

Building Responsive and Sustainable Capacity in Schools



Alternative Learning Team (ALT)

Our Agenda

Who We Are

Where We Started

Evolving Our Practice

Current Reach & Impact

Division Feedback



Who We Are



Chelsea Hallick

Coordinator of Diverse Learning Services

Jennifer Haga

ALT Teacher Consultant

Rachel Lesko

ALT Teacher Consultant

Terri Tabor

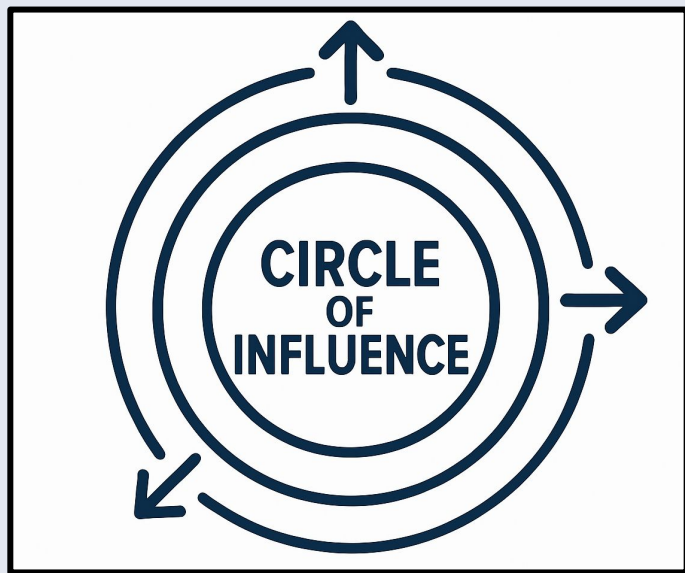
Educational Support Coach

Carie Czember

Educational Support Coach

Tara Krasko

Occupational Therapist



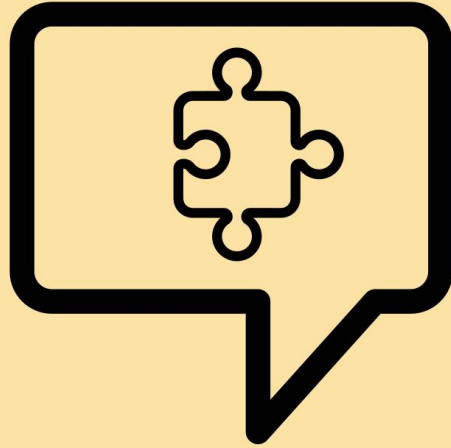
Where We Started



Grades 2-6



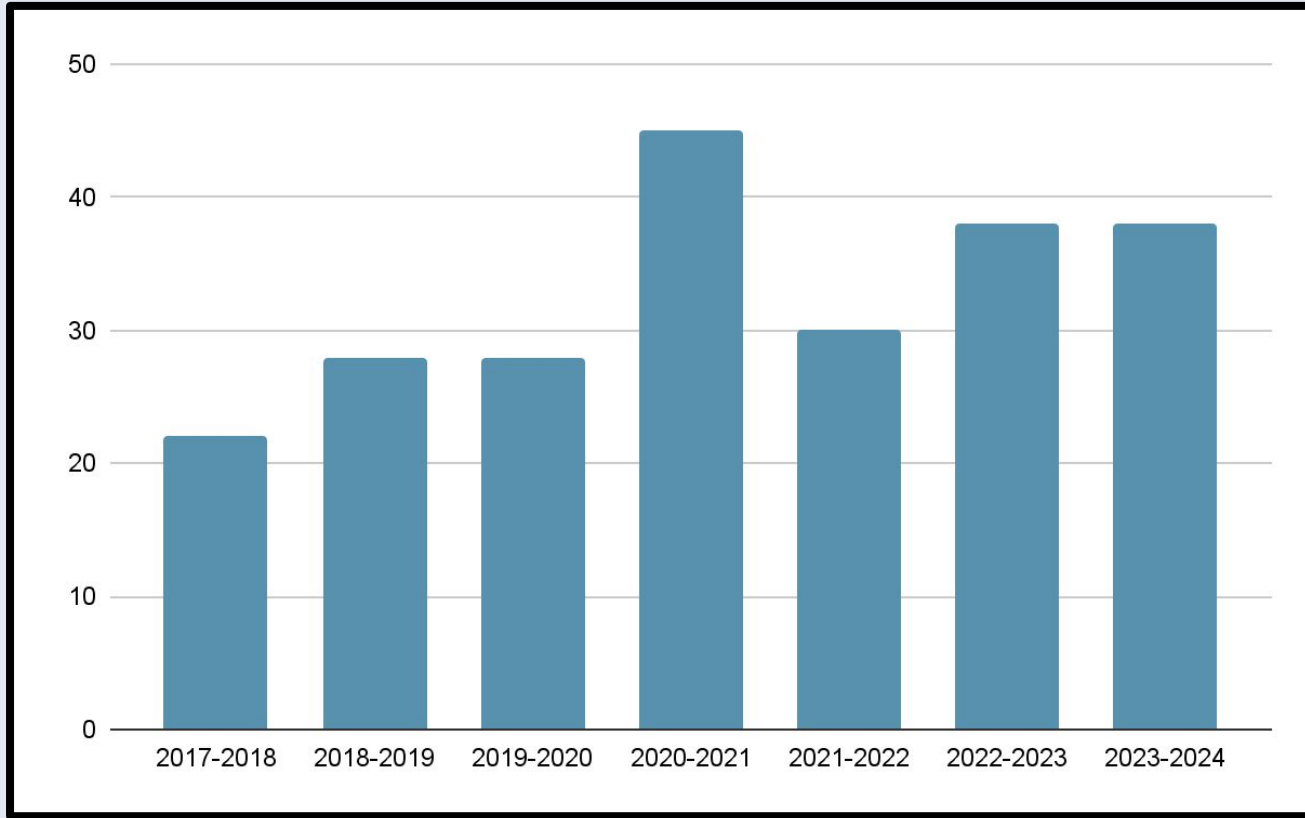
Teacher,
Educational Assistant
& Social Worker



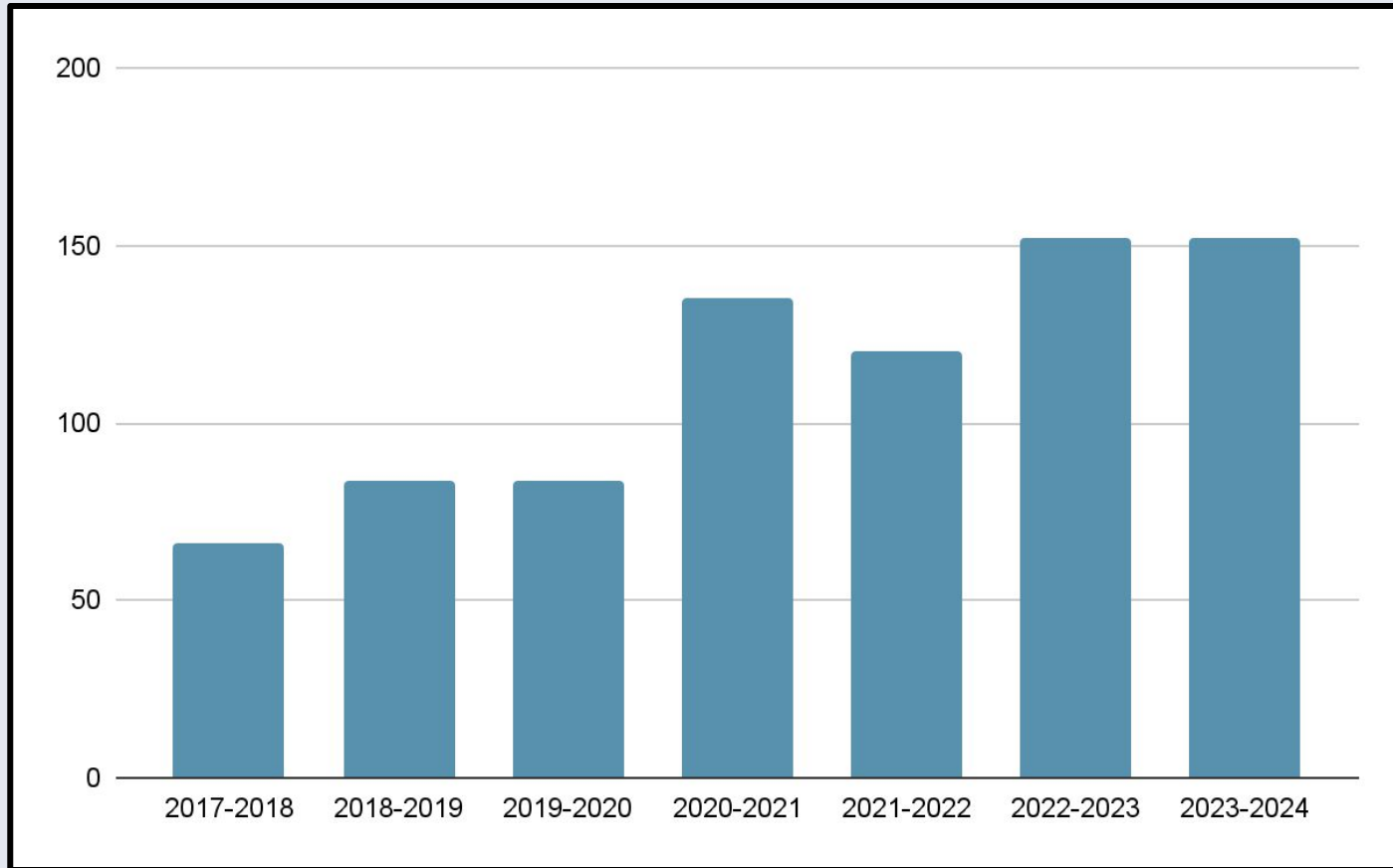
2017-2018 Themes

- Staff involvement during ALT cases was often limited to Teachers and Educational Assistants
- Students referred were not consistently requiring Tier 4 supports
- Challenges observed in the transferability and sustainability of implemented strategies

ALT Student Caseload



Staff Involved During ALT Cases

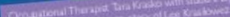




Evolving Our Practice



By Dr. Cody Edwards, Tracy Hensel, and
Chelsea Hallick, Medicine Hat Public Sch



Consultation

- Support the collaborative response process by attending teacher collaborative time, program team meetings and/or case conferences.
- Provision of school-based professional development, as requested.
- Short term support

- Focus is on an individual student or small group of students with a similar profile.
- Formal observation and/or assessment with recommendations shared in consultation report.
- Short term support (1-2 days)

"They made sure that after railstamps are fed supported and that we were doing the right things. There was never a moment that I was made to feel inadequate or incompetent. They kept encouraging all of us to try new strategies and to share when they actually worked!" - MHP/SD Teacher

school and division staff to walk together in the problem-solving process, thus allowing school personnel to step out of their day-to-day responsibilities and examine from a distance their current reality. *Holistic and integrative* is this practitioners' strategy of linking back and forth between "the dance floor" and "holiness" in their description of Adaptive Leadership.¹ In the Alternative Learning Team context, this involves offering varied perspectives through ongoing classroom observations, reviewing the student record, peer programming, meetings, and reflective conversations with school team members. Extended to the school community, the AIT extends the partnership respecting past and present school efforts, offering a new lens to recognize behavioral triggers and explore new strategies allowing the student's team.

The coaches,

The coaching process starts upon the team's vast knowledge, experience, and training. Each person understands and applies theory and strategies from Dr. Bruce Perry's Neurosequential Model, Dr. Ross Greene's Collaborative Problem-Solving Framework, Dr. Stuart Shanker's Self-Regulation Framework, Positive Behaviour Strategies, Differentiated Instruction, strategy learning steps, and more. The theoretical foundation is a system used shared with schools according to each school's needs and all driven with the goal of teaching professional learning. Still, the coaching relationship is only as effective as the level of established trust. Consequently, all members are purposeful in their interactions and always striving to be approachable, humble, accepting, empathetic, and effective. They are flexible to each situation, respectfully offering their own perspective

"After the completion of the coaching program, programming responsibilities were assigned by transition back to school staff to ensure their confidence in implementing the OT assessment and taking place to review report developed and summary checking progress. The debrief it takes throughout the process and success in elaborate participants' reflection on new learning for future practice." Program development

The team factors include observational data and one-on-one conversational feedback with a school teacher. The survey focused to collect opinions, perceptions, and staff had been the coaching model and staff had been fully trained.

Receiving critical feedback is never enough.

The College of Alberta School Superintendents



(Left to Right) Carrie Czember,
Rachel Lesko, and Jennifer Nicol

Within the comment, there is an observed feeling of teacher safety created through collaboration with the wrap-around team that facilitates reflection, risk-taking and a willingness to try new strategies. The Alternative Learning Team coaching model is a powerful example of effective professional collaboration for all organizational levels. This partnership that exhibits the type of relational trust, communication, and perceived competence we hope to see among school staff, teachers and students, and between ourselves.

beliefs, paradigms, and practices, is not what ALT members do the same. The "talk the talk" approach is an essential component of the coaching process, with ALT staff tending recess supervision, observing lunchtime interactions, or meeting the student upon arrival. The Alternative Learning Team has continuously evolved, selecting for six ways to connect with teams, which feed back and meet individualized teacher and student needs. From Hesfiter and Lindy's "holistic view," the ALT structure recognizes student behaviors as an entry point or hook for adult and team learning. It is a real experience that holds the potential to lead doors to transformed ways of thinking, acting, and adult life-long learning. One such program process, at a time.

Dr. Gail Edwards is the Associate Superintendent of Student Services, Tracy Howell is the Superintendent, and Chelina Haddock is the Coordinator of Diverse Learning Services of Medicine Hat Public School Division.

1. Heifetz, R., & Linsky, M. (2002). *Leadership on the line: Staying alive through the dangers of leading*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press.

**How has ALT adjusted their process
and approach to demonstrate
responsiveness?**

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graph TD; A[How has ALT adjusted their process and approach to demonstrate responsiveness?] --> B[Areas of Focus]; A --> C[Service Delivery Model];
```

Areas of Focus

Service Delivery
Model

Continuum of Services

COLLABORATION

- Support the Collaborative Response process by attending:
 - teacher collaborative time,
 - program team meetings
 - case conferences.
- School-based professional development, as requested.

Short term support



CONSULTATION

- Focus is on an individual student or small group of students with a similar profile.
- Formal observation and/or assessment with recommendations shared in consultation report.

Short term support (1-2 days)



COACHING

- Focus is on an individual student.
- Direct intervention and modeling strategies.
- Collaborate with school staff to develop evidence-informed and strength-based individualized programming.
- Occupational Therapist assessment provided.
- Coaching report developed throughout length of stay.

Long term support (10-12 days)



The Coaching Process

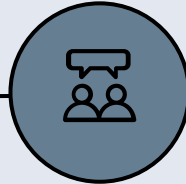
Programming
Team Meeting
(PTM)



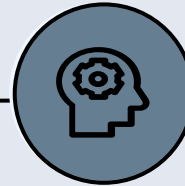
Observation &
Data Collection



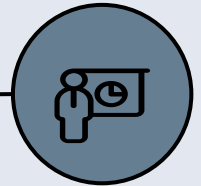
Collaboration,
Implementation &
Midpoint Meeting



Reflection &
Phase Out



Exit Meeting



10 Days

Coaching Follow-Up

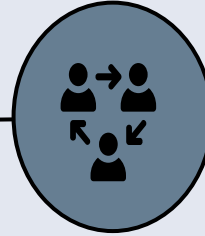
Survey



Check-in



Parent
Meeting



Focus Areas



Complex Communication

Augmentative &
Alternative
Communication



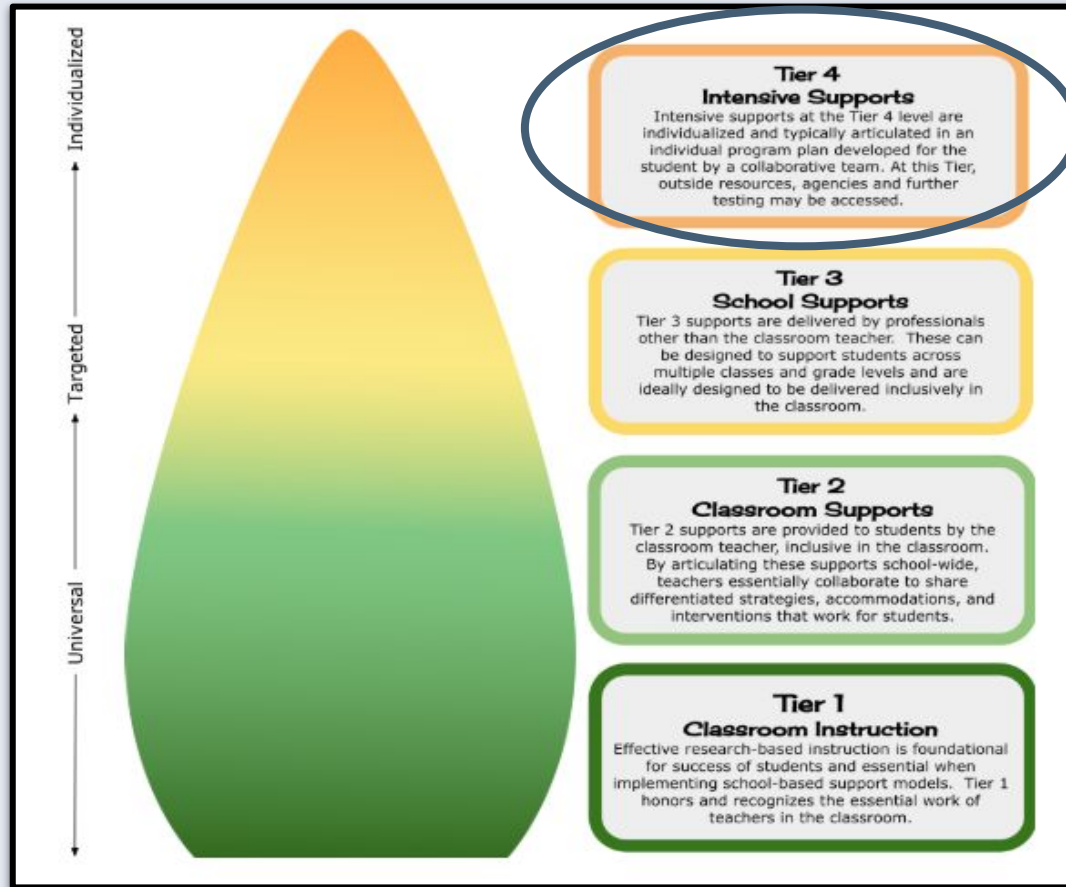
Behaviour Emotional Support

Trauma-Informed
Coaching,
Neurosequential Model,



Specialized Programming Supports

Modified Programming,
Life Skills,
Structured Teaching



**How has ALT adjusted their process
and approach to support
capacity building?**

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graph TD; A[How has ALT adjusted their process and approach to support capacity building?] --> B[CST Connection]; A --> C[ALT Experience & Training];
```

CST Connection

ALT Experience &
Training

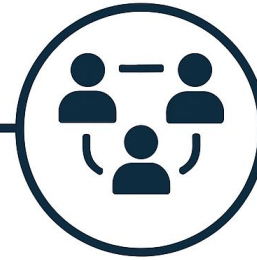
CST Foundational Principles



FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE:
**CAPACITY
BUILDING**

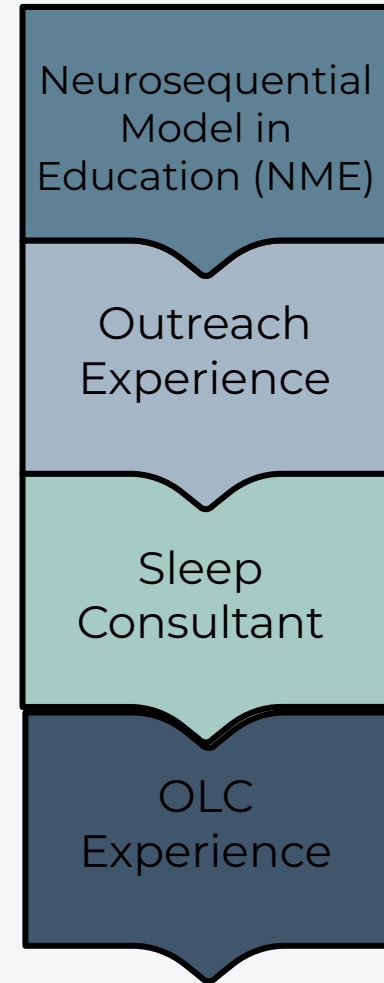
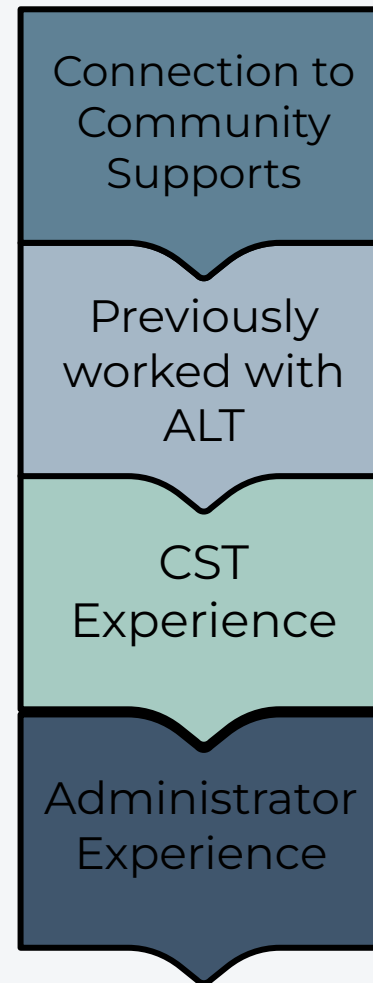
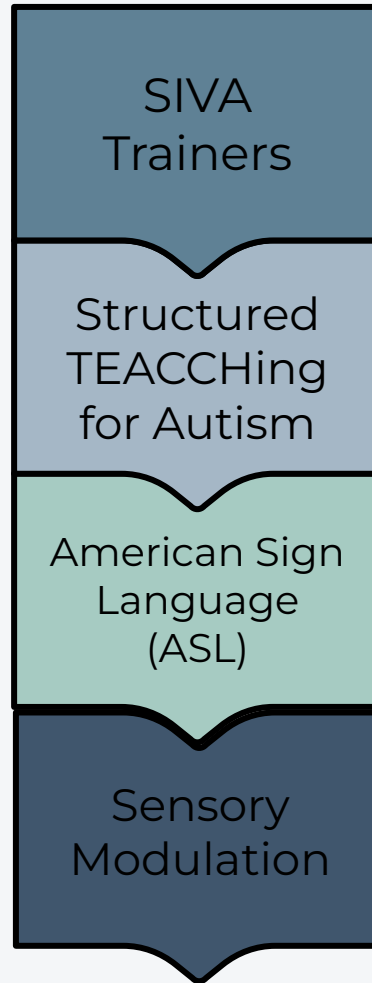


FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE:
**STUDENT
PROGRAMMING**



FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE:
**DIVISION & COMMUNITY
CONNECTIONS**

ALT Experience & Training





ALT's 2024-2025 Impact



33 Referrals to date
26 coaching, 7 consults

84 Staff Involved to date
*Not including Administrators &
Upcoming Cases

14 Schools

Mainly supporting schools with students ELP - Grade 6

ALT Connection with every Elementary School by Oct. 2024

12 Professional Development Delivered

- SIVA
- Escalation Cycle
- Adapted vs Modified Programming
- Top 5 Strategies
- Sensory Profile Series
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Best Practices for Working with EAs



Division Feedback

Responsiveness: **Timeliness, Adaptability, Relevance**

They **responded promptly** to teacher and staff concerns, offered **real-time strategies**, and took the **time to debrief** what was working well and what remained challenging.



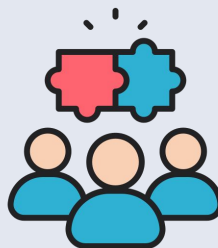
Their ability to adapt strategies based on individual student needs, classroom dynamics, and changing circumstances meant that, by the time they left, we had a solid and **actionable plan** in place.

The ALT team is not just immediately responsive to the initial concern but responsive **throughout the process**, staying **solution focused** and leaning into **staff and student strengths**.

Capacity Building: Individual Skills, Organizational Strength, School Empowerment

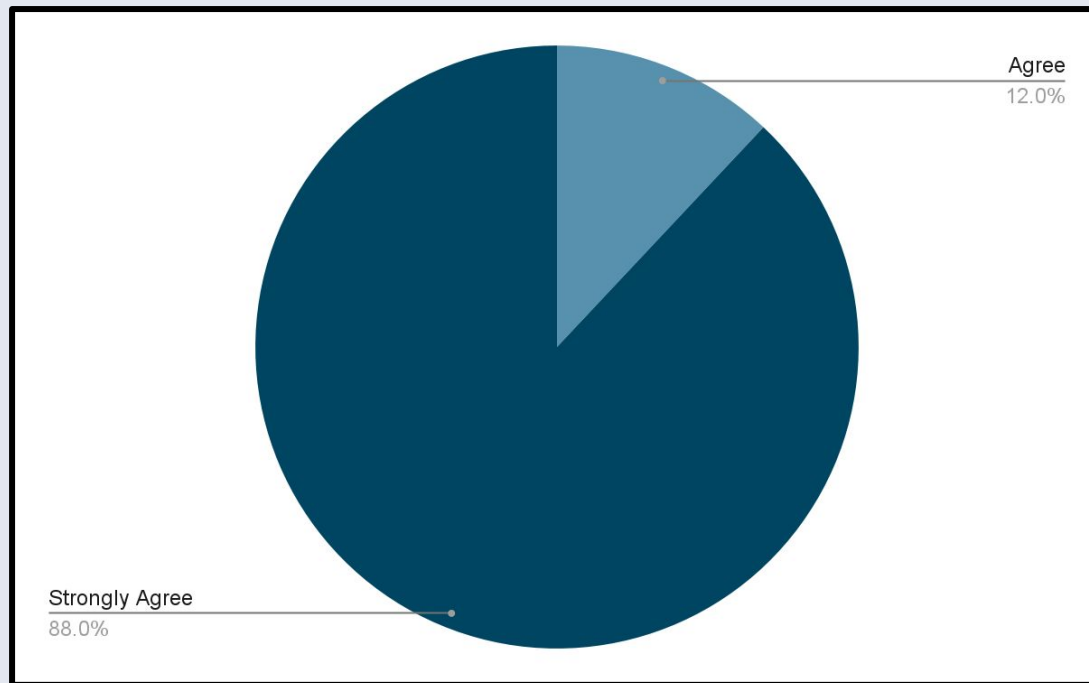
The team also shared **practical, easy-to-use tools**—such as visual supports, behavior tracking templates, and classroom management resources—which helped both myself and my staff implement strategies more **effectively** and **consistently**.

ALT is able to **recognize and highlight strengths** and builds capacity through **relationships first**, **modelling/coaching right in the moment** and intentionally asking staff what they need.



I appreciate that ALT helps schools have a **micro and macro lens** when programming. How can we address our current need/situation, but also looks at **current structures and supports** to see how they can be maximized or utilized creatively.

The Alternative Learning Team helped me to learn and implement strategies that will allow me to support students with similar needs in the future.



While supporting one student may be the initial reason for involvement, the team can **leave a broader impact** by demonstrating strategies that **apply to a wide range of students** and situations – staff **gain tools** they can use long after the initial support ends.

“Working with the ALT team in real time has been some of the most beneficial PD I have experienced. Thank you to our division for recognizing the need for this team!”

“They do make a world of difference in our ever increasingly complex learning communities.”

MHPSD CSTs

