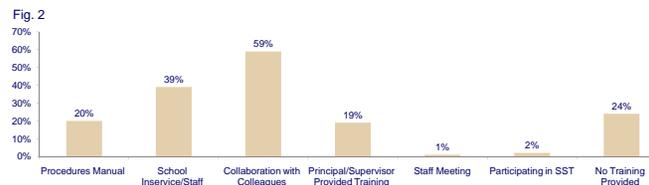
## Results



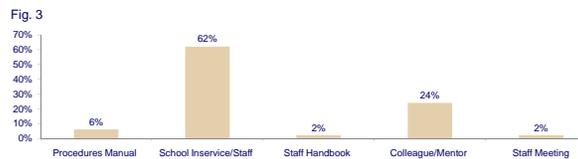
• Figure 1 displays the participants' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the SST process.

### NASP Standard - Training

*NASP recommends that all members of the SST process should receive meaningful and sufficient training. Training should extend beyond information giving and should include demonstration of the collaboration skills needed for effective team based problem solving.<sup>9</sup>*



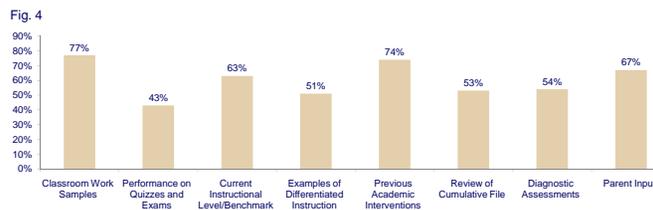
• Figure 2 displays how the participants learned about the SST process.



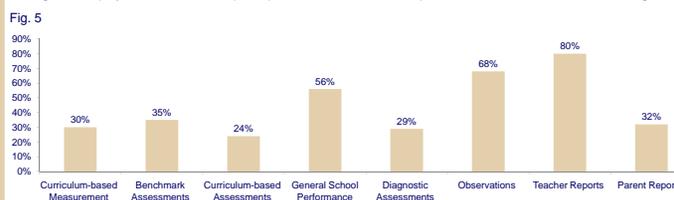
• Figure 3 displays what the participants felt the best way to inform staff members about SST.

### NASP Standard – Data-Based Decision Making

*NASP suggests that curriculum-based assessment be used during the initial SST process to help identify the performance concern and that progress monitoring methods should be incorporated to determine the effectiveness of interventions tried.*



• Figure 4 displays what kind of data participants found to be most helpful for academic needs at SST meetings.



• Figure 5 displays how student's academic progress is monitored after the initial SST meeting.

## Discussion

- Overall, the participants felt that the SST process in this district was somewhat effective. The majority of responses were from elementary school staff. Further analysis of the aggregated data may provide insight to the effectiveness of the district's SST process at secondary levels.
- Further evaluation of the data is also needed to better understand the perceptions of specific SST members and the effectiveness of the SST process.
- While the majority of participants were informally trained in the SST process, it appears that a large percentage of the participants would like to receive more formal training like that suggested by Kovaleski (2002).
- Staff identified classroom work samples and previous interventions attempted to be the most helpful data to use in the SST discussion. Perhaps more staff training is needed in the use and value of curriculum-based assessment practices.
- In terms of monitoring the progress of students, participants appeared to use teacher reports and observations more frequently than NASP recommended practices such as curriculum-based measurement. Again, this could illustrate a need for more training in the use and value of curriculum-based measurement and curriculum-based assessments practices.
- Further analysis of the aggregated data is needed to explore other staff members perspective on the effectiveness of the SST process.

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