EDC Solutions

Multi-Tiered Suicide Prevention for Schools:

A Framework with Evidence of Feasibility and Impact for Schools

Education Development Center

EDC At-A-Glance

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), is a global nonprofit that advances lasting solutions to improve education, promote health, and expand economic opportunity. Since 1958, we have been a leader in designing, implementing, and evaluating powerful and innovative programs in more than 80 countries around the world.

1958
EDC was founded by MIT scholars and researchers

200+
Projects managed annually by EDC

1,600
Employees

$200
Million FY24 operating budget

80 + 50
Countries   States in the U.S.

REGIONS: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East, and the United States

Funders include USAID, NSF, NIH, MasterCard Foundation, DoEd, and SAMHSA

Agenda

- Overview and History of Multi-Tiered Suicide Prevention for Schools (MTSP)
- Implementation of MTSP
- MTSP Environmental Assessment
- MTSP Impact
- Resources & Wrap Up

Overview & History of MTSP

Launch & History of MTSP

1. In 2021, a foundation, North Central Health Services (NCHS), came to EDC with request for support in implementing sustainable suicide prevention in schools

2. EDC developed an evidence-informed framework, assessment, and service at the school ***district*** level focused on comprehensive suicide prevention

3. In 2022 an RFA was released for school districts in North Central Indiana

4. 12 school districts participated in the pilot implementation of MTSP from 22-23 school year to 23-24 school years, with the local name Preventing Youth Suicide Initiative (PYSI)

5. Pre-post data was gathered and a second cohort was launched in Spring 2024

6. 3 additional states are now implementing or preparing to implement MTSP with cohorts of school districts

Source: diymaps.net (c)
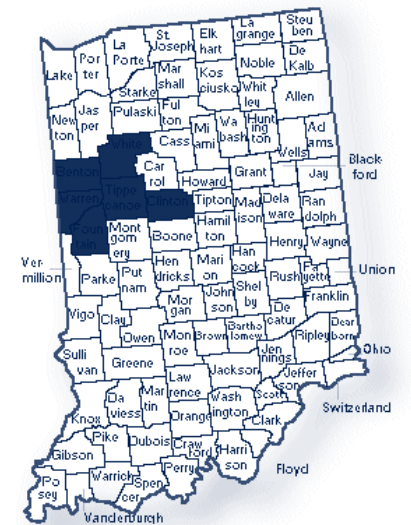
Theory & Research Guiding MTSP

- SAMHSA. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2012). Preventing suicide: A toolkit for high schools (HHS Publication No. SMA-12-4669).

- Rogers.Rogers, M. A., & O'Brien, K. H (2021). Emotionally naked: A teacher's guide to preventing suicide and recognizing students at risk. John Wiley & Sons., Inc.

- Erbacher, T. A., Singer, J. B., & Poland, S. (2024).Suicide in schools: A practitioner's guide to multi-level prevention, assessment, intervention, and postvention: Second edition. Routledge. *(& First edition)*

- Education Development Center's Zero Suicide Toolkit: https://zerosuicide.edc.org/toolkit

- The Stages of Change Theory (Transtheoretical Mondel): https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK556005/

Multi-Tiered Suicide Prevention for Schools (MTSP)

School suicide prevention is most effective when it brings together a variety of prevention strategies to prevent student distress, support for young people who are struggling, and care for the school community after a loss.

Effective school-based suicide prevention includes a multi-tiered, systems-wide approach with 6 key components.

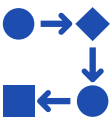# 6 Key Suicide Prevention Components for School Systems

1 Engaging Key School Community Members

2 Developing Community Partnerships

3 Written Policies & Protocols for Helping Students Who are At Risk for Suicide

4 Written Policies & Protocols for After a Death by Suicide

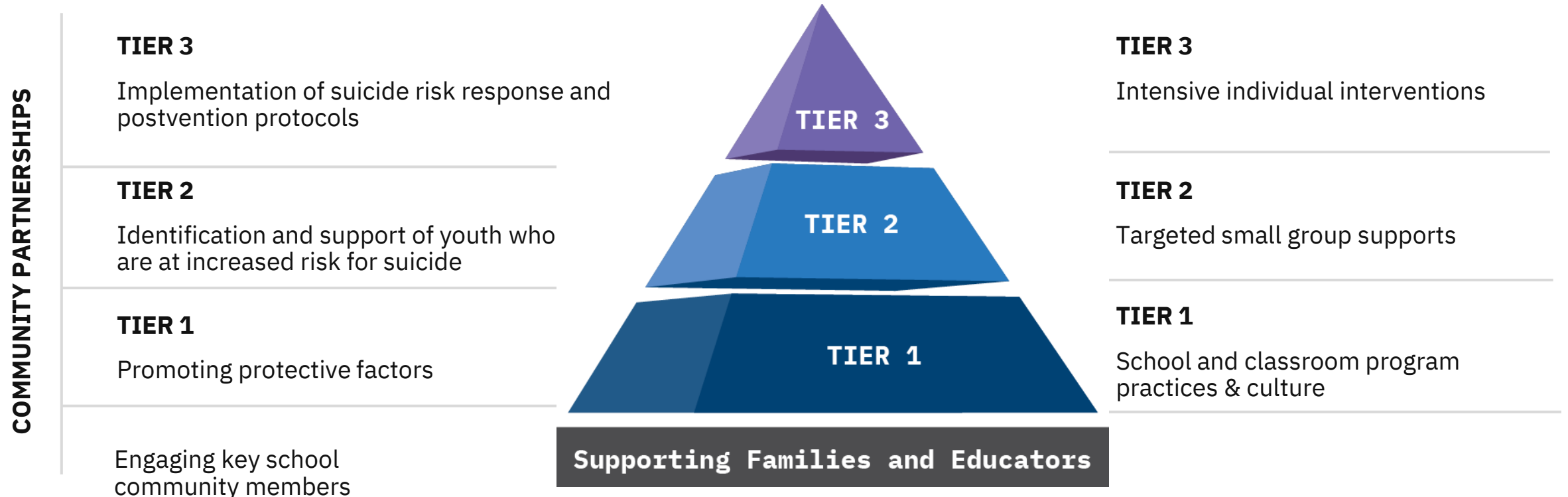**5** Identification & Support of Students Who are At Increased Risk for Suicide

6 Promoting Protective Factors

Multi-Tiered Approach to Suicide Prevention

SUICIDE PREVENTION COMPONENTS

SCHOOL TIERS

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

TIER 3

Implementation of suicide risk response and postvention protocols

TIER 2

Identification and support of youth who are at increased risk for suicide

TIER 1

Promoting protective factors

Engaging key school community members

TIER 3

Intensive individual interventions

TIER 2

Targeted small group supports

TIER 1

School and classroom program practices & culture

TIER 3

TIER 2

TIER 1

Supporting Families and Educators

Implementation Of MTSP

Goals, Outcomes, Deliverables

Equip knowledge, skills, & capacity to prevent youth suicide

Enable the development of comprehensive, system-wide approaches to suicide prevention

Identify and address unique community needs in school suicide prevention

Form or strengthen relationships with diverse community suicide prevention partners

Increase connectedness with other districts and schools

✓ **Plan & Vision**

✓ **Environmental Assessment Data**

✓ **Documented Protocols**

✓ **Resources and Trainings**

✓ **Community Partnerships**

✓ **Communication Materials and Strategy**

How it Works: Systems Change in Schools

2 Phases Focused on Planning, Implementation, & Sustainability
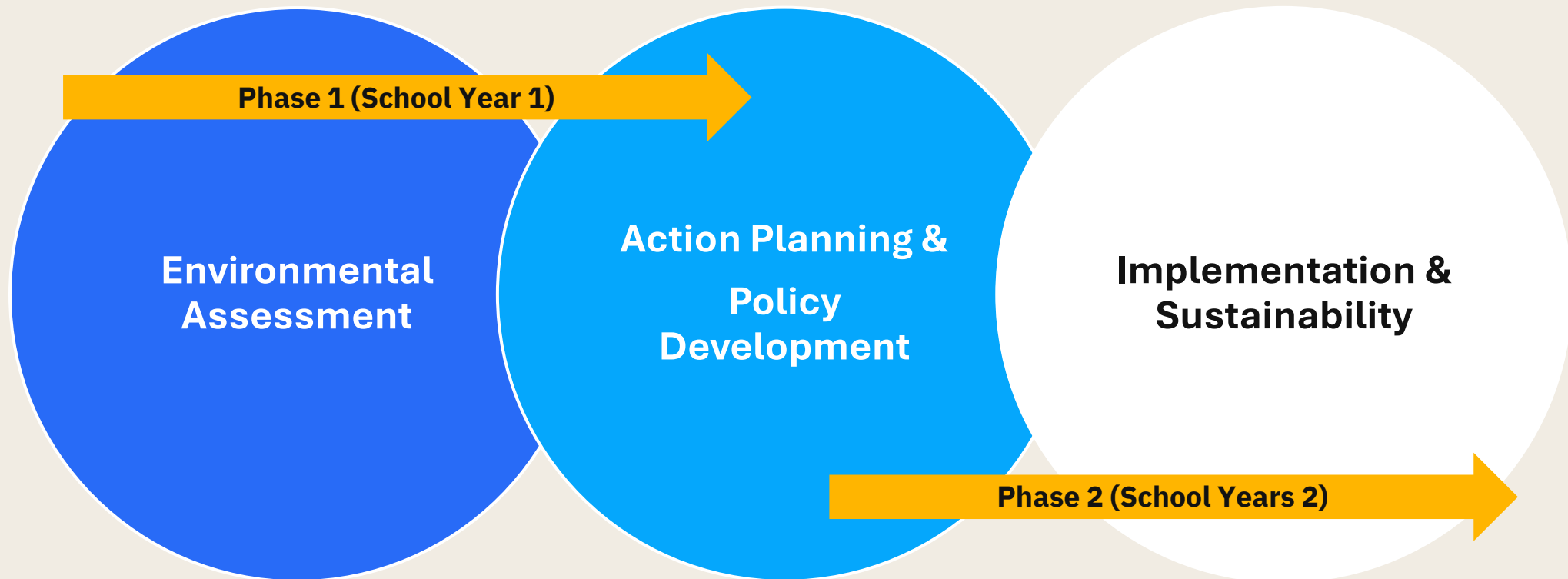
How it Works: Systems Change in Schools

Technical Assistance (TA)
Focused on Planning, Implementation, & Sustainability

District Team
- Superintendents/ Assistant Supt.
- School Leaders & Directors
- Social Workers
- Clinicians
- Teachers
- Support Staff
- Students
- Families
- Board Members

Learning Events
- Kickoff Event
- 8 community workshops focused on suicide prevention components
- Acquire knowledge and skills around suicide prevention in schools
- Engage in strategic planning, implementation, policy making
- Build supportive relationships

Coaching & Facilitation
- Site Visits
- Monthly 1-1 Calls
- Analyze & apply assessment data
- Strategic planning guidance
- Ongoing technical assistance for each team
- Aligning school efforts with state guidance & priorities
- Facilitating community linkages
- Building sustainable capacity

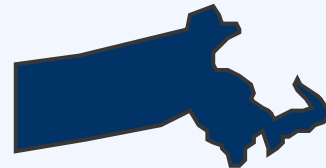# Where is MTSP being implemented?

Indiana

Connecticut

Starting Fall 2025

Massachusetts

South Carolina
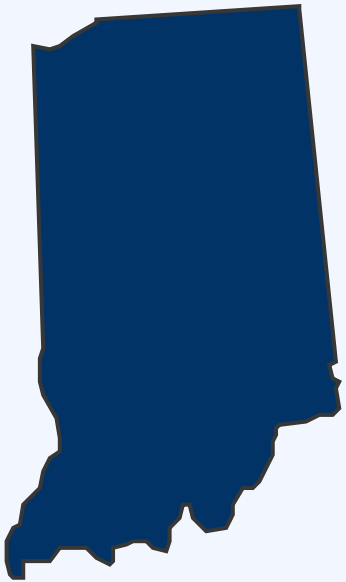
5 School Districts

19 School Districts across 2 Cohorts

8 School Districts

3 School Districts

Previous Cohort Quotes

"The most significant lesson learned over the past two years and gains made over the past year is <u>the culture shift</u> that has taken place within our district. Specifically, we have made the topic of Suicide Prevention less intimidating to talk about openly."

"The most valuable part of this initiative was the <u>comprehensive process</u>. Being able to do an assessment of where you were, set goals and establish an action plan, having the financial and assistive resources to carry out the action plan, and doing a post assessment and <u>sustainability plan</u> was invaluable."

"We feel that <u>the impact</u> of COVID on the mental health of our students <u>would have been much worse</u> if we had not had these grants and this programming in place. There is no doubt in the minds of our PYSI team that these efforts have saved lives."

"Because of the PYSI grant, we have the <u>capability to partner</u> with our students, staff, families, and our larger community using <u>best-practice tools and strategies</u> in order to implement proactive measures to promote suicide risk awareness, to foster programs/curriculum/training that will <u>promote protective factors</u> and encourage willingness to respond to situations in a proactive manner."

MTSP Environmental Assessment

MTSP Environmental Assessment

Purpose of the MTSP Environmental Assessment (MTSP Assessment):

- Provide school teams with information on context, resources, and evidence-informed practices that support the 6 key components of suicide prevention

- Guide school teams in assessing what they already have in place related to suicide prevention, mental health promotion, and life skills development

- Help school teams to identify both strengths and areas for growth

- Allow school teams to show progress in suicide prevention

School Suicide Prevention Assessment

Organizational Change Structure

School teams rank their current stage of change for each individual assessment item. Each ranking indicates…	
1. Unaware	Our school system is not currently aware that there is a need to address this consideration.
2. No Current Efforts	Our school system is aware that there is a need to address this consideration, but we have not taken steps to create change(s) related to this area.
3. Planning	Our school system is aware that there is a need to address this consideration, and we are laying out plans for how to create change(s) related to this area.
4. Implementing	Our school system has begun taking new steps/implementing efforts to create change(s) related to this area. School systems will usually spend the least amount of time in this stage.
5. Sustaining	Our school system has already created change(s) related to this area and we have put in place processes to ensure these change(s) are monitored and continued.

MTSP Assessment

go.edc.org/MTSP-Assessment

Section 1: Engaging School Community Members

Staff Awareness & Support

Stages of Change

		1. Precontemplation — Unaware of a need to change	2. Contemplation — Aware of need to change, but not yet ready to invest in change	3. Preparation — Aware of need to change and laying out plans to make change	4. Action — Actively taking steps to create change	5. Maintenance — Ongoing efforts to sustain change	Discussion Notes:
Item #	Key Considerations	Unaware	No Current Efforts	Planning	Implementing	Sustaining	
1a	School districts regularly communicate with all staff on social and emotional learning (SEL), mental health promotion, and suicide prevention.	Unaware	Minimal to no communication with staff on SEL, mental health, and suicide prevention.	School districts are planning steps to communicate with staff on SEL, mental health, and suicide prevention.	School districts are actively sharing new communication with staff on SEL, mental health, and suicide prevention.	School districts are maintaining ongoing staff communication on SEL, mental health, and suicide prevention.	
	Self-Ranking (Type X in chosen column)						
1b	School staff are aware and supportive of SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention.	Unaware	Minimal to no staff awareness and support.	School districts are planning steps to develop staff awareness and support for SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention.	School districts are actively developing staff awareness and support for SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention.	School districts are maintaining school staff awareness and support for SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention.	
	Self-Ranking: (Type X in chosen column)						
1c	School staff are aware of the connections between SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention.	Unaware	Minimal to no staff awareness.	School districts are planning steps to strengthen staff awareness across departments.	School districts are actively developing staff awareness across departments.	School districts are maintaining awareness of the connections between SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention across departments.	
	Self-Ranking (Type X in chosen column)						
1d	School staff understand their unique roles in suicide prevention.	Unaware	Minimal to no staff understanding.	School districts are planning steps to strengthen staff understanding of their roles in suicide prevention.	School districts are actively providing new staff education on their roles in suicide prevention.	School districts are maintaining staff education on their roles in suicide prevention.	
	Self-Ranking: (Type X in chosen column)						
1e	School staff are actively engaged in existing SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention efforts.	Unaware	Minimal to no staff engagement.	School districts are planning steps to strengthen staff engagement.	School districts are actively engaging staff in new SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention efforts.	School districts are maintaining staff engagement in SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention efforts.	
	Self Ranking (Type X in chosen column)						

< > Instructions | Pre-Test | **School Community** | Community Partnerships | Protocols IdentfySupport AtRisk | Protocols

MTSP Assessment Companion Guide

go.edc.org/MTSP-Assessment-Guide

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Multi-Tiered Suicide Prevention (MTSP) for Schools Environmental Assessment

COMPANION GUIDE

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Section 1: Engaging Key School Community Members

Overview

Every member of a school community—teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, counselors, and others—has a role to play in school suicide prevention. Schools are best positioned to provide these efforts in suicide prevention when the whole community is engaged. In addition to any trainings around identifying and supporting youth who are at risk for suicide, these stakeholders require a clear understanding of school suicide prevention protocols and resources.[1,2,3]

Guiding Questions and Context

1A. COMMUNICATING WITH STAFF ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL), MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION, AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

As you rank item 1a, ask your team to answer the following questions:

- Is your school district communicating with staff on SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention?
- Is your school district using a variety of communication methods to promote SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention?
- Is your school district providing opportunities for staff to ask questions or give feedback on SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention?
- **Why or why not?**

Schools can incorporate SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention into their ongoing efforts to communicate, train, and meet with staff. There is no requirement for a minimum level of communication format or frequency, but recurring reminders, trainings, and meetings focused on SEL, mental health promotion, and suicide prevention demonstrate your school's commitment to suicide prevention and keep the topic fresh in staff minds. Any time you are investing in new or existing suicide prevention programming, strategies, or activities, information on efforts should be shared with all staff.

1B. SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF AWARENESS OF SEL, MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION, AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

As you rank item 1b, answer the following questions:

- Would the average staff member say your school district is committed to promoting student wellness?

MTSP: Companion Guide   4

MTSP
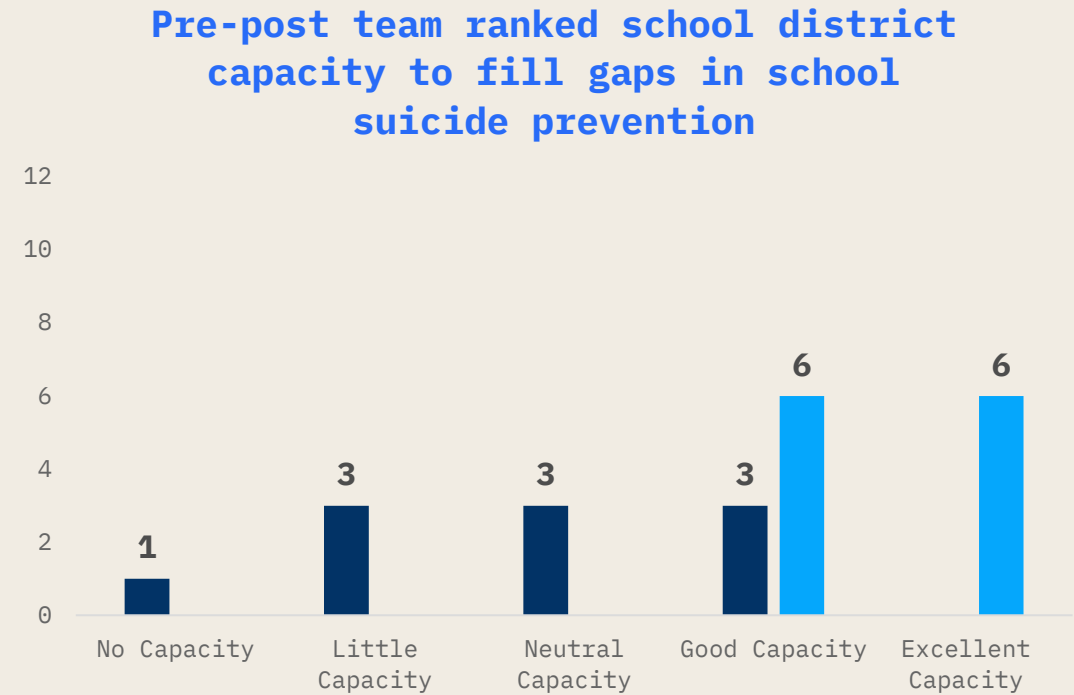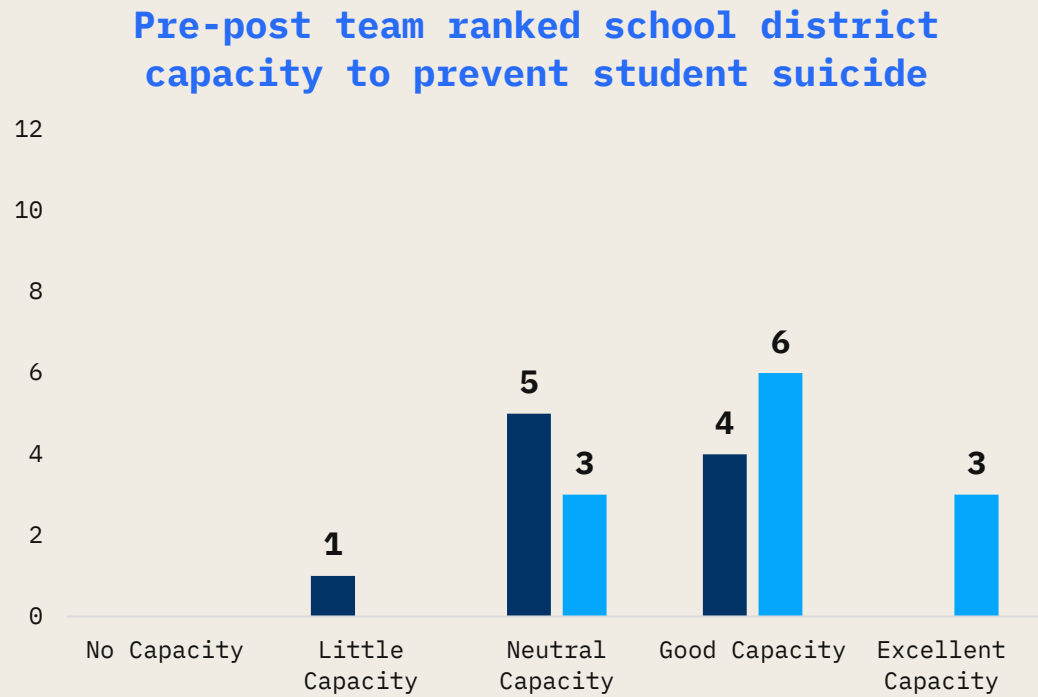# Evaluation

MTSP for Schools Environmental Assessment Data

Previous Pre-Post Data

Pre-Post Test Question Results – School District Capacity:

Pre-post team ranked school district capacity to prevent student suicide

Pre-post team ranked school district capacity to fill gaps in school suicide prevention

■ Pre-Test ■ Post Test

10 school teams completed pre-test questions.

MTSP for Schools Environmental Assessment Data

Previous Pre-Post Data

Pre-Post Test Question Results – Staff Roles:
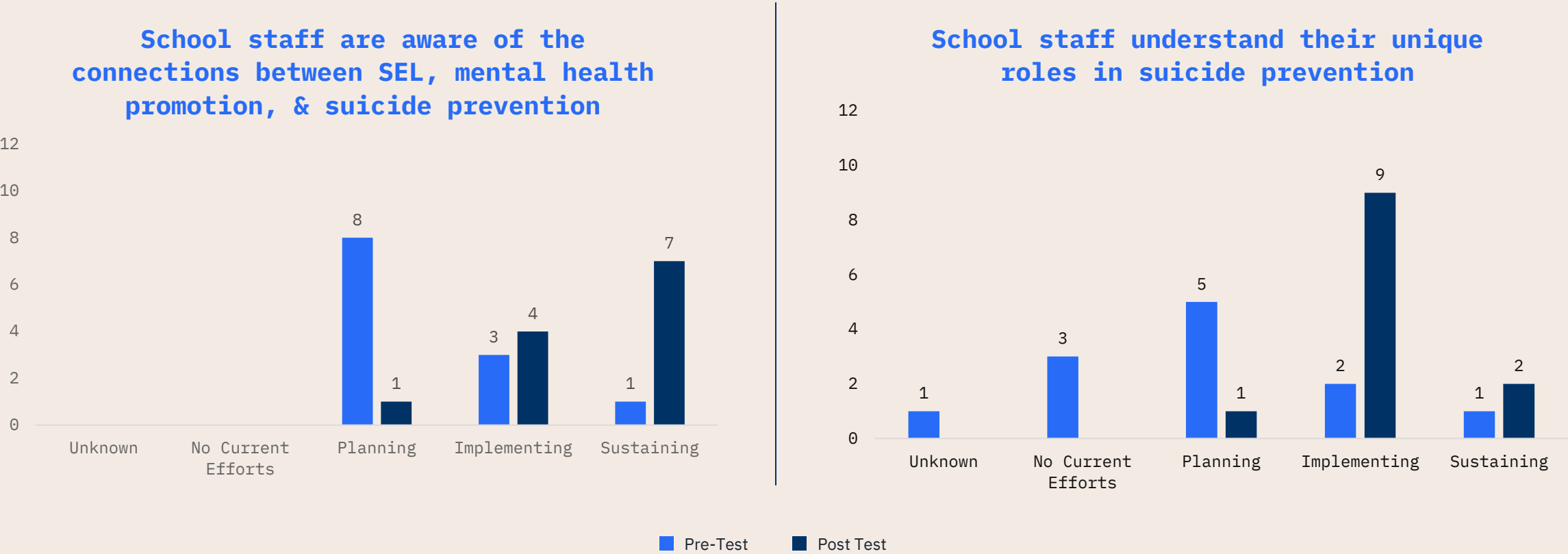
School staff are aware of the connections between SEL, mental health promotion, & suicide prevention

Category	Pre-Test	Post Test
Unknown		
No Current Efforts		
Planning	8	1
Implementing	3	4
Sustaining	1	7

School staff understand their unique roles in suicide prevention

Category	Pre-Test	Post Test
Unknown	1	
No Current Efforts	3	
Planning	5	1
Implementing	2	9
Sustaining	1	2

Pre-Test   Post Test

MTSP for Schools Environmental Assessment Data

Previous Pre-Post Data

Pre-Post Test Question Results – Community Partnerships:

Community partners are actively engaged in school districts' SEL, mental health promotion, & suicide prevention efforts

School districts have identified sources of national, state, or local funding that can support SEL, mental health promotion, & suicide prevention efforts
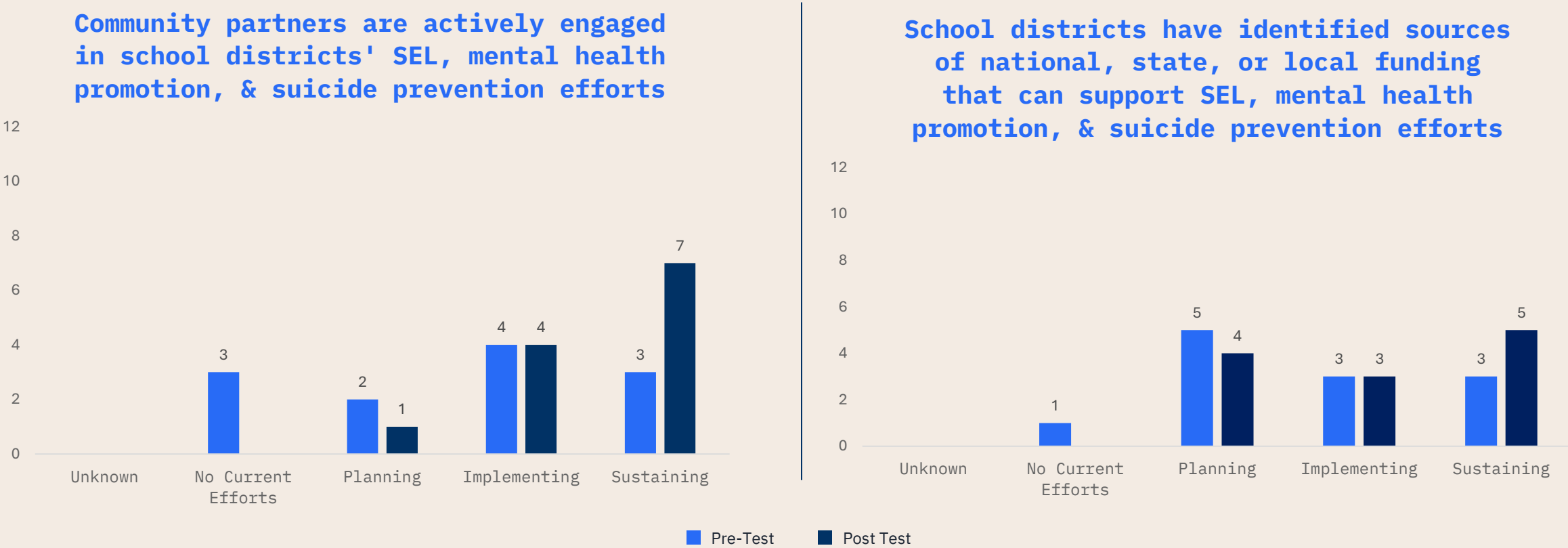
Pre-Test   Post Test

MTSP for Schools Environmental Assessment Data

Previous Pre-Post Data

Pre-Post Test Question Results – Policies and Protocols:
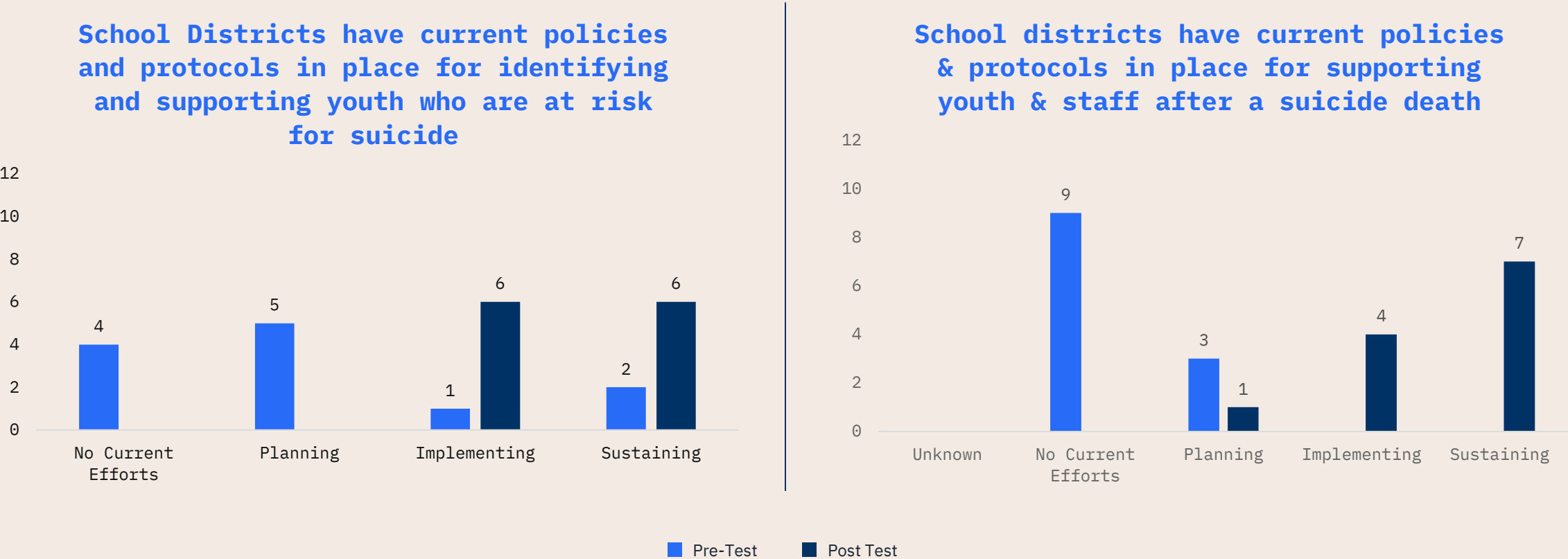
School Districts have current policies and protocols in place for identifying and supporting youth who are at risk for suicide

	No Current Efforts	Planning	Implementing	Sustaining
Pre-Test	4	5	1	2
Post Test			6	6

School districts have current policies & protocols in place for supporting youth & staff after a suicide death

	Unknown	No Current Efforts	Planning	Implementing	Sustaining
Pre-Test		9	3		
Post Test			1	4	7

■ Pre-Test   ■ Post Test

MTSP for Schools Environmental Assessment Data

Previous Pre-Post Data

Pre-Post Test Question Results – Trainings and Screenings:
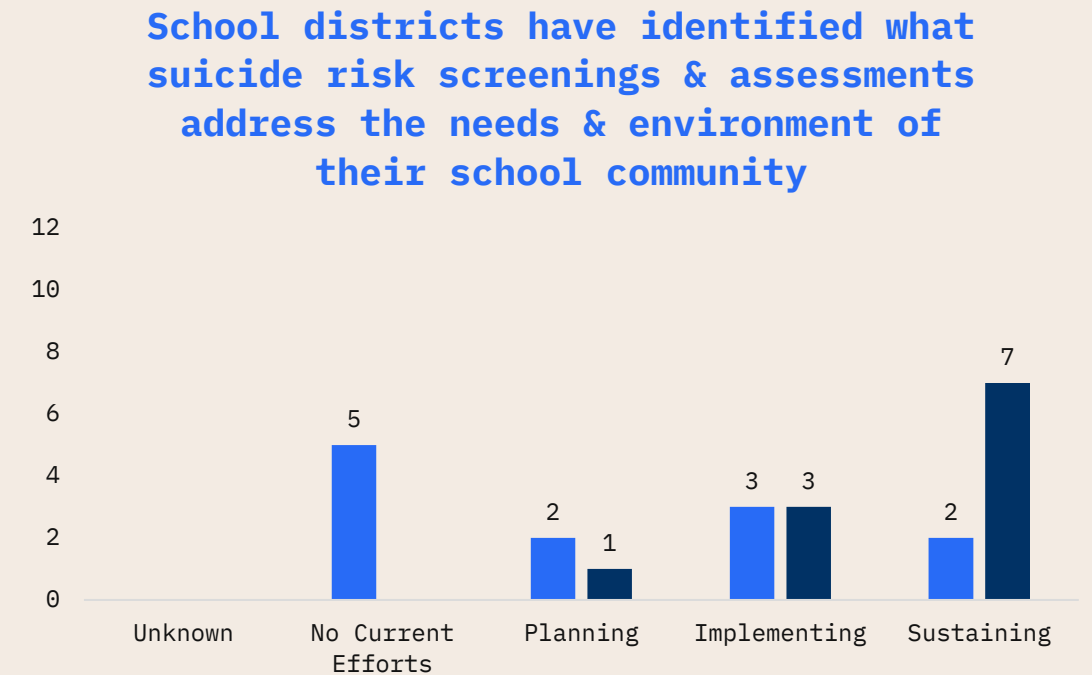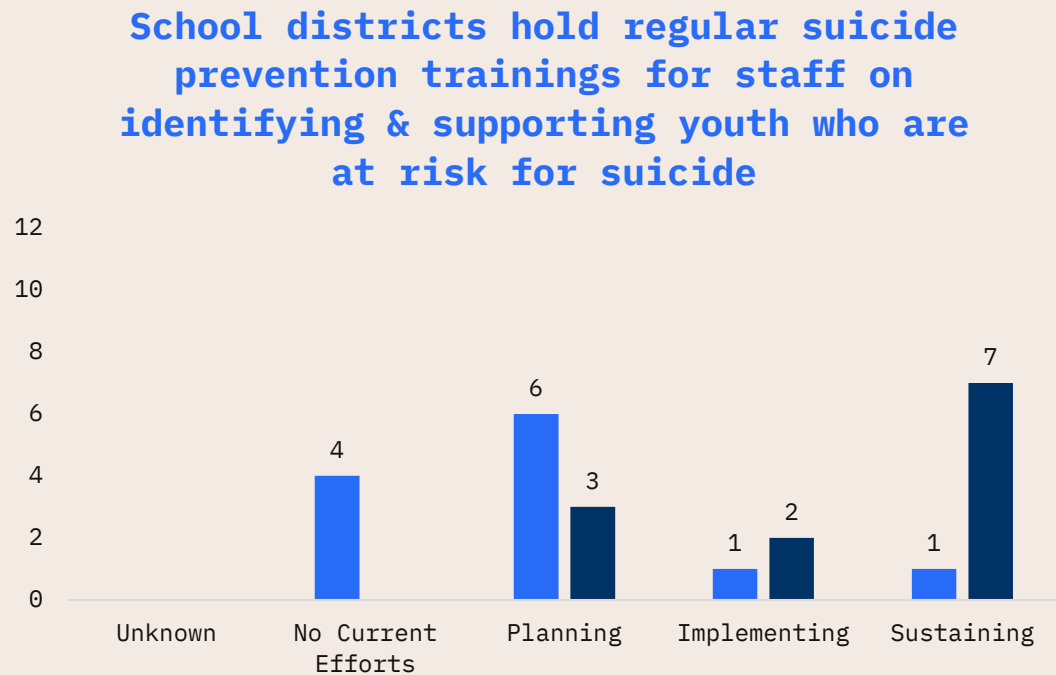
School districts hold regular suicide prevention trainings for staff on identifying & supporting youth who are at risk for suicide

School districts have identified what suicide risk screenings & assessments address the needs & environment of their school community
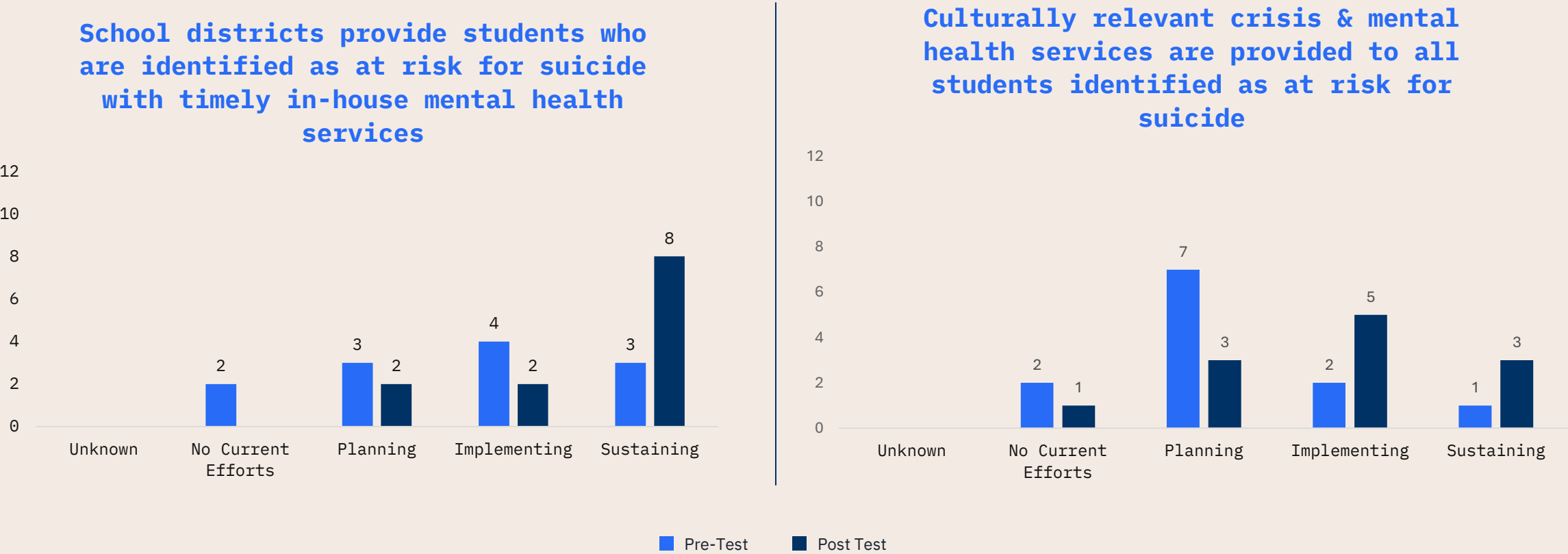
■ Pre-Test   ■ Post Test

MTSP for Schools Environmental Assessment Data

Previous Pre-Post Data

Pre-Post Test Question Results – Mental Health Services:

School districts provide students who are identified as at risk for suicide with timely in-house mental health services

Culturally relevant crisis & mental health services are provided to all students identified as at risk for suicide

Pre-Test   Post Test

MTSP for Schools Environmental Assessment Data

Previous Pre-Post Data

Pre-Post Test Question Results – Life Skill Development:

School district environments promote student life skills, mental health, & protective factors for suicide

School districts are integrating healthy coping, problem-solving, & emotional regulation into all classrooms' academic instruction
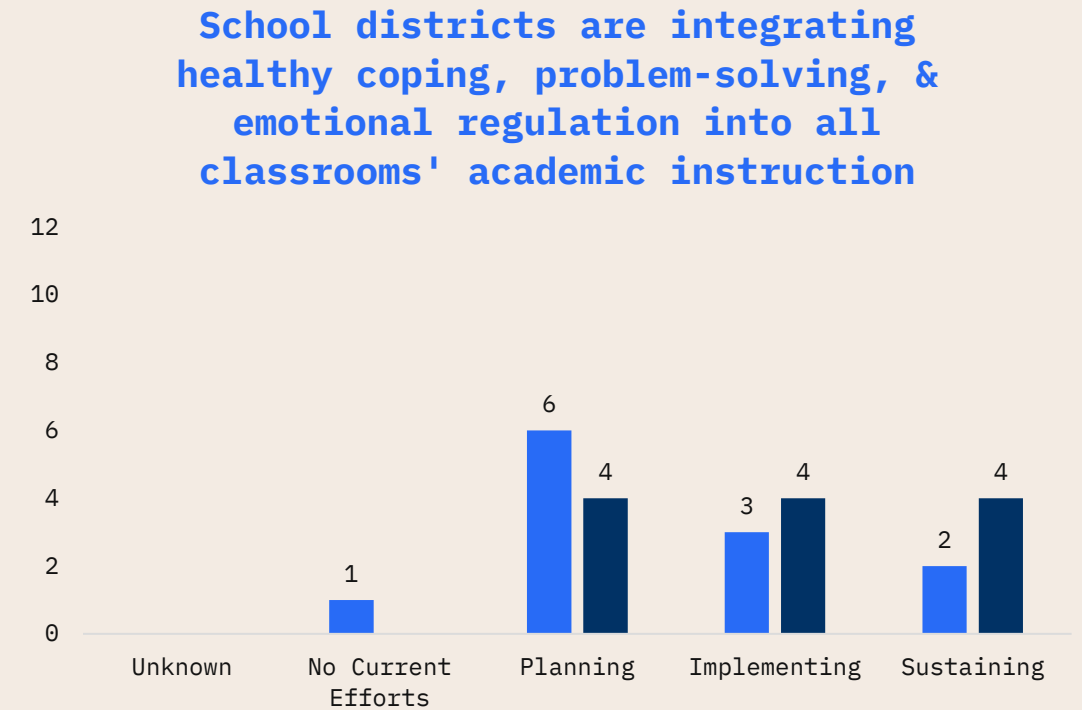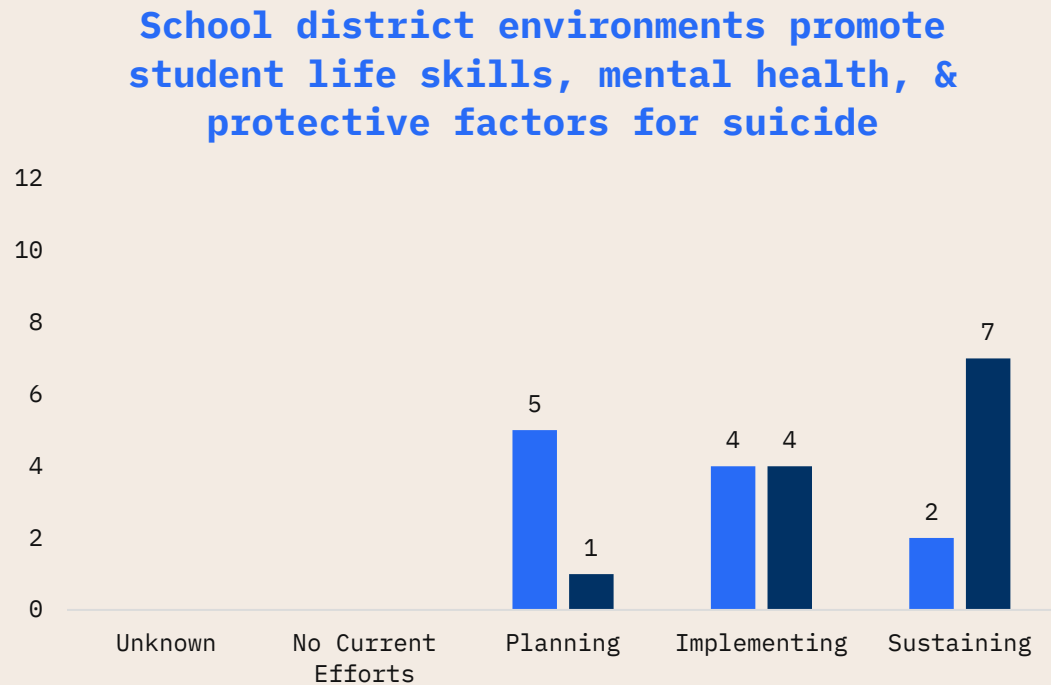
- Pre-Test
- Post Test

Resources & Wrap Up

MTSP Resources

- MTSP AAS Landing page:
https://go.edc.org/MTSP-AAS-25

- EDC Solutions MTSP:
https://go.edc.org/EDC-Solutions-MTSP

- EDC Solutions MTSP technical assistance services: email
sdhite-jones@edc.org

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Thank you   Merci   Gracias   شكرا

For more information, check out **solutions.edc.org**

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