# **The Developing, Aligning, and Improving Systems of Academic and Behavioral Supports Grant**

## 2021 Annual Report to the Legislature, Department of Finance, State Board of Education, and the Legislative Analyst’s Office



**Prepared by the**

**Educator Excellence and Equity Division**

**Instruction, Measurement, and Administration Branch**

**California Department of Education**

**May 2022**

*Description*: 2020–21 Developing, Aligning, and Improving Systems of Academic and Behavioral Supports Grant: Annual Report for Fostering a Positive School Climate Grant

*Authority*: Assembly Bill 1808 (Chapter 32, Statutes of 2018)

*Recipients*: Legislature, Department of Finance, State Board of Education, and the Legislative Analyst’s Office

*Due Date*: Annually

## California Department of Education Report to the Legislature, Department of Finance, State Board of Education, and the Legislative Analyst’s Office

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**California Department of Education**

**Report to the Legislature, Department of Finance, State Board of Education, and the Legislative Analyst’s Office****: The Developing, Aligning, and Improving Systems of Academic and Behavioral Supports Grant** **2021 Annual Report to the Legislature**

# **Executive Summary**

This report is required by Section 143 of Assembly Bill (AB) 1808 (Chapter 32, Statutes of 2018). The Budget Act of 2015 appropriated $10 million for a competitive grant requiring the grantee to provide technical assistance and develop and disseminate statewide resources. The purpose of the technical assistance and resources is to encourage and assist local educational agencies in establishing and aligning schoolwide, data-driven systems of learning and behavioral supports to meet the needs of California’s diverse learners in the most inclusive environments possible. The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) was awarded the **Developing, Aligning, and Improving Systems of Academic and Behavioral Supports (ISABS): Scaling Up Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Statewide (SUMS) in California** grant. The Budget Act of 2016 augmented the original appropriation with an additional $20 million.

Additionally, AB 1808 (Chapter 32, Statutes of 2018) established a new component of the ISABS that focuses specifically on fostering a positive school climate. The Budget Act of 2018 appropriated $15 million for this purpose. The purpose of this work is to expand restorative justice, bullying prevention, and positive behavior interventions and minimize the use of emergency interventions.

This report provides an overview of the ISABS grant reporting requirements; a summary of the ISABS 2021 annual report in its original form, as provided to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) by the OCDE; and a link to the full ISABS 2020–21 annual report (*ISABS: Fostering a Positive School Climate [Year 3])* in its original form on the OCDE website, as submitted to the SSPI by the OCDE.

If you have any questions regarding this report or would like to request a hard copy, please contact Julia Agostinelli, Education Programs Consultant, Educator Excellence and Equity Division, at 916-322-9503 or JAgostinelli@cde.ca.gov.

You can find this report on the California Department of Education MTSS web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/>. The OCDE’s annual reports are available on the OCDE California SUMS Initiative web page at <https://ocde.us/MTSS/Pages/California_SUMS_Initiative.aspx>.

## Legislative Reporting Requirements

The Developing, Aligning, and Improving Systems of Academic and Behavioral Supports (ISABS) grant was established by Assembly Bill (AB) 104 (Chapter 13, Statutes of 2015) and later amended by Senate Bill 828 (Chapter 29, Statutes of 2016). The 2015 Budget Act appropriated $10 million to ISABS, and the 2016 Budget Act augmented the original appropriation with an additional $20 million. The legislation required that the grantee provide technical assistance (TA) and develop and disseminate statewide resources. The purpose of the TA and resources was to encourage and assist local educational agencies (LEAs) in establishing and aligning schoolwide, data-driven systems of learning and behavioral supports to meet the needs of California’s diverse learners in the most inclusive environments possible.

In 2016, the California Department of Education (CDE) selected the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) as the recipient of the ISABS grant through a competitive grant process for the Scaling Up Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Statewide Initiative (also known as the CA SUMS Initiative). The OCDE subcontracted with (1) the Butte County Office of Education (BCOE) for rural representation and partnership in planning and conducting grant activities and (2) the Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) Technical Assistance Center at the University of Kansas to provide TA and professional learning opportunities to participating LEAs.

AB 1808 (Chapter 32, Statutes of 2018) established an additional component of the ISABS that required the OCDE to subcontract with a California postsecondary educational institution to expand the state’s MTSS framework to foster a positive school climate in both academic and behavioral areas including, but not limited to, positive behavior interventions and support, minimizing the use of emergency interventions, restorative justice, bullying prevention, social and emotional learning (SEL), trauma-informed practice, and cultural competency. The Budget Act of 2018 appropriated
$15 million for this purpose.

In 2018, the OCDE and BCOE partnered with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for the Transformation of Schools (CTS) to expand the state's MTSS framework with an emphasis on promoting a positive school climate statewide.

The CDE has an administrative role in this grant program, including conducting the award process, distributing funding, and providing technical oversight of the items contained within the original Request for Applications document. The CDE does not receive funding for the administration of this grant program.

AB 1808 (Chapter 32, Statutes of 2018) requires that the grantee provide the following information on an annual basis:

*Each annual report shall include all of the following:*

1. *a summary of the activities conducted and resources developed;*
2. *the number of LEAs, educators, and pupils served by the activities and resources;*
3. *a description of effective evidence-based strategies identified for implementing the practices described in subdivision (c);*
4. *a summary of any data that is available on outcomes resulting from the activities conducted, including any data reported by LEAs; and*
5. *recommendations for improving state-level activities or policies.*

## Summary of How Legislative Requirements Were Met

The OCDE provided the 2020–21 ISABS: Fostering a Positive School Climate (Year 3) to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) by the legislatively mandated date. These documents are posted on the OCDE California SUMS Initiative web page at <https://ocde.us/MTSS/Pages/California_SUMS_Initiative.aspx>.

Included in this Legislative Report is the grantee’s high-level summary obtained from the grantee’s annual reports provided to the SSPI, which describes the use of grant funds during the 2020–21 fiscal year.

## Developing, Aligning, and Improving Systems of Academic and Behavioral Supports: Fostering a Positive School Climate (Year 3)

### Activities Conducted and Resources Developed

**The Executive Leadership Team** met weekly via phone conference calls and video conference calls. The executive leadership team includes:

* OCDE Associate Superintendent Christine Olmstead, Ed.D.
* BCOE Director of California Rural California MTSS Rindy Devoll
* UCLA CTS Director Joseph Bishop, Ph.D.

**Plan of Action**

The UCLA CTS, the OCDE, and the BCOE co-designed the plan of action, which is based upon a theory of action connecting evidence-based, positive approaches to school discipline to ongoing efforts to address the educational needs of students. A summary of the plan of action is as follows: (1) engage key partners, (2) develop an evidence-based curriculum for schools, (3) train educators on how to apply the curriculum to the daily practices, (4) pilot the program at selected sites, (5) connect MTSS to response to intervention and continuous improvement frameworks, and (6) determine impact using qualitative and quantitative analysis.

**School Climate Pilot**

The 14 School Climate Pilot sites in Phase 2A engaged in Plan, Do, Study, Act Cycles and have been working toward addressing their problem of practice. California (CA) MTSS coaches virtually meet with the principal every week to do a check-in, and coaches virtually meet bi-monthly to update, review, and problem-solve.

**California Multi-Tiered System of Support Pathway Certification for Schools**

The OCDE and team continue to grant access to an online certification course for the CA MTSS to be utilized as professional learning for pilot districts. The OCDE’s intention for the CA MTSS Pathway Certification for Schools is to build participant knowledge of the CA MTSS by making explicit and meaningful connections to the participant’s work as an educator. The OCDE recommends completing the CA MTSS Pathway Certification for Schools course in a 12- to 18-month period.

Obtaining the CA MTSS Pathway Certification includes:

* Section 1: Get Started CA MTSS
* Sections 2−4: Foundations of CA MTSS—What, Why, and How
* Sections 5−10: Role-Specific Pathways (Teacher, Administrator, School Counselor, School Psychologist, Paraeducator, and Coach)
* Section 11: Reflection and Call to Action

Course learning objectives include:

* Deepening the understanding of the What, Why, and How of CA MTSS
* Discovering resources to support the implementation of CA MTSS in the work as educators, support inclusive and equitable learning environments, and engage students and families in the community
* Collaborating with other educators to share practices that support the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional success of all students
* Determining CA MTSS/Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) alignment to support working with students in order to enhance and implement LCAP and school site goals and services

**Communities of Practice**

Each region or County Office of Education (COE) formed a community of practice to provide ongoing TA and support for LEAs that have completed the CA MTSS training series. The communities of practice are hosted in-person, online (e.g., via Zoom), or in a combination of the two. Each community of practice identifies one of the CA MTSS domains or features to further explore and then shares practices.

**California Multi-Tiered System of Support Professional Learning Institute**

The OCDE hosted the CA MTSS Professional Learning Institute (PLI) virtually on July 20−22, 2021. The conference theme (“Know Me, Include Me") focused on promoting excellence, equity, and access for all learners through the CA MTSS Framework and the CDE’s School Conditions and Climate Work Group Recommendation Framework. Presentation topics included access and equity, academic and behavioral strategies and interventions, mental health, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), social-emotional and therapeutic interventions, strategies for working with English learners and students with disabilities, and Restorative Practices. Over 2,000 educators from across the nation attended the CA MTSS PLI in July.

The OCDE will host the 2022 CA MTSS PLI on July 12–14, 2022, in Anaheim, California.

### Number of Local Educational Agencies, Educators, and Pupils Served

**School Climate Pilot Program Participation (Phase 2A)**

The OCDE selected one school district from each California Geographic Lead Area. The first convening was held in October 2020 in Sacramento. The OCDE set the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding and received a commitment from each district. Each school district identified two schools to participate in the pilot program, for a total of 14 schools. While the participating schools have not changed from when they were initially selected, the number of students being served has. The tables below were provided in the OCDE report.

**Table 1. Pilot Program Participants for Phase 2A**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Geographic Lead Agency** | **School District** | **Schools** | **Number of Educators** | **Number of Pupils (2020–21****enrollment)** |
| Shasta COE | Oroville City Elementary District | Oakdale Heights Elementary | \* | 316 |
| Shasta COE | Oroville City Elementary District | Ishi Hills Middle School | \* | 339 |
| Sonoma COE | Fort Bragg Unified School District | Dana Gray Elementary | \* | 381 |
| Sonoma COE | Fort Bragg Unified School District | Fort Bragg Middle | \* | 359 |
| Placer and Sacramento COEs | Center Joint Unified School District | Center High School | \* | 1,327 |
| Placer and Sacramento COEs | Center Joint Unified School District | Oak Hill Elementary School | \* | 694 |
| Alameda COE | Pittsburg Unified School District | Rancho Medanos Jr. High | \* | 832 |
| Alameda COE | Pittsburg Unified School District | Martin Luther King Jr. Jr. High | \* | 690 |
| Tulare COE | Madera Unified School District | George Washington Elementary | \* | 659 |
| Tulare COE | Madera Unified School District | Thomas Jefferson Middle | \* | 978 |
| Kern County Superintendent of Schools | Pomona Unified School District | Decker Elementary | \* | 461 |
| Kern County Superintendent of Schools | Pomona Unified School District | Lorbeer Middle | \* | 660 |
| Riverside and San Diego COEs | Morongo Unified School District | Palm Vista | \* | 342 |
| Riverside and San Diego COEs | Morongo Unified School District | Twentynine Palms Jr. High | \* | 448 |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | \* | **8,486** |

*\*Staffing data for 2020–21 was not available at the time of this report.*

**School Climate Pilot Phase 2B**

The OCDE developed plans to distribute sub-grants to schools that would participate in the CA MTSS Pathway Certification for Schools in 2021. Participating school sites are eligible for up to $150,000. Funds may be used to provide stipends/release time for educators who participate and complete the course within an 18-month period. Twenty-two school sites, representing the seven California Geographic Lead Areas, were selected. The OCDE ensured all grade levels are represented in the cohort (elementary, middle school, and high school). The OCDE gave priority to schools that demonstrated the capacity and willingness to evaluate their school conditions and climate and create the systemic change needed to improve outcomes for all learners. The OCDE provides each school site administrator with a coach to assist in the planning and implementation of the CA MTSS Pathway Certification for Schools.

**Table 2. Pilot Program Participants for Phase 2B**

| **Geographic Lead Agency** | **School District** | **Schools** | **Number of Educators** | **Number of Pupils (2020–21****enrollment)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Shasta COE | South BayUnionElementarySchool District | South Bay Union Elementary | \* | 135 |
| Shasta COE | JohnstonvilleElementarySchool District | Johnstonville Elementary School | \* | 178 |
| Shasta COE | AndersonUnion HighDistrict | Anderson New Technology High | \* | 127 |
| Sonoma COE | REACH ParentFoundation | REACH Parent Foundation | \* | 118 |
| Sonoma COE | ForestvilleUnion SchoolDistrict | Forestville Elementary | \* | 48 |
| Sonoma COE | ForestvilleUnion SchoolDistrict | Forestville Academy | \* | 218 |
| Sonoma COE | Windsor UnifiedSchool District | Windsor Middle School | \* | 771 |
| Placer and Sacramento COEs | NatomasCharter School | Natomas Charter School | \* | 1,938 |
| Placer and Sacramento COEs | Linden UnifiedSchool District | Glenwood Elementary | \* | 441 |
| Placer and Sacramento COEs | Marysville JointUnified SchoolDistrict | Lindhurst High School | \* | 1,261 |
| Alameda COE | Liberty UnionHigh SchoolDistrict | Freedom High School | \* | 2,495 |
| Alameda COE | BayshoreElementarySchool District | The Bayshore School | \* | 361 |
| Alameda COE | CampbellUnion SchoolDistrict | Monroe Middle School | \* | 954 |
| Tulare COE | North MontereyCounty UnifiedSchool District | North Monterey County HighSchool | \* | 1,257 |
| Tulare COE | Hollister SchoolDistrict | Rancho San Justo Middle School | \* | 738 |
| Tulare COE | Alta VistaElementarySchool District | Alta Vista Elementary School | \* | 515 |
| Kern County Superintendent of Schools | TehachapiUnified SchoolDistrict | Tehachapi High School | \* | 1,187 |
| Kern County Superintendent of Schools | Los AngelesUnified SchoolDistrict | Purche Avenue Elementary | \* | 432 |
| Kern County Superintendent of Schools | Los AngelesUnified SchoolDistrict | Woodland Hills Academy | \* | 608 |
| Riverside and San Diego COEs | SaddlebackValley UnifiedSchool District | La Paz Intermediate School | \* | 801 |
| Riverside and San Diego COEs | Rialto UnifiedSchool District | Kordyak Elementary | \* | 543 |
| Riverside and San Diego COEs | Rialto UnifiedSchool District | Eisenhower High School | \* | 2,366 |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | \* | **17,492** |

### Description of Strategies Identified

The SUMS team queried grant recipients on strategies they leveraged during the 2020–21 school year. The OCDE solicited 3,118 schools, school districts, and county offices of education that had participated in Phase 1 or Phase 2 of the CA MTSS. Of these, 52 LEAs (47 schools, 3 school districts, and 2 COEs) completed the survey.

The OCDE noted that around 75 percent of principals who responded reported that they leveraged inclusive academic instruction, strong and positive school culture, trusting family partnerships, inclusive social-emotional instruction, and strong and engaged site leadership. Fewer than half of the principals reported leveraging a fully integrated organizational structure or an LEA policy framework.

The OCDE also noted that 90 percent of respondents reported that, during the past (pandemic) year, they focused on caring relationships among students, staff, and families. Additionally, 83 percent reported a focus on a sense of order and safety grounded in clear communication, followed by 70 percent reporting a focus on intentional, student-centric commitment to meeting basic needs.

The SUMS leadership team also asked how helpful meetings with their CA MTSS technical assistance provider and/or coach had been in the past year. A total of 36 survey participants responded to this question; of these, 23 reported that they had not had any meetings yet or that the question was not applicable to them. The OCDE reported that “the remaining respondents reported that meetings with their CA MTSS technical assistance provider or coach were helpful because:

* They provided schools [with] knowledge of MTSS, including specific strategies, training, and support in distinct areas (e.g., PBIS, setting up an MTSS leadership team) (n = 9);
* They provided supportive encouragement for engaging in and prioritizing the MTSS implementation work (n = 4);
* Regular district meetings about MTSS helped move their work forward (n=2).”

### Outcome Data

The OCDE uses the following measures to assess the sites’ ability to implement a school culture/climate training based on the CA MTSS framework and show positive student outcomes over time. Detailed results of the assessments may be found in OCDE’s 2020–21 annual report.

* **Schoolwide Implementation Tool (SIT).** The SIT is a self-assessment used by schools to examine the current status in addressing the four domains necessary for schools to improve climate and culture. During the 2020–21 school year, the OCDE noted that “because the COVID-19 pandemic posed many challenges for schools, only 8 of the 14 schools were able to complete their self-assessments by the time of writing of this report; thus, these data can only represent these schools.” Please also note that one school did not complete the survey for all domains, which is why one domain shows data for only seven schools.
* **SWIFT-Fidelity Integrity Assessment (FIA).** The OCDE provides this self-assessment to School Leadership Teams. The purpose is to examine the current status of schoolwide practices that have been demonstrated through research to provide a basis for successfully including all students who live in the school community.The OCDE provided a breakdown of the seven schools that completed the SWIFT-FIA and reported that the FIA results show that schools and sites made progress toward Implementing or Sustaining Implementation of the practices described in the FIA but remain at the Installing level on most items.
* **Coaching/TA Feedback.** This survey gathers sites’ feedback on coaching/TA quality, relevance, and usefulness. Additionally, the survey seeks to determine how much the TA sites received impacted their confidence or efficacy to implement the envisioned changes, access resources needed to make the changes envisioned, and build the capacity to transform and sustain. In 2020−21, the OCDE received responses from six school climate pilot participants. The SUMS team provided coaching on all five MTSS domains and all domains of the SIT. Of the six schools that responded to the survey, 100 percent found the coaching to be of high quality and relevant. All respondents also agreed that the coaching increased participant confidence/efficacy to implement changes and access needed resources, as well as building capacity to transform.
* **Local Educational Agency Self Assessment (LEASA).** The OCDE provides this self-assessment to District Leadership Teams to examine the current status of systemic practices. Essentially, the LEASA results provide LEAs with a picture of their current implementation of the CA MTSS Framework. Overall, results for the four LEAs that completed the LEASA show that LEAs in 2021 remain in the Installing stage.
* **LEA/School Reports.** Qualitative reports from school sites detail progress in fostering positive school climate and conditions, improving pupil-teacher relationships, increasing pupil engagement, and promoting alternative discipline practices. The SUMS research team conducted 30- to 60-minute semi-structured interviews with nine principals and eight coaches via Zoom. The qualitative reports demonstrate how the pandemic created challenges to coordinating times to meet with coaches, as well as the content of discussions at school sites. Once the coaching was established, principals generally felt positive effects.

### Recommendations for Improving State-level Activities or Policies

The OCDE identified the following recommendations for improving state-level activities (which are summarized below):

* Establish CA MTSS as the primary framework and change strategy for school sites, districts, and COEs as central to the Statewide System of Support
* Expand administrator support and training around CA MTSS
* Link federal and state priorities around learning accelerationto CA MTSS
* Continue toprioritize strategies for the social-emotional well-being of school site staff as schools reopen
* Equip educators with new tools for student engagement and student learning
* Support school sites to utilize data to inform decisions around implementing social-emotional supports in addressing:
	+ Discipline disparities apparent by race
	+ The overidentification of students of color for special education services
	+ Improving school climate
* Foster opportunities for collaborative relationships with families and communities