



Elementary Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health Update

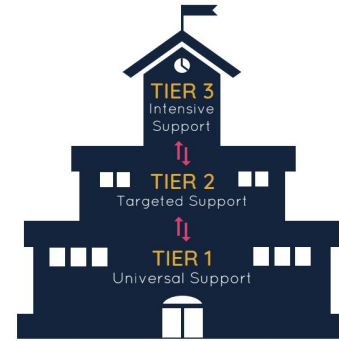
11/20/23 School Committee Meeting

Update provided by Jesse Krotick, M.Ed., MSW, LICSW;
and Maria Kolbe, Ed.D.

Goals of Presentation



Student SEL and mental health needs within elementary schools



Elementary systems and structures specifically addressing this need



Elementary SEL and Mental Health in 2023

Pre-pandemic -----> 2023

- Increased overall student mental health and SEL needs, both in terms of the number of students requiring individualized supports as well as the complexity of need within classrooms
- Continued disproportionalities within historically marginalized populations in accessing mental health and SEL interventions and supports

This looks like:

- Increasing numbers of students with lagging skills that are **facilitators of academic engagement and success**- including self-management skills, emotional regulation skills, collaboration skills.
- Additionally, **mental health complexities** related to presentations of poor self-concept, anxiety, and mood continue to grow and require significant individualized, and often wraparound, support from NPS staff.

Measuring SEL and Mental Health: Lived Experiences of Educators

Lagging SEL skills and mental health needs of elementary students are presenting for educators as looming barriers toward the achievement of district goals.

Illustrative Example	<p>Consultation with a fourth grade team related to end of unit data set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Backdrop of highly engaging, active curriculum- Each classroom identified at least 4 different groups of students that required significant alterations in either content, design of instruction, or in process of showing their knowledge within each classroom. One classroom identified 6 different groups.
----------------------	--

Measuring SEL and Mental Health: Supplementing the Qualitative

● *NPS School Connectedness data (Grades 3-5)*

- In 2022-2023, students self-report an average score of 3.42 for the areas that make up Academic support and 3.24 for the areas that make up Behavioral Support (Scale 1-4).
- Disproportionalities persist in the form of self-reported lower scores across all 7 domains for a variety of identity groups, including students that identify as male, Black students, free and reduced lunch status, and students that are supported through IEPs.

NPS Elementary Support and Stabilization Referral Data:

- Continue to see increase in complexity and intensity of student need in referrals for clinical consultation and support from this district crisis support team.
- Examining the 2022-2023 school year, the 30 referrals embodied the consistent trends we have historically seen within this data: an overrepresentation by gender (63% male in FY23) and by race (43% of referred students in FY23 are Black).

● *From Riverside Community Care:*

- From April 2023-November 2023, 29 instances of requested school-based support required at the elementary level (compared with 10 instances of requested support from April 2022-November 2022)
- Agency reporting of an increase within Newton in the need to assist families with meeting basic needs

Measuring SEL and Mental Health: Supplementing the Qualitative



	<i>2023-2024</i>	<i>2024-2025 and on</i>
Classroom Teacher Survey of Student SEL Skills	All schools will complete the survey two times this year, for a minimum of one grade level	Completed Kindergarten through 5th grade, three times a year during established assessment windows
Student Survey (with a subset of connectedness questions included from NPS instrument)	All third through fifth grade students complete, two times a year	All third through fifth grade students complete, two times a year

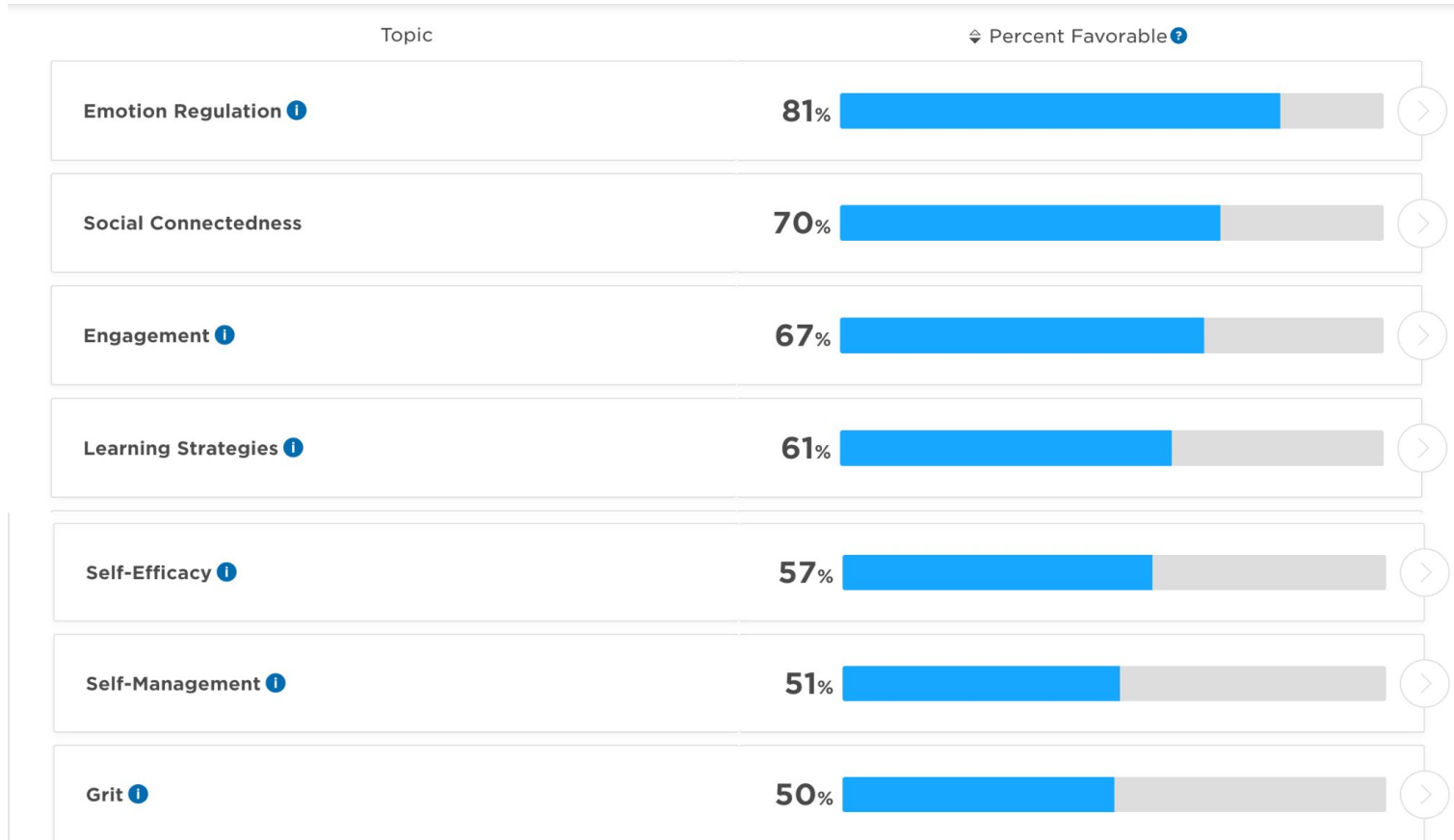


Measuring SEL and Mental Health: Supplementing the Qualitative

Qualifiers related to the data set on slides 9-10:

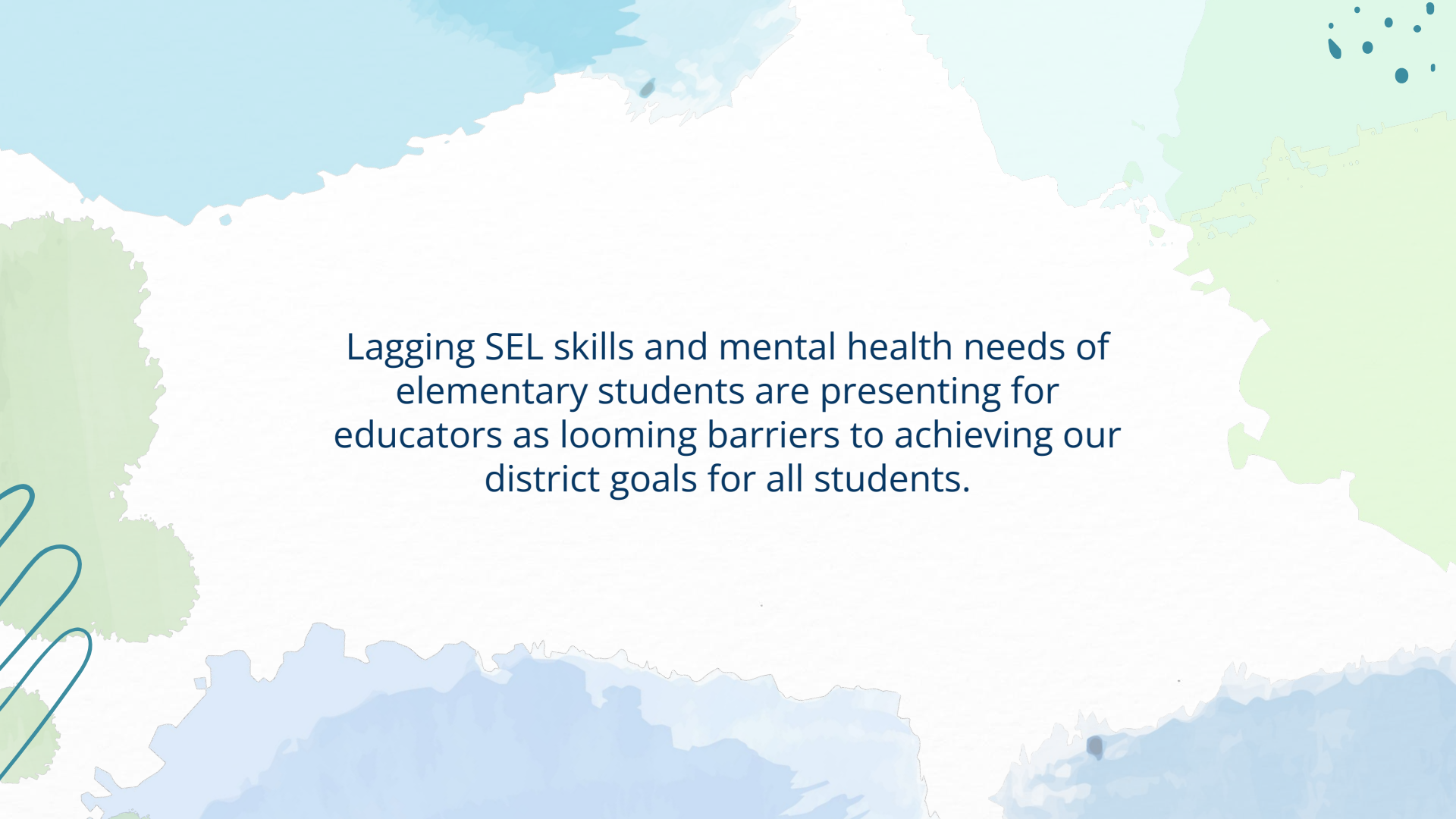
- Due to the phased implementation plan, 3,320 students were captured in the data (out of 4,998 elementary students)
- Schools that completed a subset of their building had varying reasons for choosing the grade level(s)
- Each domain was captured by one question

Partial, Fall 2023 Administration of Classroom Teacher survey of Student SEL Skills (see slide 8 for data qualifiers)



Partial, Fall 2023 Administration of Classroom Teacher Survey of
 Elementary Student SEL Skills
 (see slide 8 for data qualifiers)

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Percentage Favorable (4 or 5 on 1-5 scale)</i>
Emotional Regulation	How often does this student maintain a regulated emotional state throughout the school day?	81%
Social Connectedness	During the last 30 days, how socially connected to the classroom community did the student appear to be?	70%
Engagement	Overall, how engaged is this student in the activities of the school day?	67%
Learning Strategies	Overall, how well does the student utilize taught learning strategies?	61%
Self-Efficacy	How confident does the student appear to be in their ability to learn all the material presented in your classroom?	57%
Self-Management	Overall, how well does the student self-manage their focus during lessons?	51%
Grit	If this student is struggling with a task, how likely are they to engage in a productive struggle?	50%

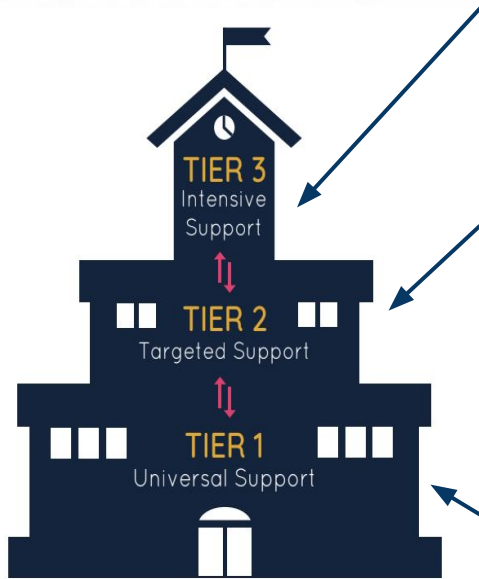


Lagging SEL skills and mental health needs of elementary students are presenting for educators as looming barriers to achieving our district goals for all students.



SEL and Mental Health Systems and Structures

The Vision of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS): SEL and Mental Health



Tier 3 Structures and Systems

- **Individualized, skill-based interventions**
- Wrap-around supports and **increased collaboration with families** related to a student receiving Tier 3 support
- Potential consultation with the **Elementary Support and Stabilization Program**

Tier 2 Structures and Systems:

- Opportunities for **repeated practice** with Tier 1 routines and rituals
- **Skill-based interventions** in or out of the classroom
- **Friendship Groups** (during lunch)
- **Check-in Check-out (CICO)** intervention program
- Mentoring and/or **relationship building at higher frequency**

Tier 1 Structures and Systems:

- **Morning Meetings and Closing Circles**, as well as other focuses on classroom community
- **Routines and rituals** of the classroom that are repetitive and predictable
- **Identity-affirming practices** that allow students to be their authentic selves in all spaces
- **EL Curriculum** (K-2 in 23-24 school year)
- **Collaboration time** between mental health teams and general educators (in PLCs) to engage in data-based decision-making
- Co-teaching and **partnering in general education classrooms** by SEL coaches

SEL and Mental Health Positions

Current dedicated FTEs to share the lift of this work with general educators and school faculty as a whole

Social Workers:

- Part-time allocation, most .5
- Support school-family connections, including bridging wrap-around supports for students and families
- Provide clinical guidance and support to school faculty
- Provide crisis response support and management
- Provide IEP mandated mental health services
- Regular education student interventions as time allows

Psychologists:

- Full-time or close to full-time allocations
- Provide IEP mandated mental health services
- Complete testing through the special education process
- Provide clinical guidance and support to school faculty and community
- Provide crisis response and management
- Regular education student interventions as time allows

Elementary Support and Stabilization Program Staff:

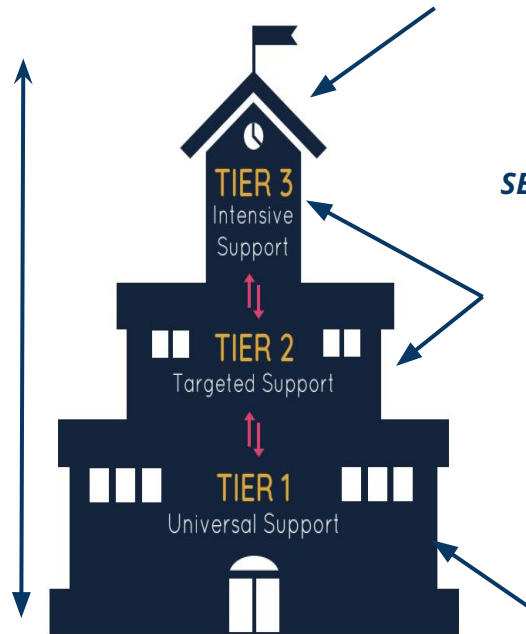
- Crisis response mechanism to provide consultation and coaching (2.0 Unit A FTEs) and behavior therapist support (3.0 FTEs) to students in acute crisis

SEL Interventionists:

- Behavior Therapists, full-time in every elementary school
- Provide small group and individualized SEL interventions
- Provide crisis response support for regular education students

SEL Coaches:

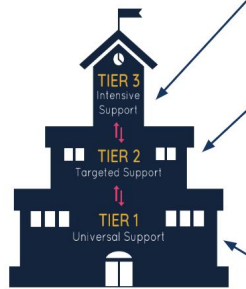
- Unit A, Part-time allocation in 5 schools
- Attend PLCs as expert on SEL data-based decision-making
- Partner and co-teach with general educators to address complex classroom challenges



Primary Areas of Need

to actualize our schools being multi-tiered systems of support for the SEL and mental health needs for all students

The Vision of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS): SEL and Mental Health



Tier 3 Structures and Systems

- **Individualized, skill-based interventions**
- Wrap-around supports and **increased collaboration with families** related to a student receiving Tier 3 support
- Potential consultation with the **Elementary Support and Stabilization Program**

Tier 2 Structures and Systems:

- Opportunities for **repeated practice** with Tier 1 routines and rituals
- **Skill-based interventions** in or out of the classroom
- **Friendship Groups** (during lunch)
- **Check-in Check-out (CICO)** intervention program
- Mentoring and/or **relationship building at higher frequency**

Tier 1 Structures and Systems:

- **Morning Meetings and Closing Circles**, as well as other focuses on classroom community
- **Routines and rituals** of the classroom that are repetitive and predictable
- **Identity-affirming practices** that allow students to be their authentic selves in all spaces
- **EL Curriculum** (K-2 in 23-24 school year)
- **Collaboration time** between mental health teams and general educators (in PLCs) to engage in data-based decision-making
- Co-teaching and **partnering in general education classrooms** by mental health staff or SEL coaches

Structural Barriers:

- Social Worker FTE
- Inequitable SEL Coach allocation
- Schedule & Time and Learning

Structural Barrier 1: Social Worker FTE

Current Allocations:

- .5 or slightly-higher allocations at each elementary school

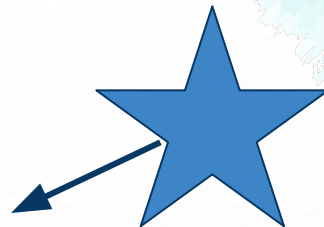
Social Workers are uniquely qualified to:

- Support **school-family connections**, including **bridging wrap-around supports** for students and families

Social Workers also bring a unique clinical lens and skill set to provide:

- Consultation and support to school faculty
- Crisis response support and management
- IEP-mandated mental health services
- Regular education student interventions

Let's hear about some of the challenges in their own words...



Voices of Social Workers

Captured using AI interview tool that generated themes below

Time Constraints

The responses discussed various aspects of Time Constraints related to the roles of social workers, such as not having enough time to meet the needs of students and families, not having enough time to consult with parents and outside counselors, not having enough time to provide consistent support for students and staff, not having enough time for family work, and not having enough time for professional development. The participants involved had a perception that Time Constraints were a major factor in how comprehensively they could effectively execute their job as a social worker, and that having full time social workers at every school would help to alleviate the issue.

Quality of Service Delivery

The responses discussed various aspects of quality of work/ability to perform well related to the roles of social workers, such as managing caseloads, providing support to students and families, and engaging in tailored professional development. The participants expressed a need for more FTEs and full-time social workers in order to meet the needs of students and families, as well as to provide more comprehensive support and preventative strategies. They also highlighted the importance of having enough time to consult with parents and outside counselors, as well as to engage in meaningful relationships with students and families.

Crisis Intervention

The responses discussed various aspects of Crisis Intervention, such as the need for more FTEs, the need for more social workers in each school, the need for professional development, and the need for more family work. The participants perceived Crisis Intervention as a difficult task due to the lack of resources and time constraints, which makes it difficult to provide comprehensive support to students and families. They also highlighted the need for a culture shift to better value the role of social workers.

Making the Case for Full time Social Workers at Each School

The participants discussed the challenges of having limited Full Time Social Workers (FTE) to meet the needs of students and families, particularly those with high needs and involved in multiple systems. They highlighted the need for more FTEs to provide comprehensive support, including counseling, consultation, caregiver engagement, and professional development. They also discussed the need for more FTEs to provide family work, crisis intervention, and outreach to families and other parts of student's care team. The participants expressed that having more FTEs would lead to a culture shift and better support for students and families.

Structural Barrier 2: Inequitable SEL Coach Allocation

- Current positions are in place due to creative, outside-the-box thinking related to allocation existing FTEs to the proactive, Tier 1 SEL work within elementary schools
- Result of a part-time SEL Coach position in five elementary schools for the 2023-2024 school year:
 - Angier: .5 FTE
 - Cabot: .5 FTE
 - Franklin: .5 FTE
 - Lincoln-Eliot Elementary: .8 FTE (partially through Title 1 funds)
 - Mason-Rice: .5 FTE

Two Core Features of the Role

Attend **grade-level Wednesday afternoon PLCs** (just as Literacy Specialists and Math Coaches attend for their areas)

Through data-based decision-making, **facilitate brainstorming and goal setting regarding Tier 1, universal SEL and mental health systems and structures in classrooms**- both through consultation but also partnering and co-teaching with general educators

Structural Barrier 3:

Current Schedules: Impact of Time on Learning (TOL) structures

Grade-level schedules that are a product of:

- A lack of SEL minutes outside of Morning meeting and closing circle, leading to no dedicated time within the week for the explicit teaching of SEL skills

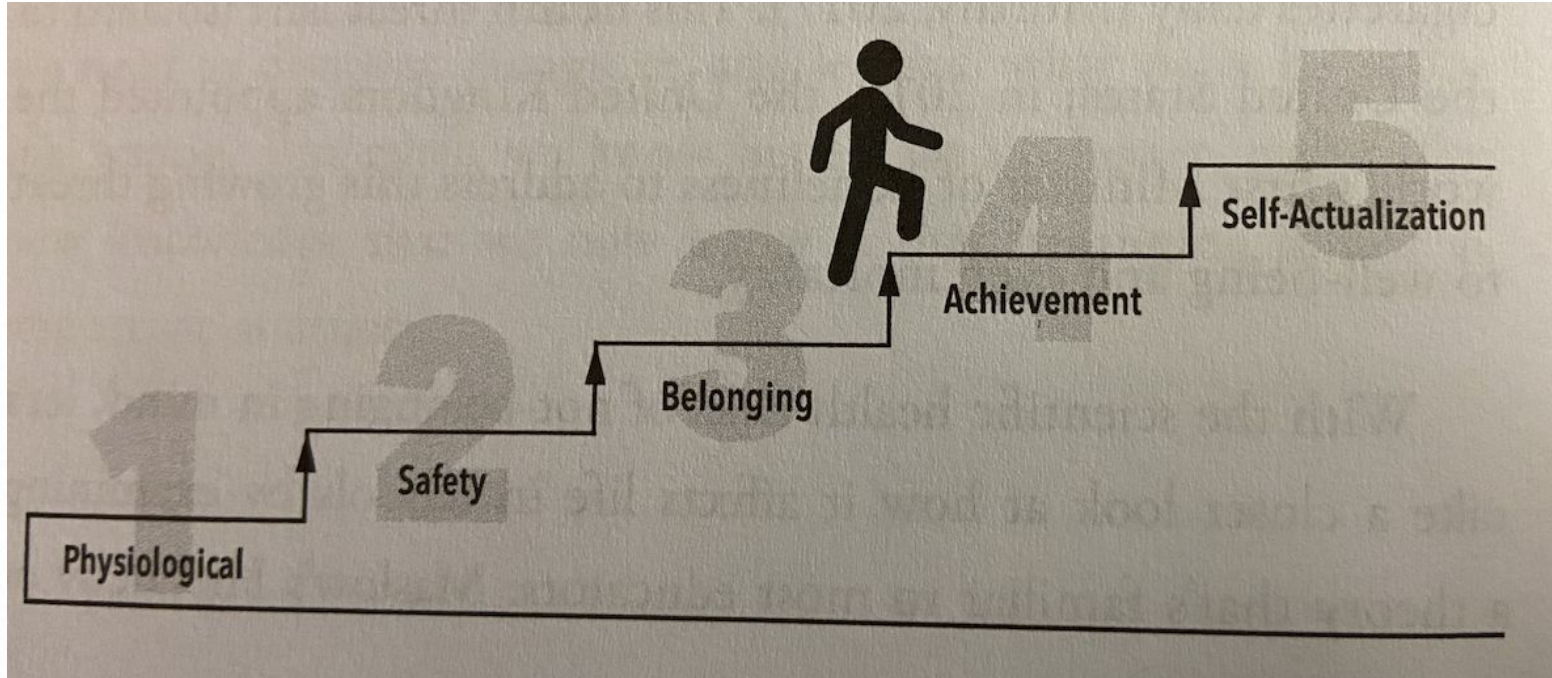
Broader concerns that impact all content areas:

- Classroom schedules that vary day-by-day, as opposed to a set, predictable flow of the day for students
- Content blocks that are often not at the same time across a grade-level, hindering the level of individualized instruction that can be expected to be provided systematically and sustainability
- Minimal to no common planning time for general educators to plan for differentiated instruction as a team

This School Year

- Learning alongside our general educators regarding the **EL literacy curriculum**, but continuing to be impressed with the quality and breadth of the embedded SEL content
- Refining our already defined **Tier 1 and 2/3 SEL structures and intervention systems**, through department meetings and professional learning community work
- Providing professional learning in **three SEL intervention curricula** for mental health/SEL teams, ordered through the DESE grant funding Panorama
- Collaboration with DEI department to **examine and refine existing identity-affirming curricula and resources** for our elementary schools
- Growing the muscle of using quantitative SEL data through **Panorama's educator and student surveys**, learning from year one of our implementation plan
- Looking toward **capturing the conditions of our schools** that are closest to the MTSS SEL and mental health vision shared tonight, looking toward measuring the impact of SEL efforts in schools over time
- Exploring different formats for and preparing the content of elementary **parent workshops based around Panorama SEL skill focus areas**- to be offered in the 2024-2025 school year.

Where all Students Thrive

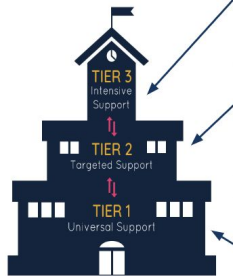


SOURCE: Cobb, F. and Krownapple, J., 2019, from the "Belonging through a Culture of Dignity: the Keys to Successful Equity Implementation"

Where all Students Thrive



The Vision of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS): SEL and Mental Health



Tier 3 Structures and Systems

- **Individualized, skill-based interventions**
- Wrap-around supports and **increased collaboration with families** related to a student receiving Tier 3 support
- Potential consultation with the **Elementary Support and Stabilization Program**

Tier 2 Structures and Systems:

- Opportunities for **repeated practice** with Tier 1 routines and rituals
- **Skill-based interventions** in or out of the classroom
- **Friendship Groups** (during lunch)
- **Check-in Check-out (CICO)** intervention program
- Mentoring and/or **relationship building at higher frequency**

Tier 1 Structures and Systems:

- **Morning Meetings and Closing Circles**, as well as other focuses on classroom community
- **Routines and rituals** of the classroom that are repetitive and predictable
- **Identity-affirming practices** that allow students to be their authentic selves in all spaces
- **EL Curriculum** (K-2 in 23-24 school year)
- **Collaboration time** between mental health teams and general educators (in PLCs) to engage in data-based decision-making
- Co-teaching and **partnering in general education classrooms** by mental health staff or SEL coaches

