



Supporting Students through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support 2021–23 Biennial Operating Budget Decision Package (DP)

Agency/Program Recommendation Summary

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) requests funding to support statewide development of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) by providing training and technical assistance on evidence-based approaches to supporting students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Washington students, including students with disabilities, multilingual/English learners, students of color, and students from low-income families continue to experience persistent gaps in opportunities, growth, and achievement. In order to close these gaps, schools must have systems to identify students requiring additional supports and respond to their needs.

Package Description

What is the problem, opportunity, or priority you are addressing with the request?

Every student deserves an education that can meet their academic, social, and emotional needs, and schools require the tools to meet these important goals.

Students do not enter school with equal opportunities. Economic inequality, institutionalized oppression, the experiences of trauma, and other factors mean that some students start school with fewer opportunities and more barriers to learning. Once they are in school, we also know that discipline policies and practices disproportionately impact students of color, students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and students lacking stable housing. For example, Native American students are 2.26 times more likely than White students to be excluded from school, and Black students are 2.44 times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their White peers (2018–19).

In addition to being 2.6 times more likely to be suspended or expelled compared to students without disabilities, students with disabilities in Washington also have very high rates of placement in segregated classrooms and schools (2018–19). Washington ranks 44th the U.S. in the placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive learning environments (LRE). Over time, these inequities result in vastly different rates of school achievement and completion.

For the Class of 2019:

- Graduation rates for Native American students were 21.1 percentage points lower than that of White students.
- Graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness were 27.2 percentage points lower than their peers with stable housing.
- Graduation rates for multilingual/English learners was 22.2 percentage points lower than native English speakers.
- Graduation rates for students with disabilities were 21.5 percentage points lower than students without disabilities (2018–19).

Many districts and schools do not have the infrastructure and capacity to implement a comprehensive system of support that would allow staff to make connections with each individual student, assess their strengths and needs, and engage with them and their family to develop a plan for their future.

Without a statewide system of technical assistance to guide implementation, many districts are finding it difficult to effectively provide a tiered continuum of supports that uses evidence-based practices; data-based team decision-making; and family, student, and community engagement. Researchers on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which is the behavioral component of MTSS, developed a tool for schools to assess the fidelity (quality) of implementation of evidence-based practices across three tiers: tier 1 universal supports; tier 2 individualized supports, and tier 3 intensive supports.

This tool is called the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI). For many reasons, including lack of awareness of the tool or lack of capacity, fewer than one-quarter of schools in 2018 administered the TFI for tier 1 implementation. **Only 324 schools, or 13.24% of schools statewide**, rated themselves as implementing tier 1 with fidelity, which is the foundation and prerequisite for implementing MTSS across three tiers and serving all students. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Administration of the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) in 2018

Educational Service District	Total Schools	Percentage of Schools in State	2018 TFI	% of schools assessing	2018 Fidelity	Percentage of Schools at Fidelity
101	284	11.60%	3	1.06%	0	0.00%
105	151	6.17%	64	42.38%	43	28.48%
112	225	9.19%	53	23.56%	35	15.56%
113	195	7.97%	64	32.82%	37	18.97%
114	113	4.62%	11	9.73%	1	0.88%
121	807	32.97%	251	31.10%	166	20.57%
123	158	6.45%	11	6.96%	7	4.43%
171	143	5.84%	18	12.59%	14	9.79%
189	372	15.20%	43	11.56%	21	5.65%
Total	2448	--	518	21.16%	324	13.24%

What is your proposed solution?

This proposal would establish state and regional MTSS implementation supports with the goal of increasing the consistency and fidelity of implementation across the state. A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a framework for enhancing the adoption and implementation of a continuum of evidence-based practices to improve important outcomes for all students and decrease adverse outcomes for student groups who experience opportunity gaps. MTSS integrates both academic and non-academic supports to meet the needs of the whole child. By integrating these supports, schools may also increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of their services (McIntosh, K., & Goodman, S. (2016). *The Guilford practical intervention in the schools series. Integrated multi-tiered systems of support: Blending RTI and*

PBIS. Guilford Press). As students (and adults) are experiencing the additional traumatic effects of a global pandemic, MTSS also provides a framework for more effectively integrating behavioral health supports into the school setting.

The research on tiered supports indicates that universal supports, when provided consistently to all students, will meet the needs of 80% of students. Tier 2 supports are added to meet the additional needs of 15% of students, and tier 3 supports are the most intensive to meet the students with the highest needs in academics and/or social/emotional/behavioral domains. It takes all three tiers, well implemented, to support all students.

Further, to be effective, MTSS must be implemented with an equity focus, using culturally responsive practices, in order to effectively close opportunity and achievement gaps. Cultural responsiveness is embedded in the MTSS model, including the importance of building relationships with students and their families, assessing the skills and needs of each student individually, and using data to constantly adjust and refine instructional strategies and intensities until students meet desired goals.

At a time of limited and threatened resources, MTSS helps OSPI, our regions, and our districts to use existing resources in a more efficient and effective way. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) reviewed the research on School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions (SWPBIS), which is the behavioral portion of MTSS. WSIPP found that the return on investment of SWPBIS is **\$14.12 for each dollar invested (or 1412%)**. Much of that benefit will be realized by the students currently being left behind.

What are you purchasing and how does it solve the problem?

There are three main components to this proposal:

- 1. Regional capacity-building and professional development:** 12.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) Regional MTSS Implementation Specialists. This would include one specialist per educational service district (ESD), with additional support for Washington's most populated areas in the Puget Sound, as well as for the smallest schools and districts in rural areas of the state.
- 2. Statewide implementation and progress monitoring:**
 - 1.0 FTE Statewide MTSS Implementation Manager and 1.0 FTE Statewide MTSS Data Manager.
 - Training and support for Regional Implementation Specialists and Implementation Manager from national and regional experts to build knowledge and skills for best practice in coaching for equity, implementation science, and MTSS implementation.
- 3. Feasibility study for statewide MTSS database development:** A database will be used to measure ongoing implementation fidelity and effectiveness and compare with student outcomes.

The 12 implementation specialists will support all nine ESD regions, with additional support for areas that are either highly populated or very rural. Experience in other states has found that

small, rural districts often need more time and more support to successfully implement MTSS. A cohort of 12 specialists will allow OSPI to scale-up support for districts in an intentional and effective way and provide a foundation for future expansion.

Staffing at OSPI is necessary to ensure the 12 specialists are well trained and that their efforts are coordinated and supported. The Implementation Manager will directly oversee and support the Specialists who are based at the ESDs, including providing training and ongoing professional development in MTSS and implementation science. The Data Manager will collect and analyze training and implementation data and coordinate the development of data systems to compare program inputs with implementation fidelity and student outcomes.

In order to support continuous improvement and to assess the quality of systems coaching, the proposal includes funds to assess the feasibility of a database to record the coaching and professional development activities delivered by the regional Implementation Specialists, as well as the participation by district and school staff, and then compare this data to implementation fidelity measures and student outcomes.

Using a logic model and evaluation plan, such a database would be designed to allow comparisons of inputs, such as MTSS coaching, Learning Assistance Program (LAP) fund expenditures, school improvement supports, and others; with districts' level of MTSS implementation and fidelity, and with key outcomes for their students. Systems are already set up to collect student data, but it is important that OSPI be able to use that data as part of continuous improvement processes to calibrate training, funding, and other supports to districts in order to be most effective. The first phase would involve a feasibility study, paying an expert to develop the specifications and cost estimates for full development and implementation.

Ideally, the database would be set up to import data already collected on fidelity of implementation (District Systems Fidelity Inventory, Tiered Fidelity Inventory for PBIS, and Tiered Fidelity Inventory for Reading), as well as student outcome data aggregated at the school and district level, which is already collected by OSPI through the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS).

Triangulating the three types of data will assist multiple OSPI departments to better align resources and supports with the MTSS framework, to enable effective implementation of those supports, and, as a result, to improve student outcomes.

Research (Green, A., Lewis, T., & Olsen, A. (2020). General Education Teachers' Use of Evidence-Based Practices: Examining the Role of Student Race and Risk Status. *Behavioral Disorders*, 45(3), 183-192. Behavioral Disorders 2020, Vol. 45(3) 183–192. DOI: 10.1177/0198742919883570).

using classroom observations of MTSS practices has found that the dosage of evidence-based instructional practices was lower than the amount needed to be effective for students generally. When they looked further, students who were most at risk of adverse outcomes, including students of color, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families, received even less. **In other words, poor (or lack of) MTSS implementation means the students who need more actually get less.**

In order to implement effective classroom practices at the local level, the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) Center has found that states that standardize resources and materials for districts and invest in implementation capacity are much more successful than states that do not (Goodman, Ward, & McIntosh, 2019). This proposal supports both approaches.

What alternatives did you explore and why was this option chosen?

Most states provide technical assistance, training, and coaching to districts on MTSS implementation. Models in other states include technical assistance centers at universities or a separate governmental or non-profit organization. The option proposed here is consistent with approaches in some states and is the option for Washington that will be the most cost-effective and most efficient to reach all areas of the state, as it uses the existing educational service district structure. This type of support has been identified by researchers as an essential component of successful and sustained implementation. Without this support for districts, we instead see false starts, failed implementation, and a lack of fidelity to evidence-based practice models and frameworks.

This proposal will support districts and schools to implement MTSS systems by receiving evidence-based training and coaching at no cost. It is a modest investment that will lead to more efficient and effective uses of K–12 resources and produce better outcomes for the students who suffer the most from educational inequities.

Performance Measures

Performance outcomes:

Implementation is the key to equitable practice and equitable outcomes. MTSS provides access to equitable practices for students of color and students with disabilities. It does this by increasing the instructional time that students receive (e.g., by reducing classroom and school exclusions) and by increasing the quantity and quality of evidence-based instruction.

More specifically, this proposal will:

1. Increase access to evidence-based professional development for districts that is free and low-cost, which will:
 - a. Increase the number of districts who are supported in implementing MTSS with fidelity.
 - b. Increase the number of schools that implement MTSS with fidelity to support student needs across three tiers.
2. As a result of increased MTSS implementation with fidelity, student outcomes improve, including:
 - a. Improved academic growth for all disaggregated student groups.
 - b. Decreased use of exclusionary discipline for disaggregated student groups.
 - c. Reduction of gaps in achievement for students with disabilities, students of color, and other student groups.
 - d. Increased inclusion of students with disabilities in least restrictive environments (LRE).
 - e. Improved student, family, and teacher perceptions of school climate and safety.

Fiscal Details (Funding, FTEs, Revenue, Objects)

Operating Expenditures	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Fund 001-1	\$2,280,000	\$2,193,000	\$2,193,000	\$2,193,000
Total Expenditures	\$2,280,000	\$2,193,000	\$2,193,000	\$2,193,000
Biennial Totals	\$4,473,000		\$4,386,000	
Staffing	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
FTEs	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Average Annual	2.0		2.0	
Revenue	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Fund BBB-X	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Biennial Totals	\$0		\$0	
Object of Expenditure	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Obj. A	\$185,000	\$185,000	\$185,000	\$185,000
Obj. B	\$99,000	\$99,000	\$99,000	\$99,000
Obj. C	\$132,000	\$53,000	\$53,000	\$53,000
Obj. E	\$1,842,000	\$1,842,000	\$1,842,000	\$1,842,000
Obj. G	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
Obj. J	\$10,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion or alteration of a current program or service:

N/A

Detailed assumptions and calculations:

- Contract for 12 MTSS Regional Implementation Specialists totaling \$1,830,000 each fiscal year, beginning in fiscal year (FY) 2022.
- OSPI will hire 2.0 FTE to support MTSS data management and implementation activities. The estimated cost to fund these positions is \$318,000 in FY22 and \$310,000 annually thereafter.

- Contract to assess the feasibility, specifications, and cost estimates for full development and implementation of a MTSS database. This is projected to cost \$79,000 in FY22.
- Contract with regional and/or national experts to train the MTSS Implementation Specialists on implementation science and evidence-based practices to build the workforce knowledge and skills. This is estimated to cost is \$53,000 each year beginning in FY22.

Workforce assumptions:

Twelve FTE (12.0 FTE) MTSS Regional Implementation Specialists at the educational service districts. This is estimated to cost \$1,830,000 each year beginning in FY22.

OSPI staff: 1.0 FTE MTSS Data Manager is estimated to cost \$162,000 in FY22 and \$158,000 annually thereafter; 1.0 FTE MTSS Implementation Manager is estimated to cost \$156,000 in FY22 and \$152,000 annually thereafter.

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?

The purpose of the proposal is to close persistent gaps between student groups, based upon race, ability, family income, and other factors. The charts in the appendix show the impact in Wisconsin of implementing a similar system of support for schools and their students. Proper implementation of MTSS will mean students receive evidence-based instruction and those experiencing educational gaps receive a sufficient dosage of these supports in a culturally relevant manner in order to accelerate student growth and close gaps.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic framework:

This request supports Superintendent Reykdal's vision and priority to close opportunity gaps, as well as the OSPI mission to develop equity-based policies and the agency's values of ensuring equity, continuous improvement, and focus on the whole child.

OSPI believes ensuring educational equity requires education leaders "to examine the ways current policies and practices result in disparate outcomes" and requires educational leaders to "actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools."

Effective implementation of MTSS has been shown to reduce the use of suspension, improve student academic performance (particularly in reading), and close longstanding opportunity gaps affecting students of color and students with disabilities.

Other Collateral Connections

Intergovernmental:

OSPI does not anticipate any impacts to tribal, regional, county, or local governments.

External stakeholders will include the educational service districts (ESDs), the Association of Washington School Principals, the Washington Association of School Administrators, the Washington Education Association, the Public School Employees of Washington, institutions of

higher education, and others. Many of these groups have already articulated the need for state level support. The ESDs will be contracted to deliver support to districts in order to more effectively and consistently implement the MTSS framework.

Stakeholder response:

OSPI has been in contact with multiple stakeholders through existing advisory groups and other venues. Stakeholders including district representatives, teachers, and families have expressed a desire for OSPI to take a leadership role in supporting MTSS implementation. The training and coaching resources will be offered for districts who choose to use them and take steps to engage in implementation.

Legal or administrative mandates:

N/A

Changes from current law:

Statutory changes are not required to move forward. Support can be provided to districts on a voluntary basis, based upon their willingness and ability to meet readiness criteria to implement MTSS.

State workforce impacts:

This proposal does not impact the overall workforce, but it is designed to improve the capacity of the existing workforce and support the effectiveness of any expansion of the workforce through staffing enrichment or other means.

State facilities impacts:

N/A

Puget Sound recovery:

N/A

Other Documents

Reference documents:

SISEP and the National PBIS Center: [Four key actions for State Education Agency teams to support implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support](#) (Goodman, Ward & McIntosh, 2019).

Other state MTSS technical assistance centers and projects:

- [Michigan MTSS Technical Assistance Center](#)
- [Wisconsin RtI Center](#)
- [Florida PBIS Project](#): Multi-tiered System of Supports, Florida Dept of Education

Attached: When implemented through a statewide framework of training, coaching, and technical support, Wisconsin demonstrated that MTSS improves student outcomes and closes

gaps. This includes significant reductions in suspensions as well as improvements in academic growth and achievement. Graphs from their annual reports are provided in the appendix:

- Figure 1. Decreases in out of school suspension rates from 2009–10 to 2015–16 for all students, Black students, Hispanic/Latino students, and students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- Figure 2. Increases in percentage of students meeting or exceeding projected Northwest Education Association (NWEA)'s Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) growth from 2011–12 to 2015–16 for all students, Black students, Hispanic/Latino students, and students with IEPs.

Data from Wisconsin reinforces the importance of MTSS implementation for behavior and reading on closing gaps for students who experience the most profound opportunity gaps. Implementing either behavioral or reading MTSS with fidelity at tier 1 closes gaps in both suspension/expulsion rates and reading growth.

Implementing both closes gaps more and faster:

- Figure 3. Reduction in suspension rates in Wisconsin, resulting from MTSS for behavior (PBIS) implementation
- Figure 4. Reduction in suspension rates in Wisconsin, resulting from MTSS for Reading (RtI) implementation
- Figure 5. MAP growth rate in schools implementing MTSS for behavior, Tier 1, with fidelity
- Figure 6. MAP growth rate in schools implementing MTSS for reading, Tier 1, with fidelity

Information technology (IT) addendum:

Does this decision package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software (including cloud-based services), contracts, or IT staff?

- No
- Yes

Appendix

Figure 1. Decreases in Out-of-School Suspension Rates from 2009–10 to 2015–16 for All Students, Black Students, Hispanic/Latino Students, and Students with IEPs

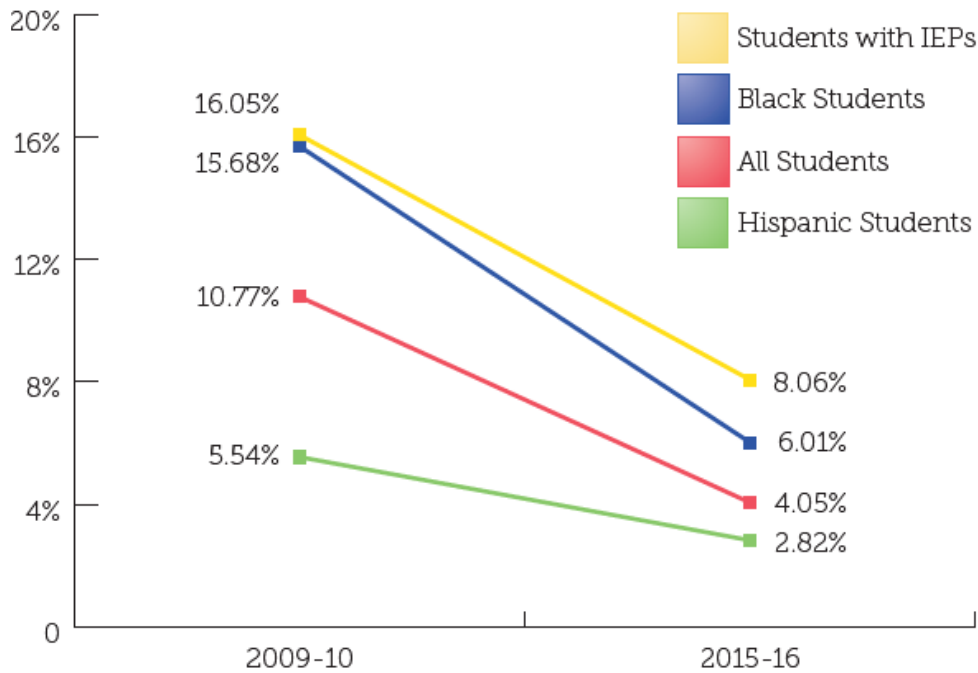


Figure 2. Increases in Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding Projected Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth in 2011–12 and 2014–15 for All Students, Black Students, Hispanic/Latino Students, and Students with IEPs

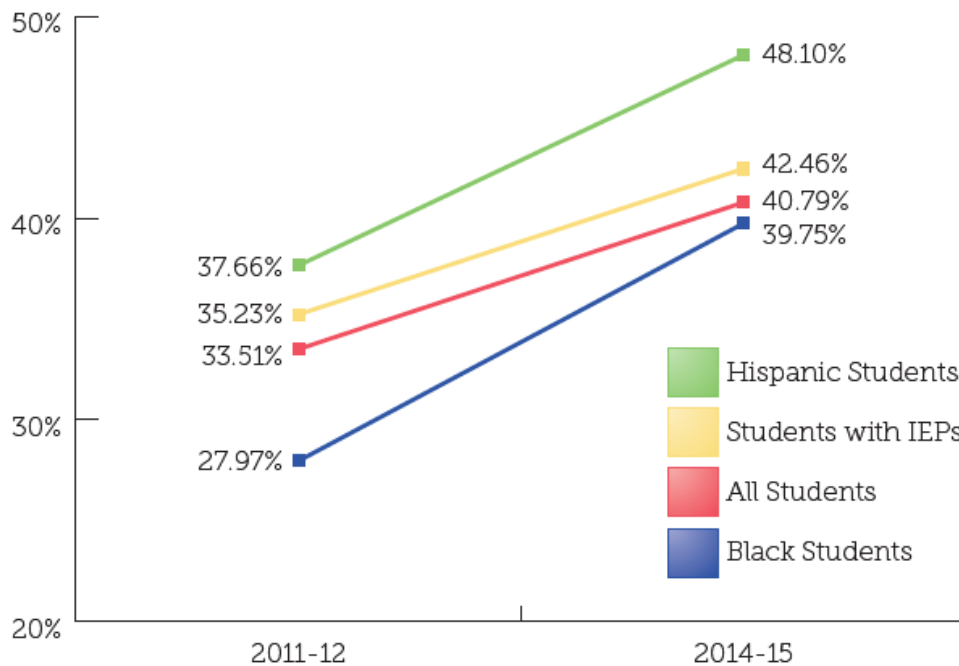


Figure 3. Reduction in Suspension Rates in Wisconsin Resulting from MTSS for Behavior (PBIS) Implementation

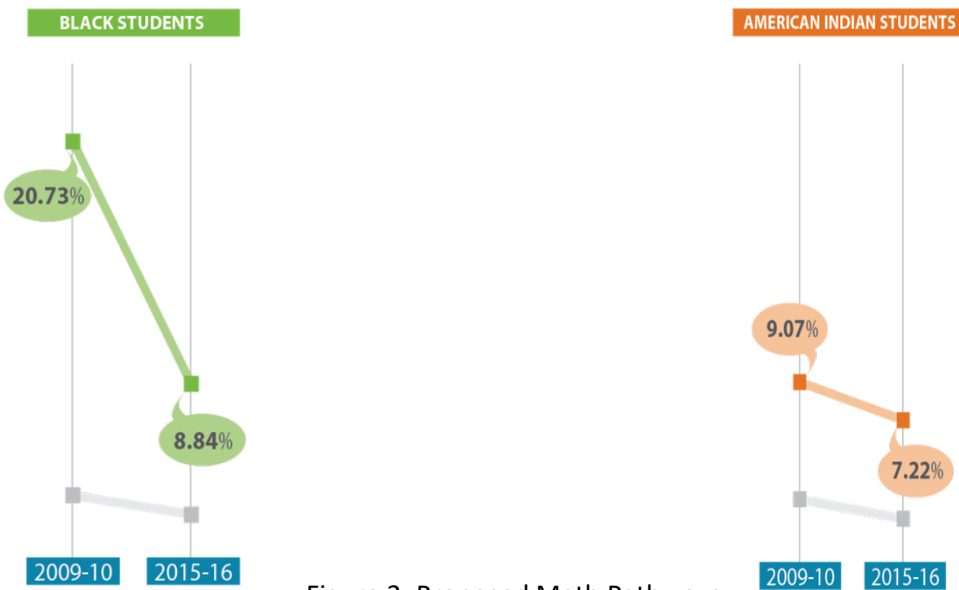


Figure 2: Proposed Math Pathways

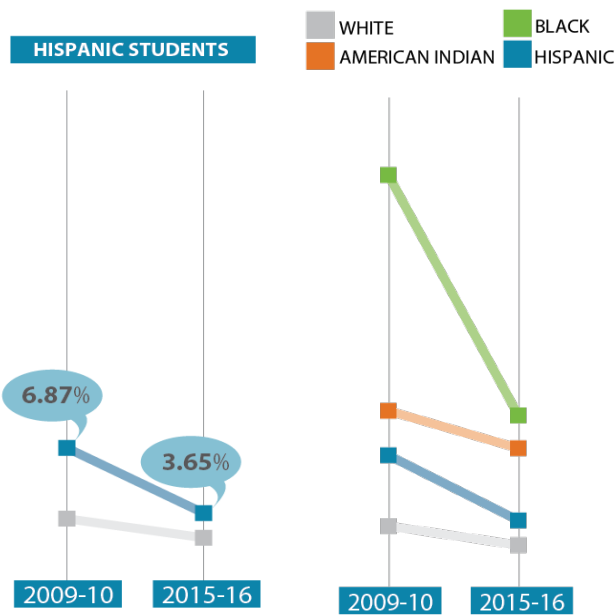


Figure 4. Reduction in Suspension Rates in Wisconsin Resulting from MTSS for Reading (RtI) Implementation

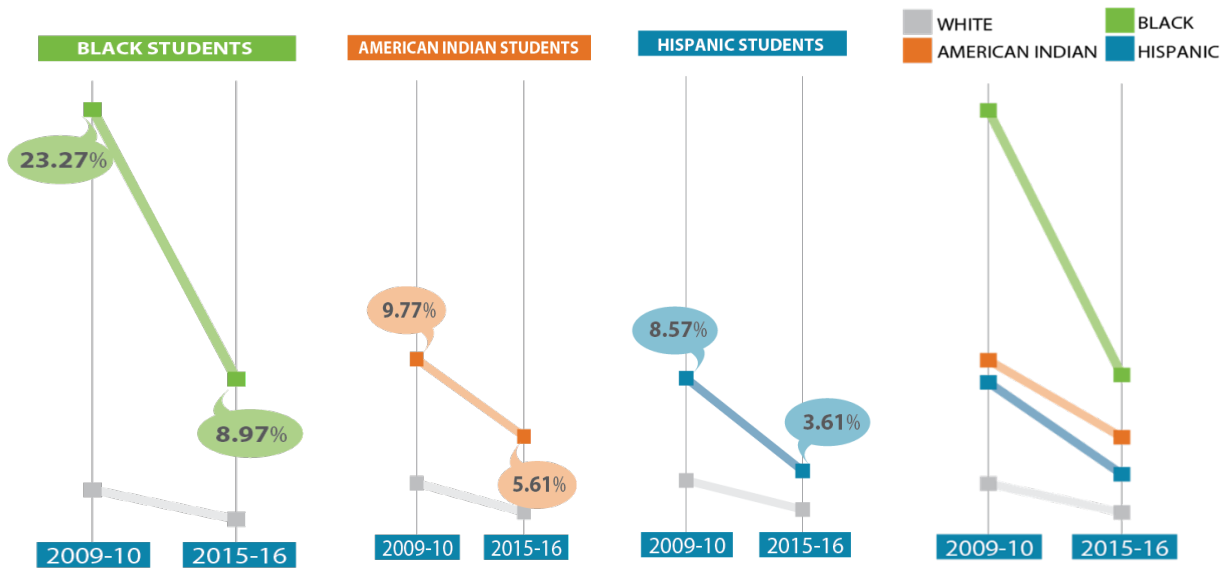


Figure 5. MAP Growth Rate in Schools Implementing MTSS for Behavior, Tier 1, with Fidelity

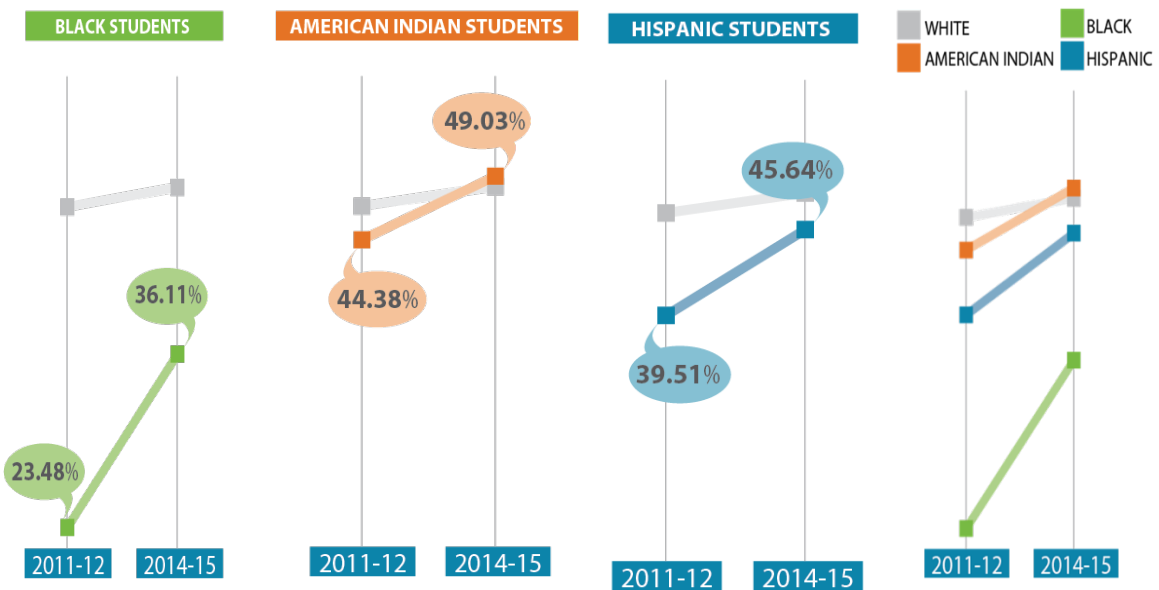


Figure 6. MAP Growth Rate in Schools Implementing MTSS for Reading, Tier 1, with Fidelity

