

# Behavior Triage To Enhance Resilience (BeTTER) 2.0



## *What is BeTTER?*

BeTTER is a partnership between the Mid-Dakota Education Cooperative (MDEC) and two elementary schools in the MDEC region to identify, assess, and serve elementary students with behavioral manifestations in the classroom who are not receiving special education services. BeTTER's mission is to improve student success by assisting schools in building behavior supports while increasing student, family, and staff capacity. Our goal is to enhance student and staff resilience and in turn prevent students from falling through the cracks.

## *How does it work?*

Teachers use a preselected, evidence-based screening tool to identify at risk students for the program, based on their observations. Then, the MDEC Family Support Strategist (FSS) and Coach observe students in their natural environment; collect behavioral data and information; work with school staff to identify appropriate evidence-based interventions that are then used to address behaviors; and assists with teacher coaching and intervention implementation.

In addition, the students identified for BeTTER, and their families may receive support from the MDEC Family Support Strategist (FSS) who works to engage families in the problem solving process by strengthening both student and family voice within the school and community. The FSS works directly with the family to ensure they are understanding the education-specific jargon utilized by educators and administrators; helps identify natural supports; helps nurture and strengthen relationships between the family and school; and connects the family with community resources (mental health providers, food pantries, etc.).

## *Why now?*

Incidences of adverse behavior manifestations in the classroom are increasing. In addition, educators are feeling ill equipped to manage the increasing frequency and intensity of these outbreaks while dutifully tending to curricula facilitation among other job-related duties. As a result, students and teachers are losing instructional time. The ramifications of lost instructional time are costly for students, teachers, school districts, and ultimately, society. Research suggests that for every \$1 spent in early intervention, \$9 is saved in treatment.

## *How do we know it's working?*

Initial data reveals students enrolled in BeTTER demonstrate a consistent decrease in behaviors as the we continue to support their needs. The pattern reveals a "honeymoon" period in which behavioral manifestations decrease, followed by an intense spike, and then a steady decrease in the behaviors that were targeted for interventions.

