Gardner Public Schools

Addressing Attendance Through District & School MTSS

May Institute PBIS Webinar
“Attending To Attendance in Live & Virtual settings”
March 30th, 2021
Mark Pellegrino - Superintendent,
Joyce West, & Amber Casavant
Gardner Schools

Student enrollment: 2300
5 Schools:
- Elementary PK-1
- Elementary 2-4
- Middle School 5-7
- High School 8-12
- Alternative School 9-12
Gardner Demographics

Select Populations
- SWD: 22%
- High Needs: 62%
- Economically Disadvantaged: 55%
- ELL: 6%

Race/Ethnicity
- White-65.7%
- Hispanic-22.2%
- Multi-race/non Hispanic-7.2%
- African American-2.6%
- Asian-2.1%
District Theory of Action

**IF** we have strong leaders *at every level* who focus on equity, have the capacity to develop effective leaders, facilitators and teams, and have the primary goal of creating a Multi-Tiered System of Support in their school;

**THEN** GPS will develop a district-wide, robust Multi-Tiered System of Supports that strives to eliminate inequitable outcomes for students, and bring about adaptive change to address the myriad of issues facing our schools.
Focus on Leadership Capacity

✔ Hired District Coordinator/Coach

✔ Utilize Lynch Leadership Academy of Boston College to:
  ▪ Train administrators and team leaders about equity issues in education, culturally responsive leadership, data-driven decisions, and meeting facilitation
  ▪ Train and Coach District Leaders to coach principals and facilitators

✔ Engaged the May Institute & MTSS DESE SEL MH Academy to help GPS assess, plan, and implement an effective MTSS

✔ Provide PD and Planning Time for building leaders twice/month at Administrative Counsel meetings
  ▪ 5 Dysfunctions of a Team, Meeting Ourselves to Death, Culturally Responsive Continuum, and Difficult and Courageous Conversations
  ▪ Developing MTSS
Focus on MTSS Development

✔ Utilize MTSS (SEL/MH and Academics) to address initiatives (Student Outcomes, Family Engagement, Equity, & Social Justice)
✔ Superintendent periodically attends core team and facilitators meetings
✔ Every principal has an evaluation goal to create an effective MTSS
✔ Central Office Executive Leaders meet weekly to strategize short & long-range MTSS Development and Outcome goals
✔ Superintendent meets weekly with Director of PPS and MTSS Coordinator to debrief progress and needs
✔ Superintendent & PPS Director meet with each principal twice/month to discuss the building’s MTSS SEL Team
GPS MTSS Focus on Attendance
# 2019-2020 Pre-Pandemic Attendance Report

Gardner Vs. MA State Average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Point</th>
<th>Gardner</th>
<th>MA State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avg Attendance Rate</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg # Absences</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent 10+ Days</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronically Absent (10% or more)</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexcused 9+ Days</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

[https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/attendance.aspx](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/attendance.aspx)
Attendance Challenges

- **Defining attendance in virtual/remote setting**
  - Different schools were defining and recording differently
  - Staff within a school were defining and recording differently

- **Data Source (Rediker)**
  - Cumbersome to pull attendance reports
  - Difficult to export into excel and view in graphic form for visual analysis
Attendance Challenges Cont.

➢ District of Schools vs. School District

○ Each school doing their own thing in regards to monitoring attendance
  ■ No consistent cycle of data review
  ■ No consistent data points or disaggregated or guiding questions
  ■ Data was difficult to visually analyze (not in graph form)
Attendance Interventions (Prior to MTSS)

- Parent Communication with Teacher/Staff
- Parent Communication with Counselor
- Parent Communication with Nurse
- Attendance Letter Sent Home
- Phone Call to DCF
- Student Meeting
- Parent / Student Meeting
- SRO Home Visit
- File 51A for Educational Neglect
- File CRA
- Mental Health Supports
- Ensure there are no Technology Issues
- Parent Communication with Teacher/Staff
- Parent Communication with Counselor
- Parent Communication with Nurse
- Attendance Letter Sent Home
- Phone Call to DCF
- Parent / Student Meeting
- SRO Home Visit
- File 51A for Educational Neglect
- File CRA
- Mental Health Supports developed (i.e. counseling)

And More.....
Incorporating Attendance into MTSS

“Building the plane as we were flying it” - Pre-correcting and lots of modeling & coaching for school teams was critical to success.

Adapted Behavior Skills Training (BST) Model

- Provided descriptions, both verbal and written
  - (e.g., MTSS Manual, Facilitators Guide), of the target skills to be taught
- Demonstrated the target skills
  - (modeling facilitation during District and Facilitator meetings), had the MTSS Facilitators practice those skills in MTSS meetings
- Followed by feedback
  - (debrief meetings & written feedback notes)
Implementation Conditions for Success

**District Leadership Involvement**

- Superintendent commitment
- Pupil Personnel Director commitment & direction
- District Coordinator/Coach Hire/Role
  - Coaching plans and Weekly Feedback forms
- Building based support staff (not sharing roles)
- MTSS SEL Mental Health Academy (DESE) District Team
  - Conscious selection of representation

**Other Systems of Success**

- Grants to support work (approved 2)
- Technical Assistance from [MayInstitute](#)
- District Team Growth/Commitment
- Phased in each buildings’ participation
- Disaggregation of Attendance data for data-based decision making
- Implementation of PBIS at the classroom level (data-based observation/feedback)
- MTSS SEL Manual and Supporting Tools
  - MTSS Facilitator Support - MTSS Content & Leadership (Technical, Adaptive and Facilitative)
    - Focus on Results, Process & Relationships
MTSS/PBIS Implementation
(4 Step Data-Based Decision Making Process)

Step 1: **Define**, in objective and measurable terms, the goal(s) to be obtained. (What is it we want students/educators/system to know and be able to do?)

Step 2: **Identify** and **analyze** possible reasons for why the desired goal(s) are not being met.

Step 3: **Develop** outcome goals and **implement** a well-supported plan using evidenced based strategies to obtain the goal(s)

Step 4: **Evaluate** the effectiveness of the plan in relation to stated goals.
MTSS/PBIS Implementation
(4 Step Data-Based Decision Making Process)

Step 1: Define
October-November
- Defined Attendance
- Created a more efficient Data Source
- Identified Data Points & Guiding Questions

Step 2: Analyze
December - January
- Created Problem Statements
- Identified Decision Making Criteria (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3)

Step 3: Develop & Implement
February - March
- Turned problem statements into Outcome Goals
- Prioritizing Outcome Goals and Interventions
- Identifying Progress Monitoring Tools and Fidelity Measures

Step 4: Continuously Evaluate
- Systems, Practices & Data
- Student Outcomes
# Data Representation Challenge

## Data Disaggregation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Disaggregation</th>
<th>Sept. 2020</th>
<th>Currently</th>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance - Whole School by Month</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance Rate by Classroom, Course, and/or Staff</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Students Chronically Absent</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Attendance Rate by Grade</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Attendance by IEP/504 Status</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Attendance by Race/Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Average Attendance by EL Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Attendance Rate by Day of the Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance by Individual Student Aggregate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance by Individual Student Trend Graphs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance by Individual Student by Tier with Automatic Student Flagging System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triangulation of Data</td>
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</table>
Disaggregating the Data for School Team Data-Based Decision Making

By...

- Month
- Grade
- Day of Week
- Homeroom/Teacher

- IEP/504 Status
- Race/Ethnicity
- ELL Status
- Individual Student
Using our Data to Progress Monitor for Tier 2 and Tier 3

Individual Student Trends
(# of Absences per month)
*Goal is a decreasing Trend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>RA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% absent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>05</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2%</td>
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Annual Trend
“make a switch, you need to script the critical moves”
– Chip Heath, *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*

- Provided Instructions (verbal & written)
  - Developed a tool “script” to reference Guiding Questions that corresponded to identified data points
  - Reviewed the tool at District level MTSS meetings
- Modeled using the guiding questions to review attendance data
- District Initiative - All Facilitators to follow
- Provided Feedback to MTSS Facilitators
What is the average attendance rate for the whole school by month?

What % of students are chronically absent?

What’s the average attendance rate by....

  - Grade?
  - IEP status?
  - Race/ethnicity?
  - EL group?
  - Day of the week?
  - Classroom, course, staff?
MTSS SEL Guiding Questions

Guided Follow up Questions

- What is the average attendance rate for the whole school by month?
  - Is it increasing, decreasing or no change?
- What % of students are chronically absent?
  - What % have 5+ absences?
  - What % have 10+ absences?
- What’s the average attendance rate by grade?
  - What grade(s) have the lowest attendance?
  - Are those grades increasing, decreasing or no change
  - Are those grades with lowest attendance the same as previous months or does it vary?
Following the same BST process, we trained teams in creating problem statements

**Example Problem Statement from our Early Adopter**

45% of students have (5+) absences, with grade 3 being the lowest attendance % rate, on Wednesdays during virtual/remote learning.
**Organization of Interventions Across Tiers**

**Road to Resource Mapping**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 3 Supports</th>
<th>Tier 2 Supports</th>
<th>Tier 1 Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

**MTSS SEL Intervention Matrix TIERS 1-3**

(Ajust per school building)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1 Interventions</th>
<th>What is the intervention?</th>
<th>Is it Evidence Based? Yes/No</th>
<th>What does the intervention Target? Function?</th>
<th>What is the Fidelity Tool?</th>
<th>What data will be used to evaluate student outcome/progress/effectiveness of the intervention?</th>
</tr>
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Early Adopter

Average Attendance Rate Per Month
ESS 2020 - 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Attendance Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>96%</td>
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</table>
Instructional Minutes Gained
From Jan 2021-Feb 2021

Gardner Public Schools Attendance
Instructional Minutes Gained

355,870 Instructional Minutes Gained
Implementation of Interventions

Across the Tiers

Next Steps Include:
   Using Data to...
   • Measure Fidelity
   • Assess Effectiveness
   • Improve Efficiency
Emphasizing Universal Interventions - Tier 1 (All Students)

**School Wide**
- Grade level Dojo Point Competition
- Grade level Attendance Competition

**Class Wide**
- School Store & Fun Activities on Remote Days
  - Virtual Menu
- Expectation and Acknowledgement Points for “Being Here” and “Being Engaged”
- Improving Engagement & On Task Behavior
Return to Full In Person - April 5th 2021

Anticipating Increased Anxiety & School Refusal
Emphasizing Universal Interventions - Tier 1 (All Students)

Return to Full In Person - April 5th 2021
- Red Carpet Return
- Video of Expectations
- Animal Petting
THANK YOU