UNDERSTANDING OUR STUDENTS, SUPPORTING OUR TEACHERS, AND ALIGNING OUR RESOURCES

Who Am I?

- **Licensed Psychologist**

- **Professor of School Psychology**

- **Former Teacher**

- **Dog Mom, Mom, Wife, Sister, Daughter Friend, Runner**

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A Little More About Me

- **NECS**
- **Jumpstart**
- **French Prairie**
- **Burbank**
- **Valley West**
- **Buttonball**
- **Holt**
- **May Institute**

Environment Matters!

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MARZANO Resources

3
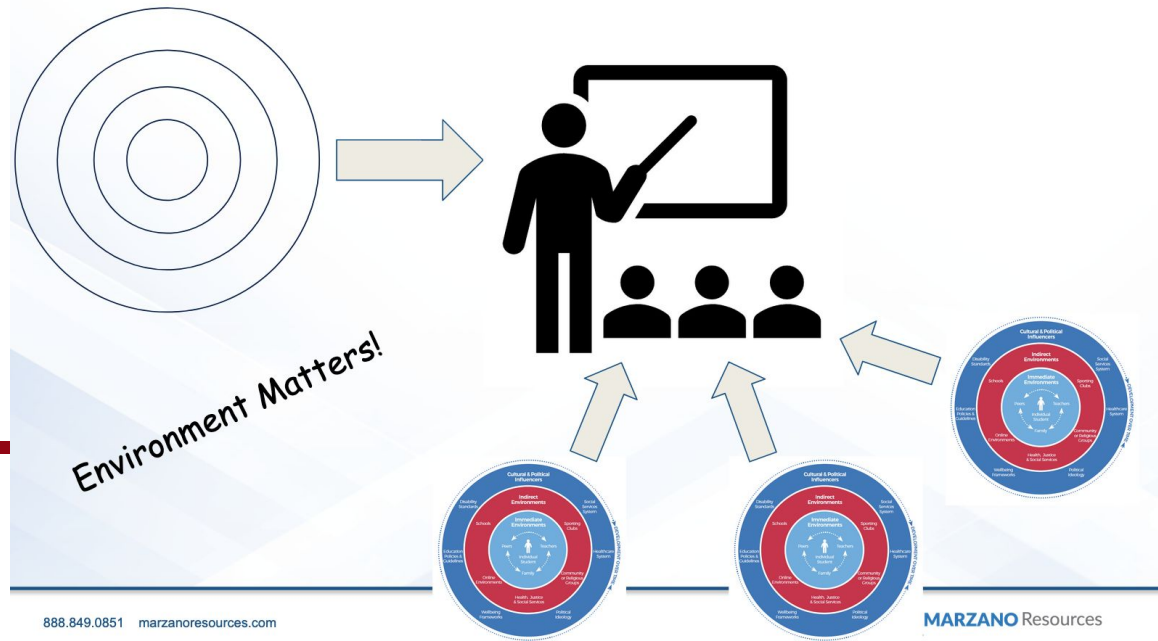
A Big Thank You: Credit Given To

- **My School Partners!**
- **My students!**
- **The BIRCh Project (birchproject.org)/Boston Children's/EOHHS/The Children Mental Health Campaign**
- **Sarah Fefer, University of Massachusetts**
- **CBER, University of Connecticut**
- **ECS, University of Oregon**
- **Laura Feuerborn, University of Washington, Tacoma**
- **The May Institute**
- **George Bear, University of Delaware**
- **Sel4ma.org**
- **Strongkidsresources.com**
- **www.pbis.org**
- **https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/**
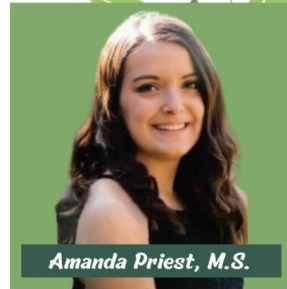- **CASEL (www.casel.org)**

BIRCh Project

Melissa Pearrow, Ph.D
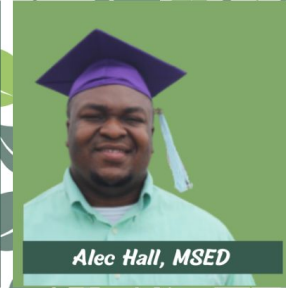
Alec Hall, MSED

Talia Berkman, B.A.
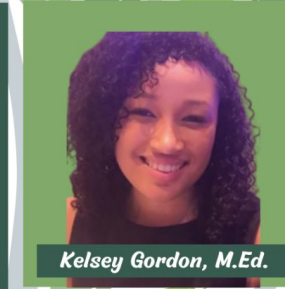
Sara Whitcomb, Ph.D

Amanda Priest, M.S.

Paige Pannozzo, B.A.

Kelsey Gordon, M.Ed.
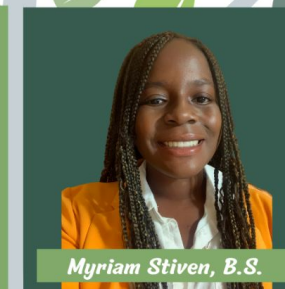
Bryce Scottron, M.A.

Whitney Walker, Ph.D

Kathryn Kurtz, Ph.D

Myriam Stiven, B.S.

Kristina Ruggeri, M.S., NCSP

Patrick Robinson-Link, M.A.

Meet the BIRCh Staff

# Big Ideas

The mental health needs of our students are increasing.

Teachers are frontline workers in the mental health crisis.

We know what to do to prevent and intervene with mental health concerns. We need to focus on how to do it.

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What is mental/behavioral health?

A diagram with two axes. The vertical axis is labeled "High Well-Being" at top and "Low Well-Being" at bottom. The horizontal axis is labeled "Low Distress" on the left and "High Distress" on the right. The four quadrants are labeled: "Complete Mental Health" (upper left), "Symptomatic but Content" (upper right), "Vulnerable" (lower left), and "Troubled" (lower right).

*"**Good mental health is important for everyone**. Mental health is as important as physical health to our quality of life. Mental health is not simply the absence of mental illness, but also means having the skills necessary to cope with life's challenges. If ignored, mental health problems can interfere with children's learning, development, relationships, and physical health"*
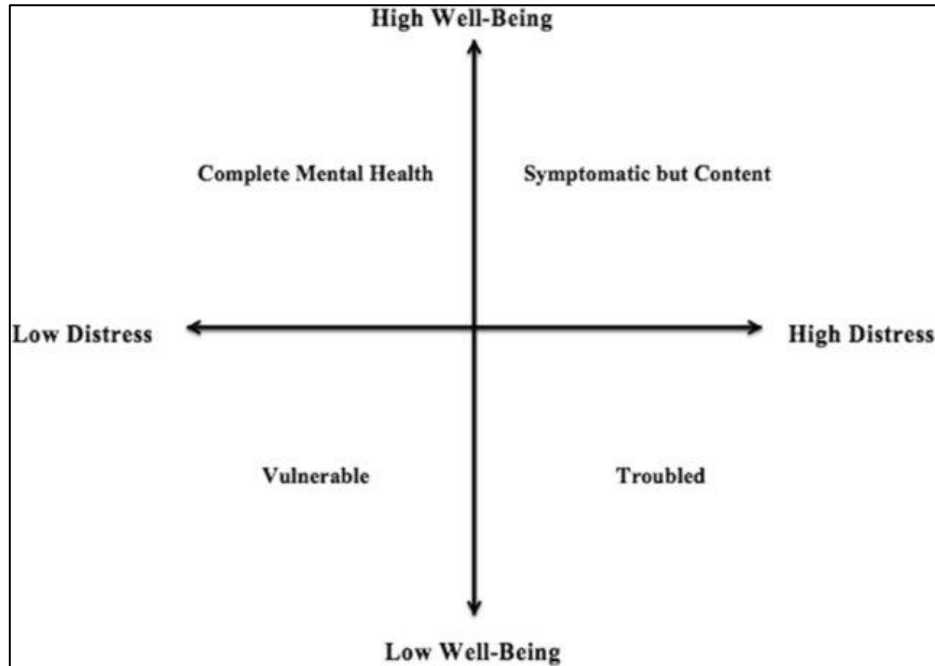
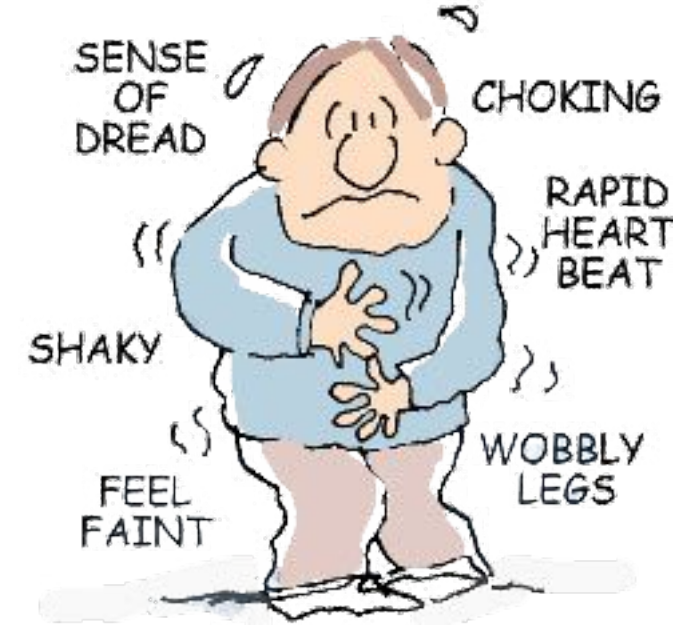-National Association of School Psychologists

What do MH Challenges Look Like in the Classroom?

Fight–anger, confrontation, property destruction

Flight-panic, avoidance, bolting

Freeze-shutting down, dissociating, shy

Fawn-tries to please others, not assertive, lacking boundaries

Now that we have the words, let's think about the numbers…

As of July, 2019, the general population was 6,892,503.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, every day

951,631 students in our public schools
134,259 full-time teachers and staff (89% white)
1,085,890 in total in our schools every day

1 out of every 6 people (16%)
in Massachusetts enter a public school on any given weekday

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For the Commonwealth, of the 951,631 students in public schools, the estimated impact of behavioral health concerns

142,745 – 190,326 children*

Recognize that 50% to 75% of youth with a substance use disorder experience a co-occurring mental illness, this impacts between 61,856 to 142,745.

*Estimated rates are pre-pandemic, and we know these rates and concerns have escalated

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Professional Support Personnel (18-19)

**951,631** students in **406** School Districts (LEA)

7,475 Professional Support Personnel

5,427 focus on **Behavioral Health** (SAC/SSW, SC, & SP)

Professional Support Personnel License	Number of Professionals in MA Schools	Ratio of Staff: Student	National Recommended Ratios
School Social Worker/ School Adjustment Counselor	1777	1:536	1:250
School Counselor	2353	1:404	1:250
School Psychologist	1297	1:734	1:500
School Nurse	2048	1:465	1:750

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Number of Students to School Psychologist
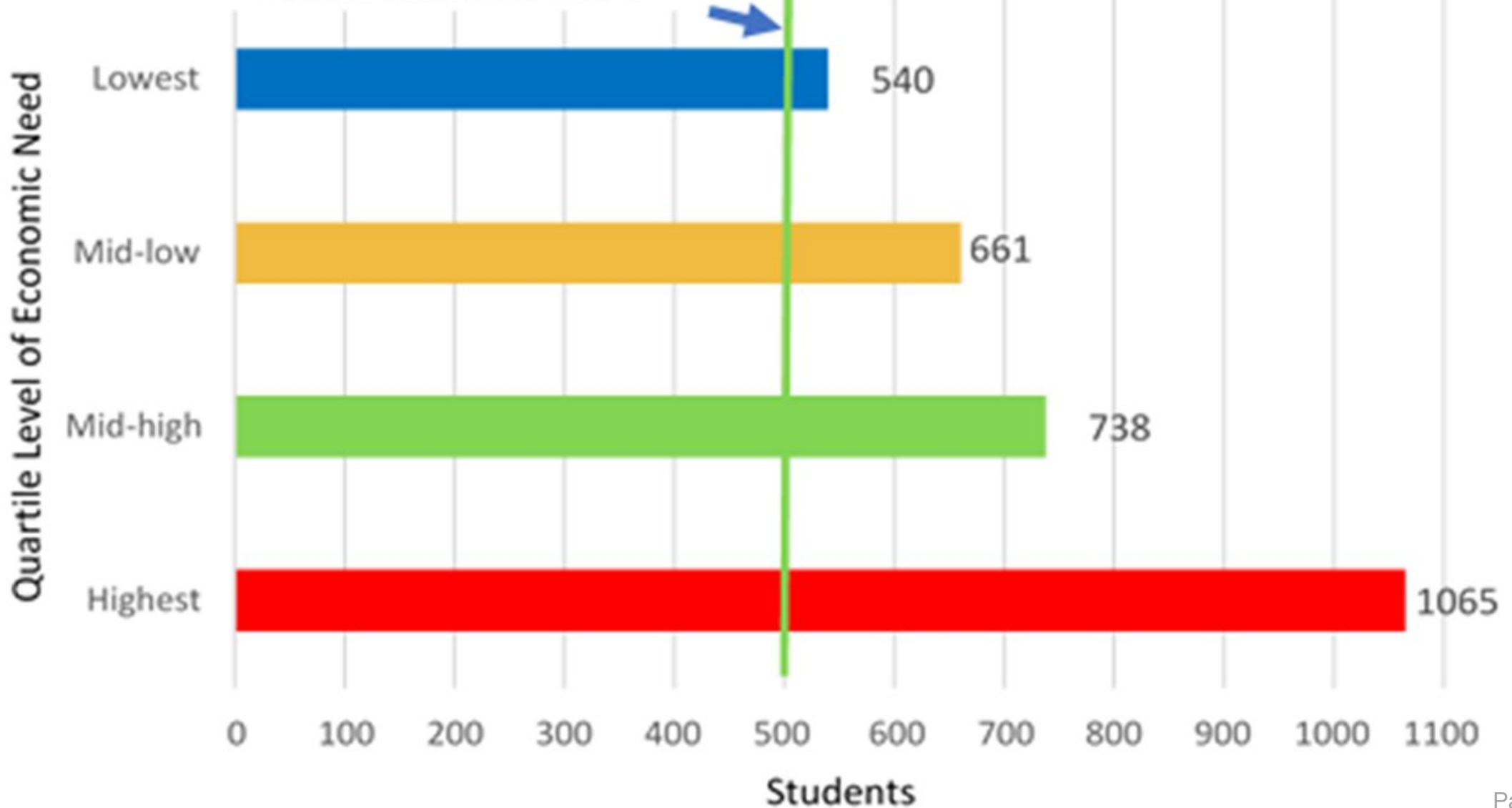
What it feels like
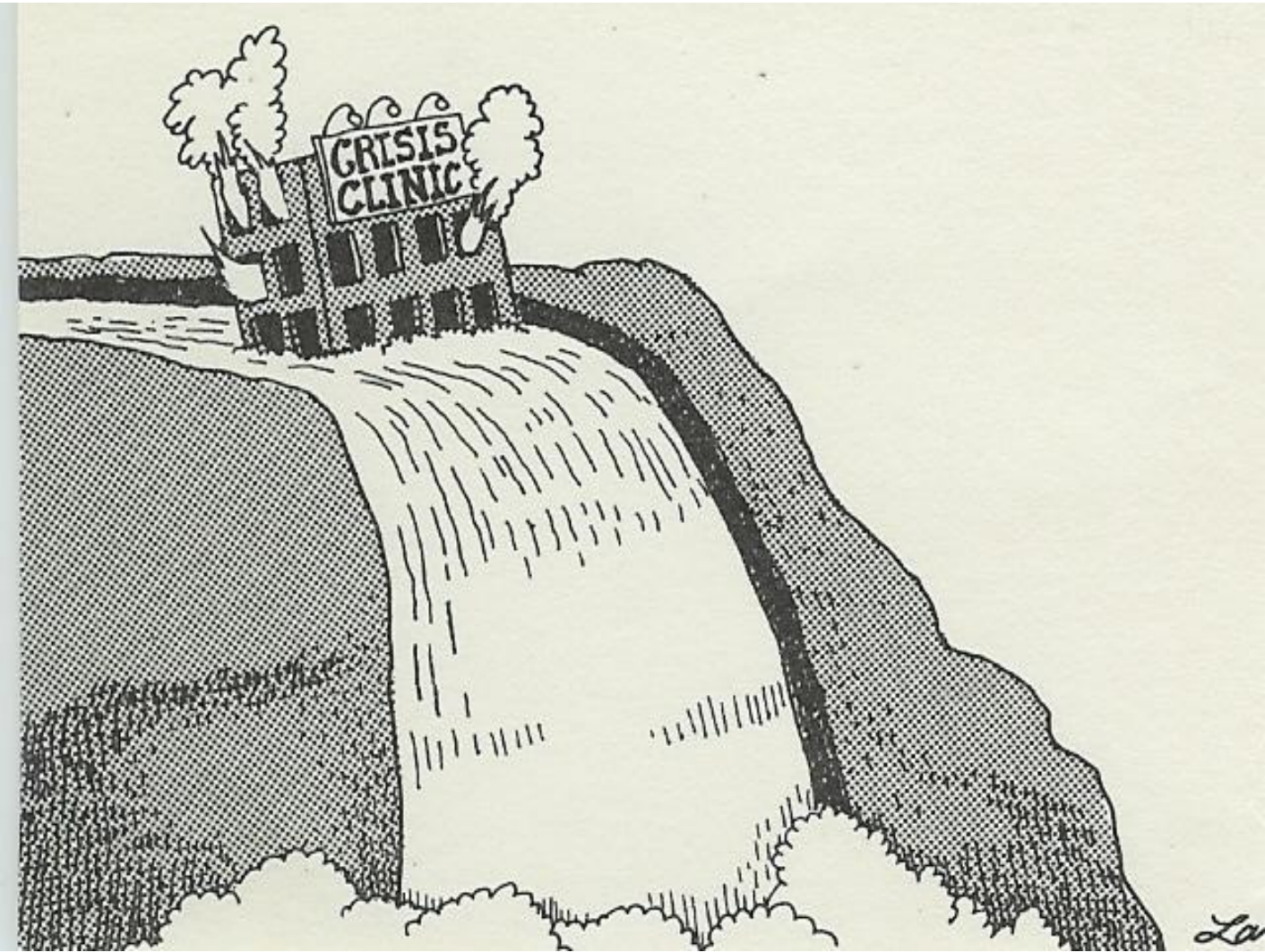
Wellness and Mental Health Framework

Let's think about our Teachers
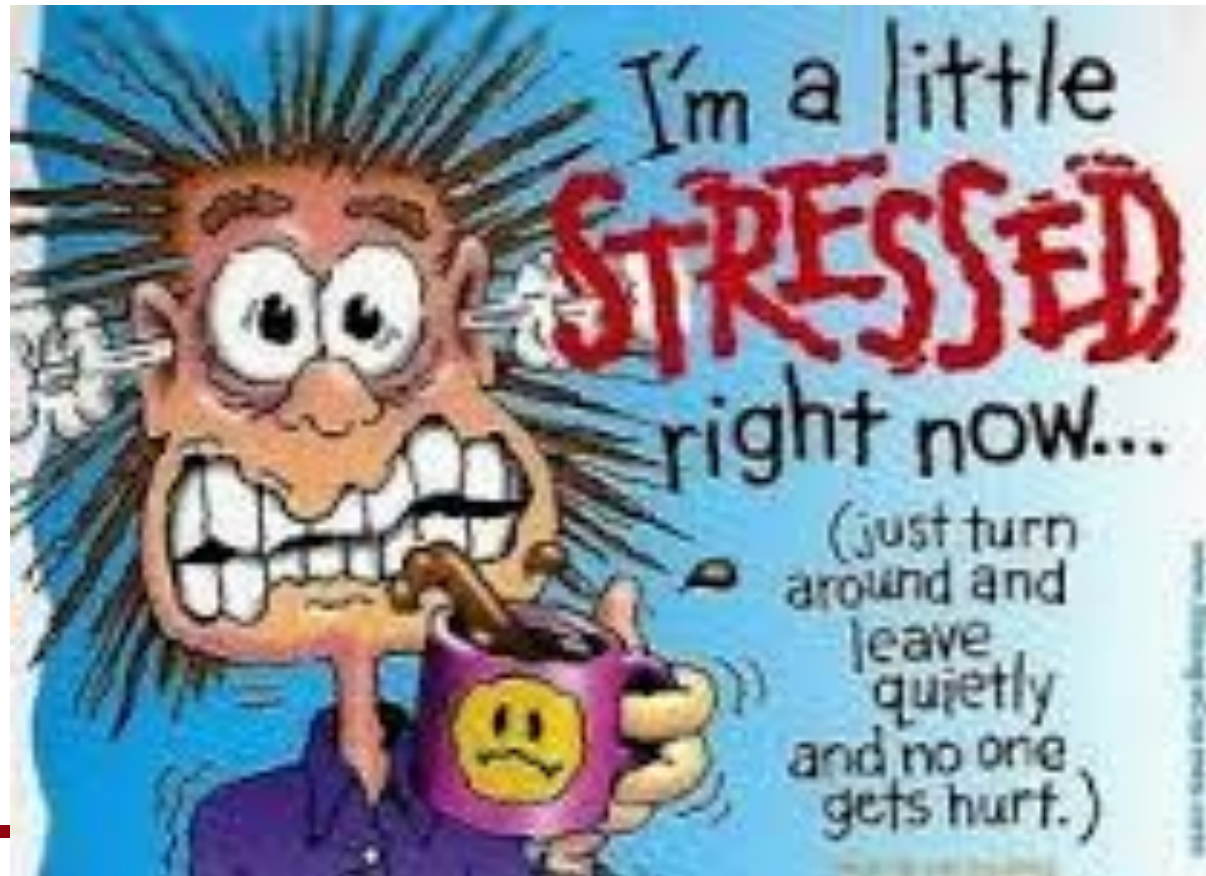
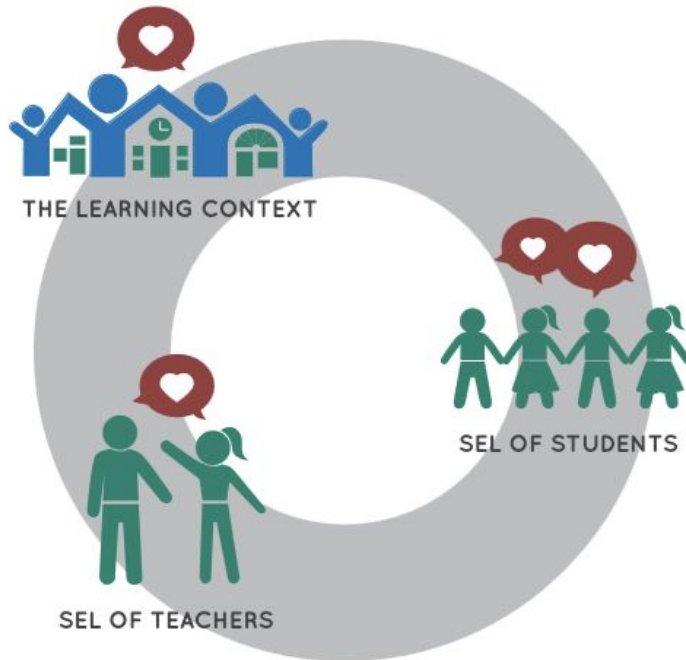# Pre-Service Teachers and Mental Health/Wellness/SEL

TO REACH THE STUDENTS, TEACH THE TEACHERS

A National Scan of Teacher Preparation
and Social & Emotional Learning

A Report
Prepared for CASEL

AUTHORS:
Kimberly A. Schonert-Reichl, Ph.D., M. Jennifer Kitil, M.P.H., & Jennifer Hanson-Peterson, M.A. for CASEL

Teachers' Social-Emotional Learning

District of Columbia

Students' Social-Emotional Learning

District of Columbia
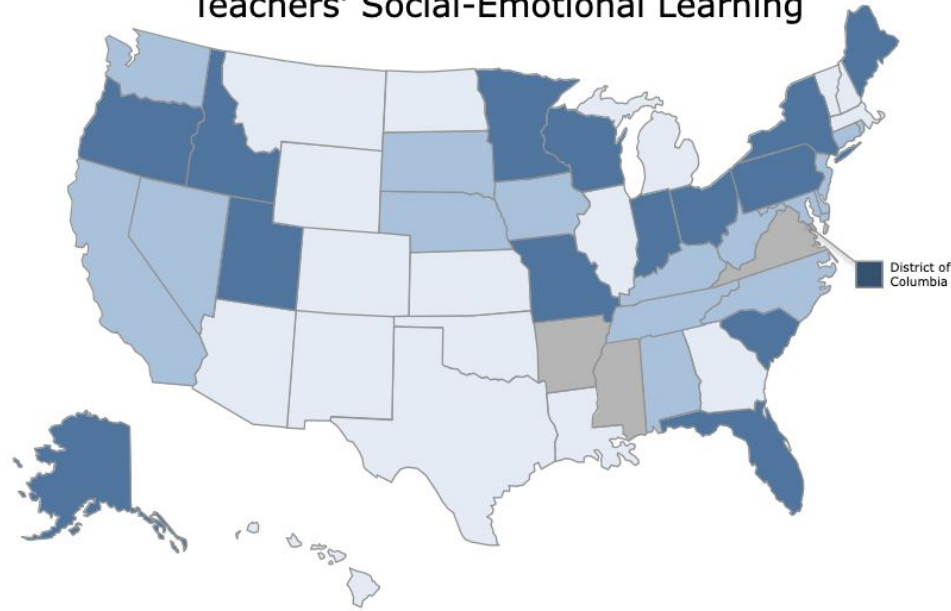
Coding Criteria and Legend:
Color denotes number of Teachers' SEL dimensions addressed in required coursework for majority of colleges of education

- Most or all dimensions (4 & 5 of 5)
- Some dimensions (3 of 5)
- Few dimensions (2 of 5)
- One dimension (1 of 5)
- No dimensions
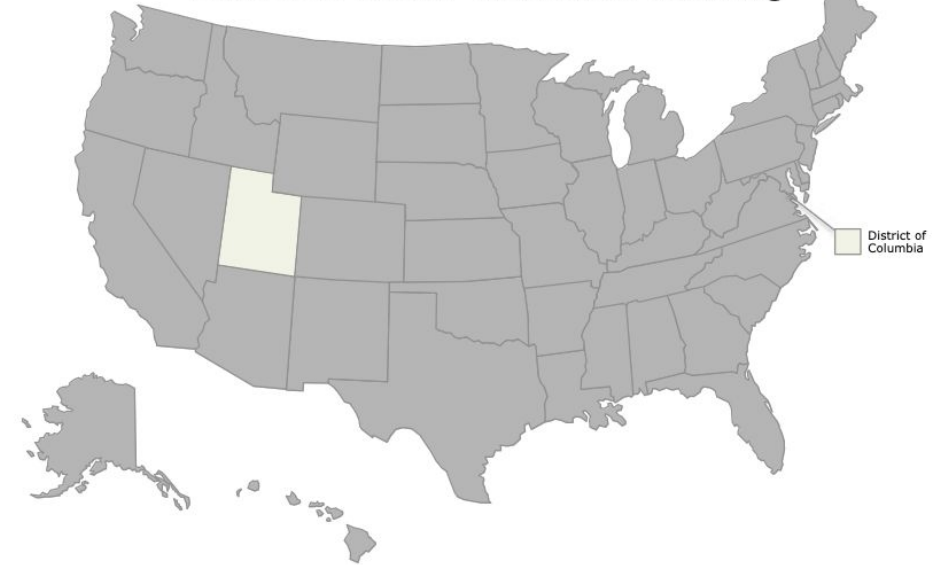
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- All dimensions (4 & 5 of 5)
- Most dimensions (3 of 5)
- Some dimensions (2 of 5)
- One dimension (1 of 5)
- No dimensions

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"It's not only our responsibility but our commitment at the Department of Education to encourage, invest in, and lift up teachers across America. The future of our country and our children's futures depend on it." – Secretary Cardona

Good news! We know what to do…but the "how" is the challenge

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Bradshaw et al., (2010) found an average of 5.1 programs were being introduced in each school on "character education and /or development, social-emotional or social skills, bullying prevention, drug prevention (e.g., D.A.R.E.), and conflict resolution and/or peer mediation" (p. 146).

McIntosh (2015)
"One of the major variables affecting sustained implementation of effective practices is the introduction of new initiatives that either (a) compete with resources needed for sustained implementation or (b) contradict existing initiatives."

Approach	Description	Key Practices
Positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS)	Organizes school into a multitiered system to support students' behavior and improve climate	• Teaching students between three and five schoolwide expectations • Focusing on explicit lessons and reinforcement of schoolwide expectations • Providing a clear discipline structure
Restorative practices (RP)	Focuses on building and maintaining relationships and repairing harm from conflict	• Morning meetings • Classroom circles • Repair conversations
Social and emotional learning (SEL)	Uses strong instructional practices to teach core social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies	• Explicit teaching of SEL with lesson plans • Cooperative learning • Other techniques to embed competency practice throughout school day and across school settings
Trauma-informed practices (TIP)	Ensures a safe environment for students to learn coping skills and to process their emotions	• Teaching and reinforcement of coping skills, such as mindfulness and deep breathing • Creating relationships with students • Developing predictable learning environments

Positive Climate

Trauma informed

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

PBIS

Restorative Practices

Use of data

Consistency
Connection
Compassion

Bolstering Student Resilience

Creating a Classroom With Consistency, Connection, and Compassion

JASON E. HARLACHER

SARA A. WHITCOMB
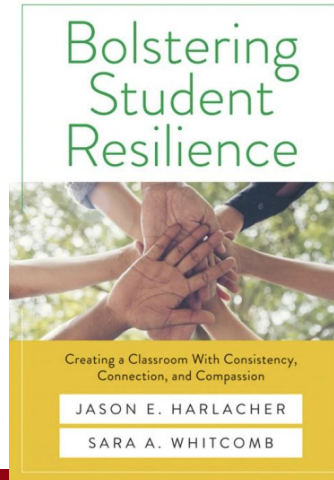
3 C's Across Systems
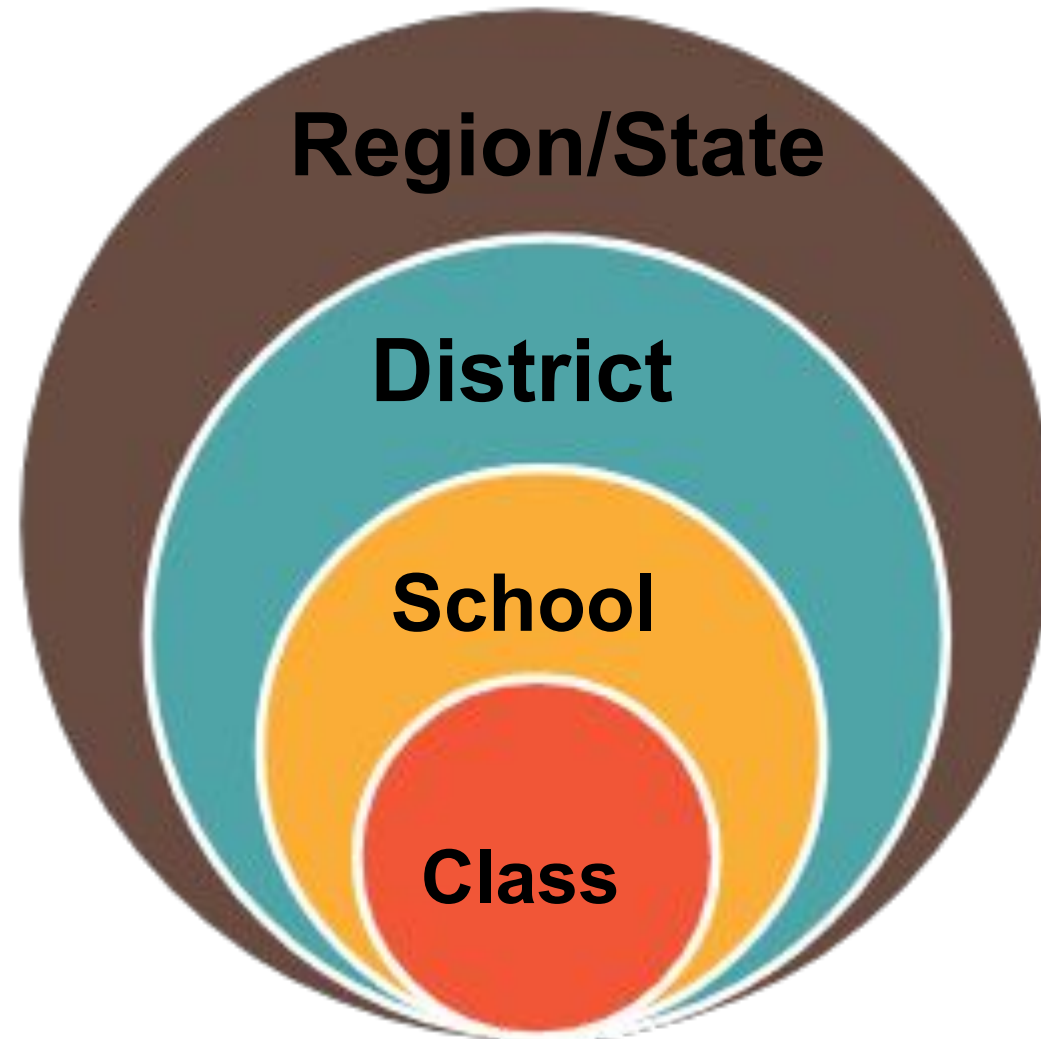
Consistency

To Build Consistency…

- **Create unambiguous environments with**
  - Clear expectations
  - Predictable routines
  - Multiple opportunities to engage
  - High rates of feedback

- **Teach and embed SEL**
  - https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/se/tselcompetencies.asp

Supporting and Responding to Behavior

Evidence-Based Classroom Strategies for Teachers

© CASEL 2017
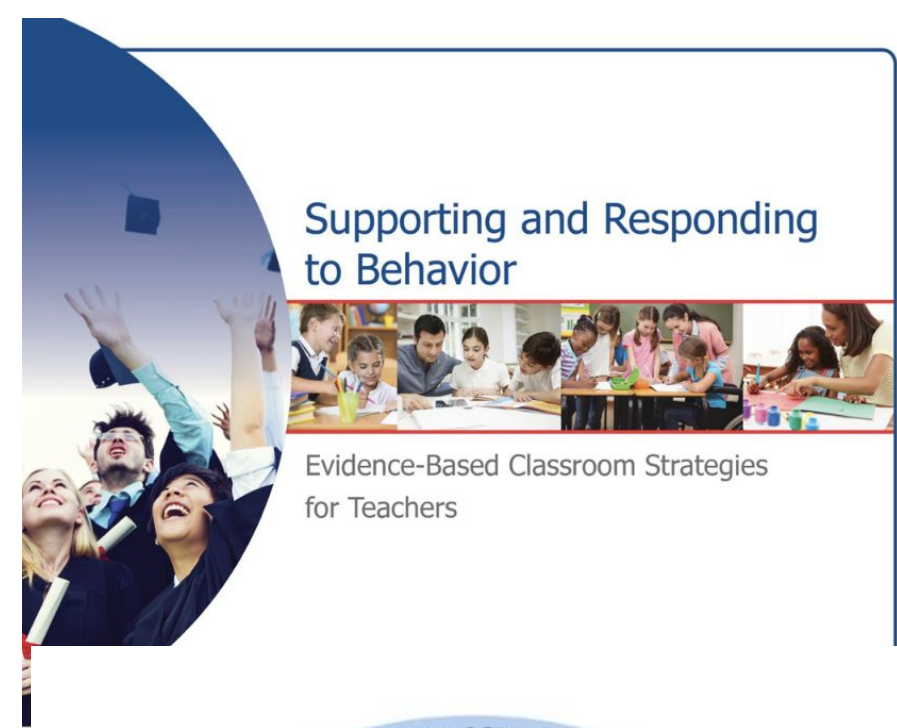
A Sidebar about Self-Awareness
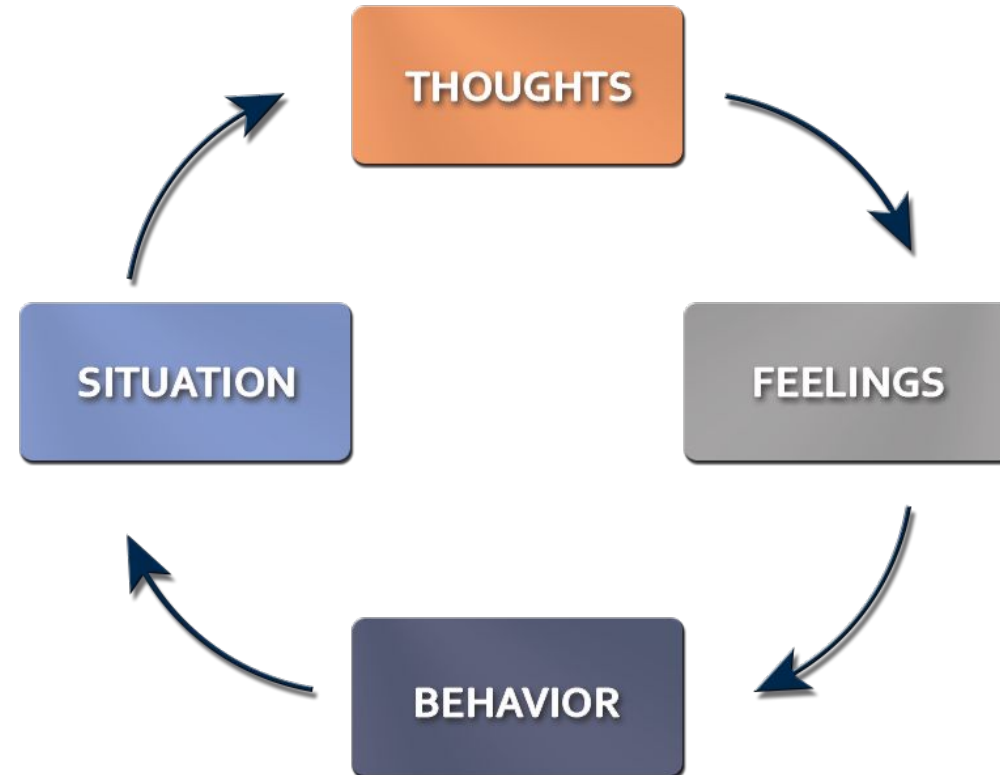
The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

Emotional intelligence is being **smarter** with feelings.

*Emotional literacy

*The connection between thoughts, physical feelings, emotions, and actions

*Awareness of strengths and limitations

*Self-Awareness

Awareness of Thoughts: Introduction to Thinking Traps

"Thinking traps are thoughts or patterns of thoughts that are either inaccurate or unrealistic interpretations of events. They can trap us and make us feel even worse or make the situation worse."

Brené Brown on Blame: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IL1JgIj3_fA

Breaking it down: Event. Reaction, Response, & Consequence

Associations between teacher expectations and racial disproportionality in discipline referrals

María Reina Santiago-Rosario [1], Sara A Whitcomb [2], Jessica Pearlman [3], Kent McIntosh [4]

Affiliations + expand

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Connection

Examples of Relational Contact

Share personal stories

Use humor to engage

Greet each student at the door

Ask questions about students' lives

Use pop culture references

Restore the relationship

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On a scale of Baby Yoda, how are you feeling today?

Two-Way Communication Efforts

Glows and Grows

Wonderful Wednesdays

Positive Parent Contact (Fefer et al.)

Compassion

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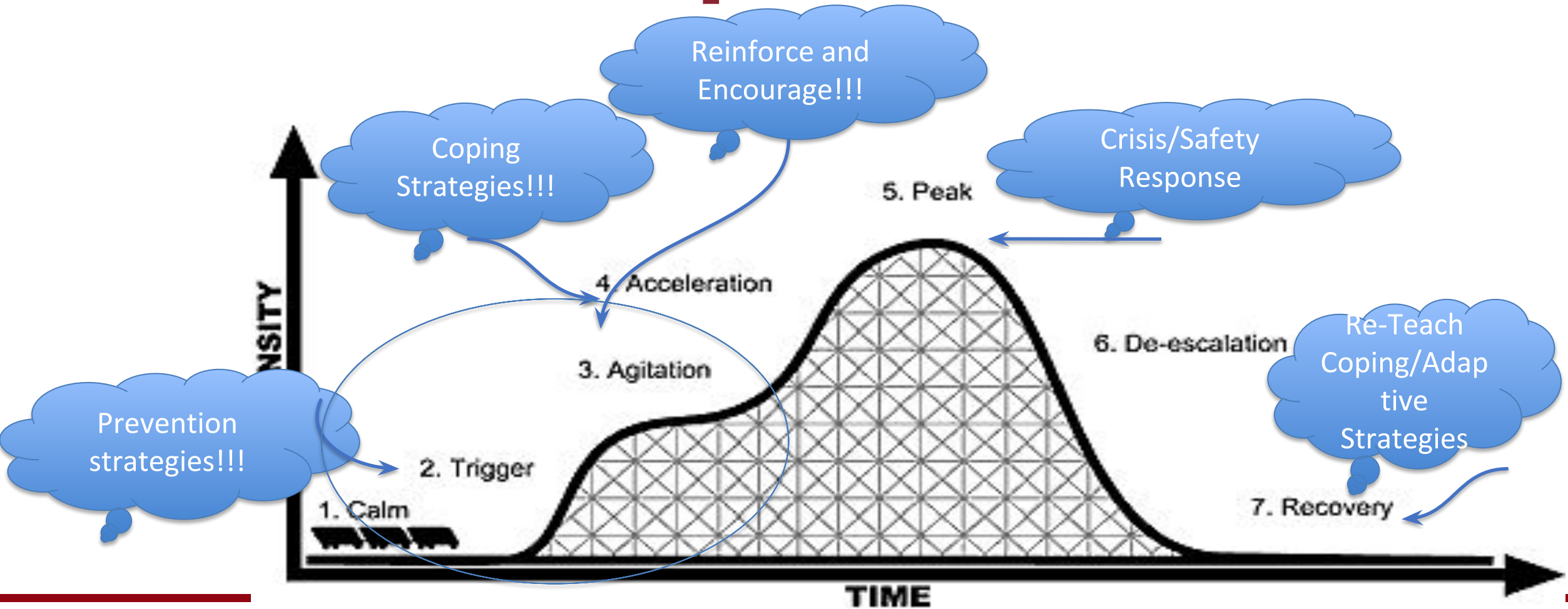
Compassion

To Enhance Consistency, Connection, and Compassion Across a School/District/State

We must focus on:

Internal Alignment

Quality of Execution

Capacity for Renewal

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(Keller & Price, 2011)

Internal Alignment

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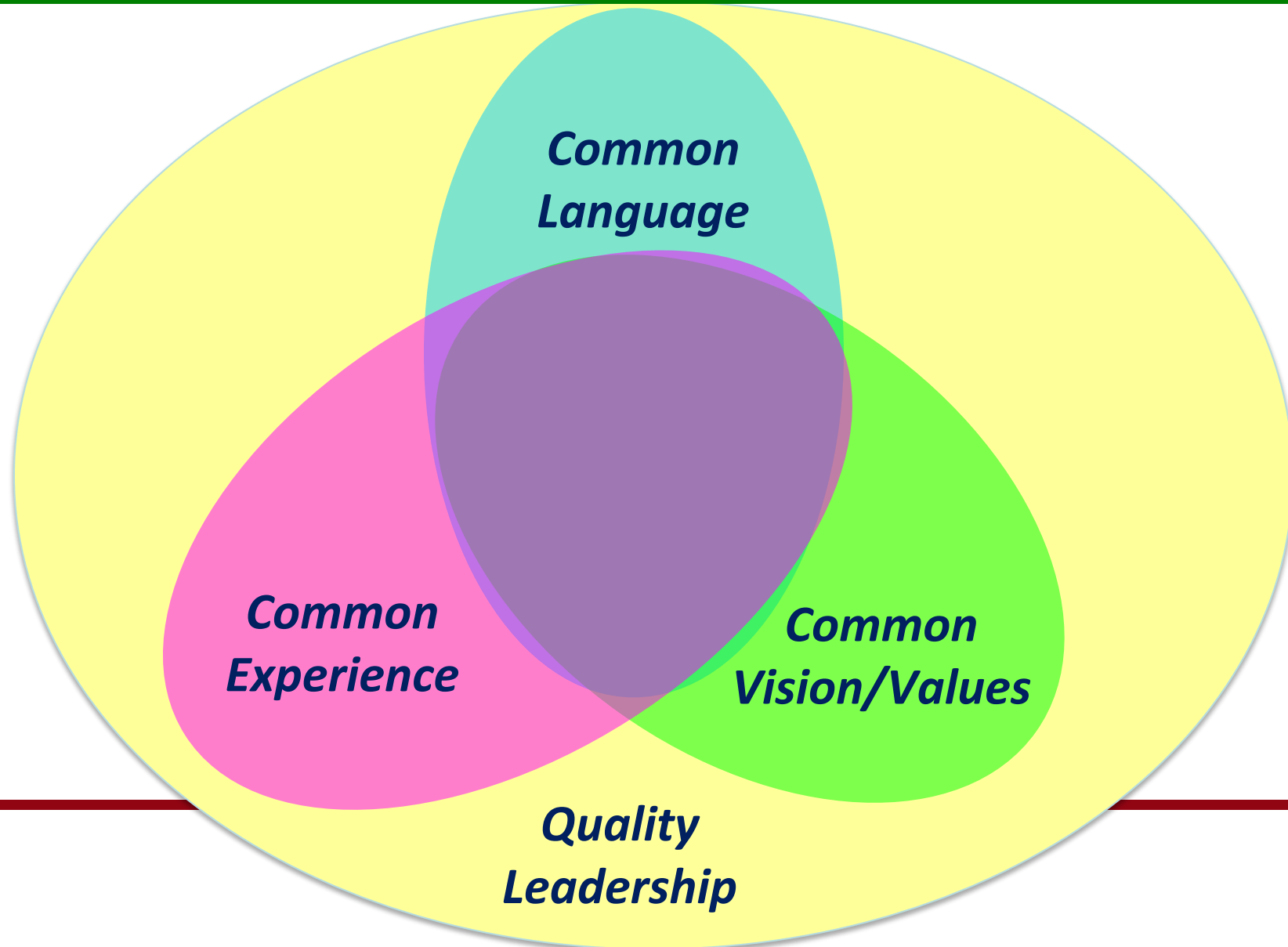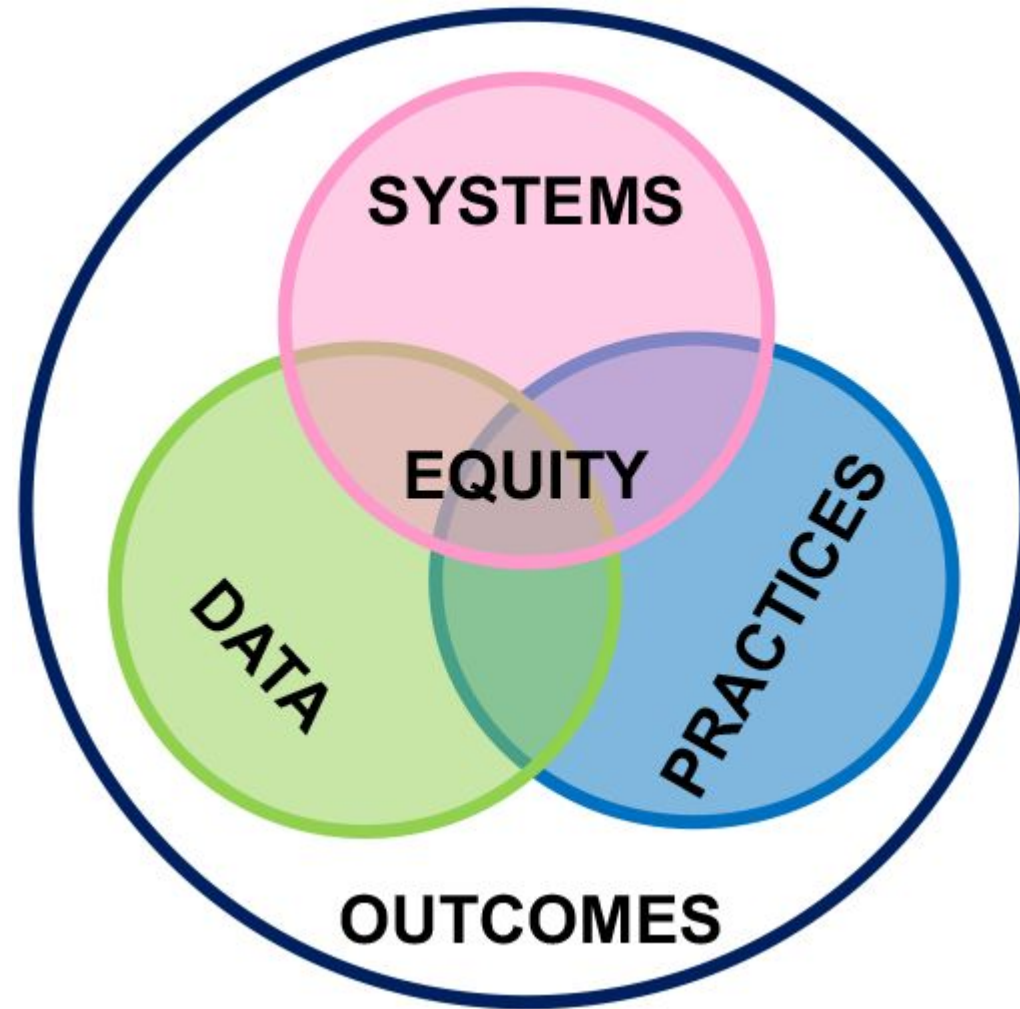
How to align?

- **Prioritize and Identify classwide/schoolwide/districtwide needs (Outcomes & Data)**

- **Select a LIMITED number of practices/approach based on instructional needs (Practices)**

- **Develop *explicit* routines to support practices (Systems)**
  - Routines for student learning
  - Routines for staff learning

- **Monitor and evaluate practices (More data!)**

Ms. Fuentes First Grade Classroom

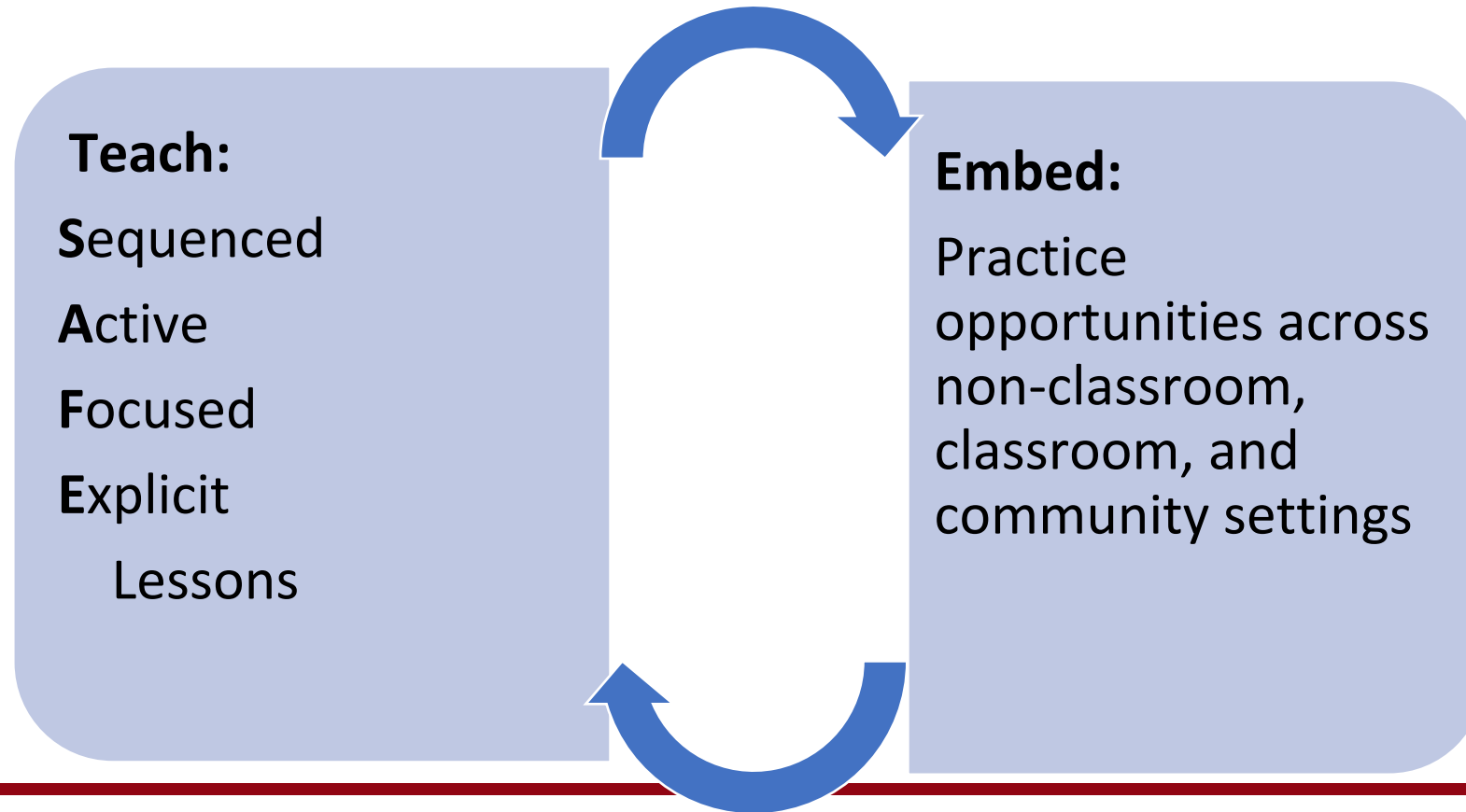| Student	Exhibits positive behavior	Regulates behavior appropriately	Participates appropriately in group activities	Works and plays without disrupting others	Follows classroom routines	Adjusts to transitions and changes	Responds to conflict effectively	Takes care of materials and belongings
1	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
2	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
3	green	red	yellow	green	yellow	red	red	yellow
4	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
5	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
6	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
7	green	green	green	green	green	yellow	green	green
8	yellow	green	green	yellow	green	green	green	green
9	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
10	green	green	green	green	green	red	green	green
11	green	yellow	green	green	green	green	green	green
12	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
13	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
14	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
15	green	green	green	yellow	green	green	green	green
16	green	green	green	green	green	green	red	green
17	green	yellow	green	green	green	yellow	green	yellow
18	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
19	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
20	green	green	green	red	green	red	green	green

Select, Teach and Embed Key Practices

Teach:

Sequenced

Active

Focused

Explicit

　Lessons

Embed:

Practice opportunities across non-classroom, classroom, and community settings

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Embed SEL skills in school-wide matrix

School-wide Expectations	Incorporate Social-emotional Competencies				
	All Settings	Hallways	Lunch	Bus	Online
Respect	Be on time. Assume positive intent.	Walk to the right. Use level 2 voice volume.	*Invite those sitting alone to join.*	Stay in my seat.	*Consider feelings of others before I post.* *Be an upstander—speak up when I see unsafe behavior.*
Achieving and Organized	Hands and feet to self. Help/share with others.	Walk directly to my designated area.	*Have a lunch plan.* *Choose quiet or social lunch area.* *Invite friends to join.*	Have a plan. Use headphones to listen to music.	*Check my feelings before I post.* *Re-read message before I post.*
Responsible	Recycle. Be prepared.	Pick up litter. Maintain physical space.	*Use my breathing technique.* *Listen to my signals.*	Watch for my stop. Use level 1 voice.	*Double check sources before I post.* *Think before I forward.*

Barret et al, 2018

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A Sample Cheat Sheet: Crosswalk PBIS with SEL
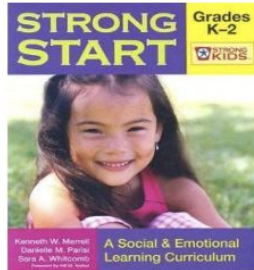
	Cooperation	Accountability	Respect	Empathy
Understanding your Feelings			X	
Understanding Other People's Feelings	X		X	X
When You're Angry	X	X	X	X
When You're Worried		X	X	

Quality Execution–

Competency

Implementation
Drivers

Leadership

Organization

http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/

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Leadership Drivers

Adaptive

- Is the MH vision clear? Is it represented in DIPS and SIPS?
- Is leadership distributed? How might a district level team work?
- How do we access collaborator voices?

Technical

- To what extent is time allotted for:
  - Professional development for all staff (teachers, paras, etc)
  - Data collection
  - Teams to meet to review data and plan implementation targets
- To what extent is funding allocated for:
  - Professional development/coaching
  - Substitutes
  - Materials

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Organization Drivers

Infrastructure

- What structures exist that enable implementation to happen?

  - Time in the master schedule to teach

  - Data meetings to address social-emotional and behavioral data along with academic data

  - Opportunities for problem-solving

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Organization Drivers

People, Process, and Products

- Is there a Team of representative champions?
- Have we considered staffing roles?
- Is there a systematic approach to accomplishing tasks (see TIPS)?
- Have you considered a school/district playbook?

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Organization Drivers

Decision Support Systems

- Assess key outcomes

- Support decision making/intervention planning

- Shared AND processed with all to help express rationale for particular intervention efforts

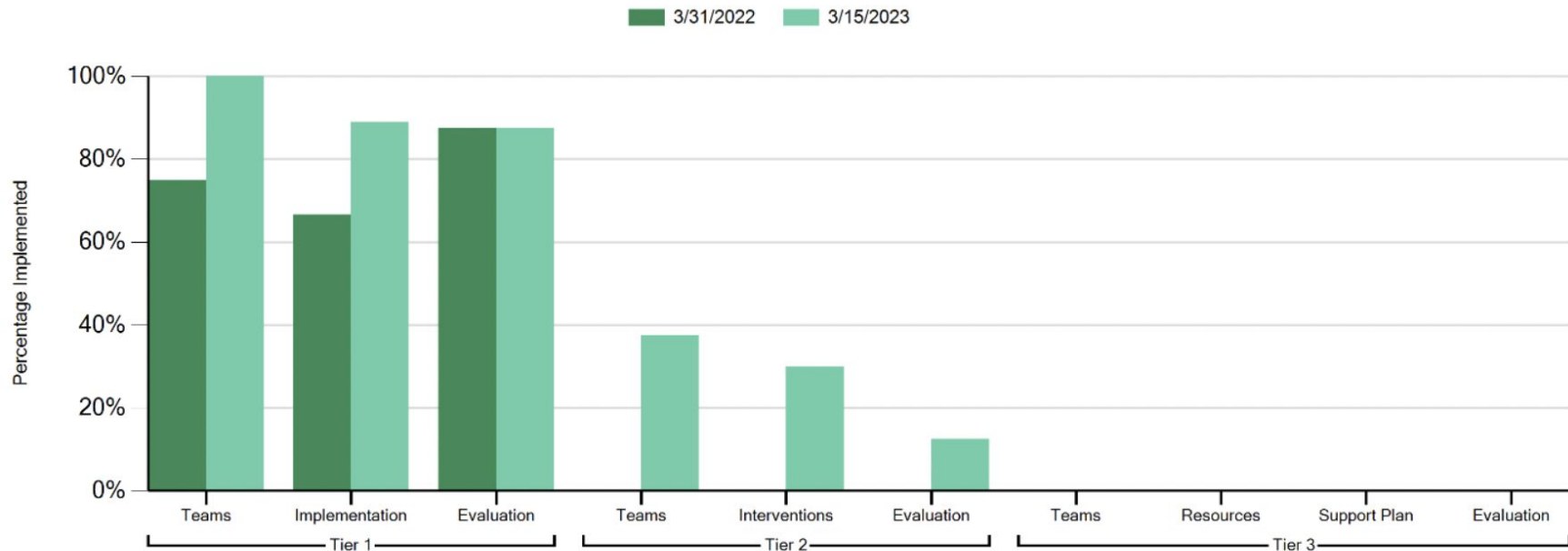 - Student level data

  - Stakeholder surveys

  - Fidelity data

Needs assessment: District Systems Fidelity Inventory

District Capacity Systems Inventory 2022

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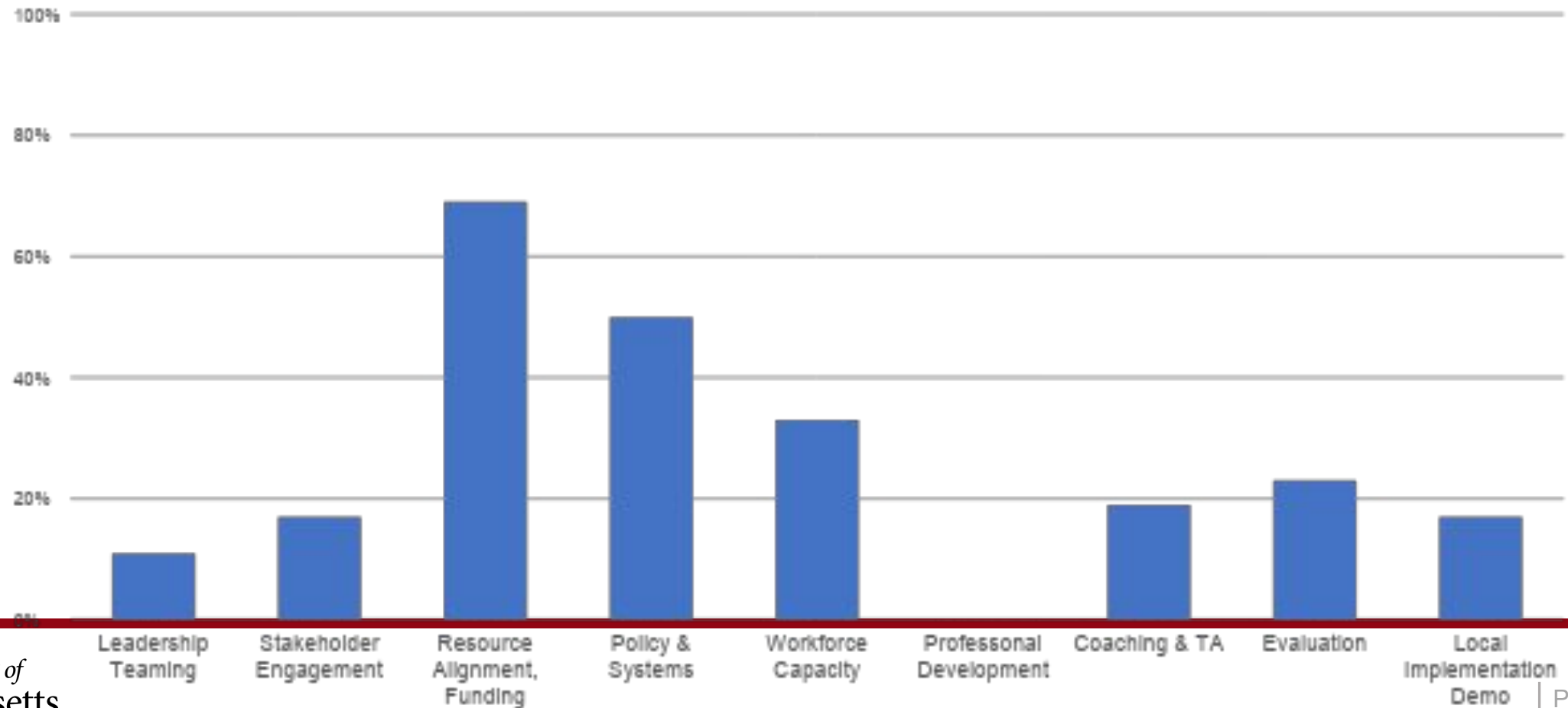
Tiered Fidelity Inventory

| | 3/31/2022 | 3/15/2023 |

Date Completed	Tier 1			Tier 2			Tier 3			
	Teams	Implementation	Evaluation	Teams	Interventions	Evaluation	Teams	Resources	Support Plan	Evaluation
3/31/2022	75%	67%	88%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
3/15/2023	100%	89%	88%	38%	30%	12%	NA	NA	NA	NA

Competency Drivers

Selection

- How are new employees selected in relation to the MH vision?
- How are team members selected?
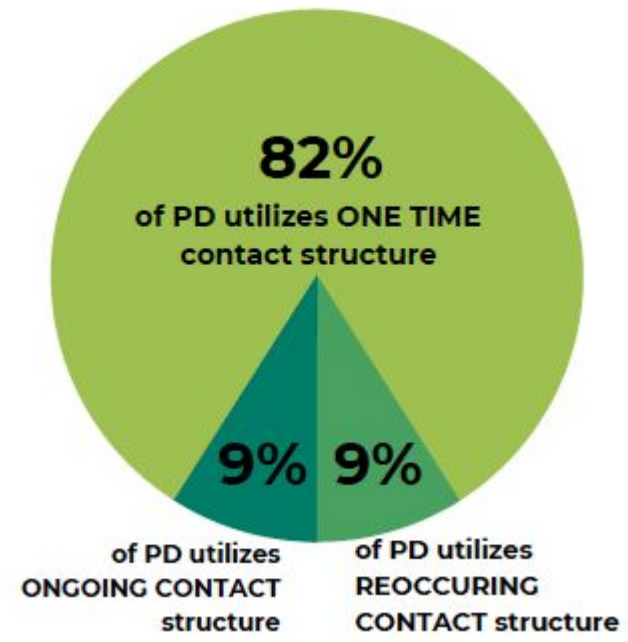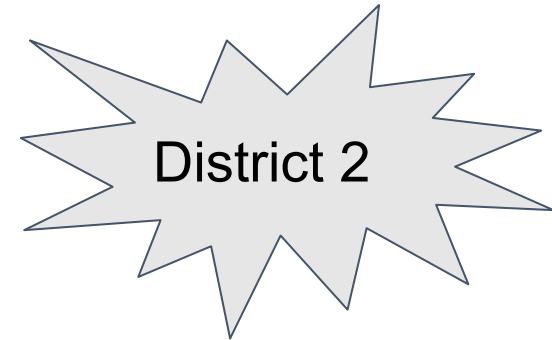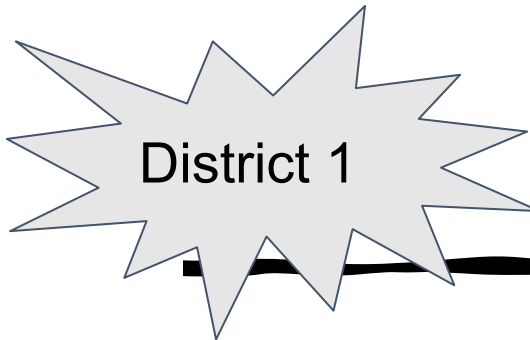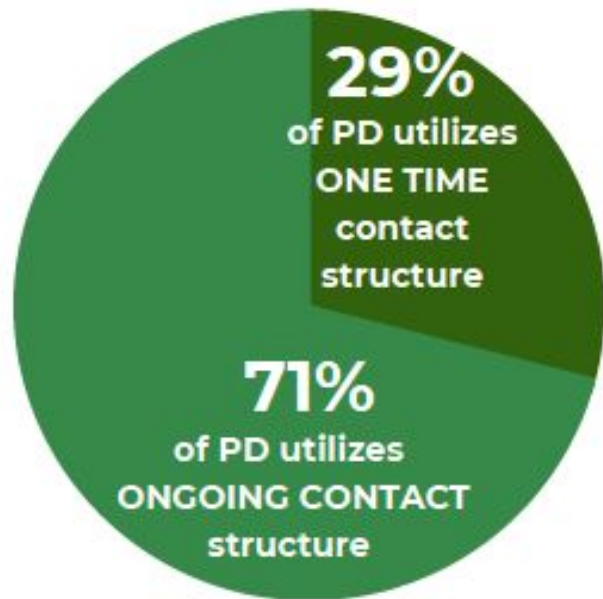
Competency Drivers

Training
- How is new content presented to all adults involved?
  - PSP leaders
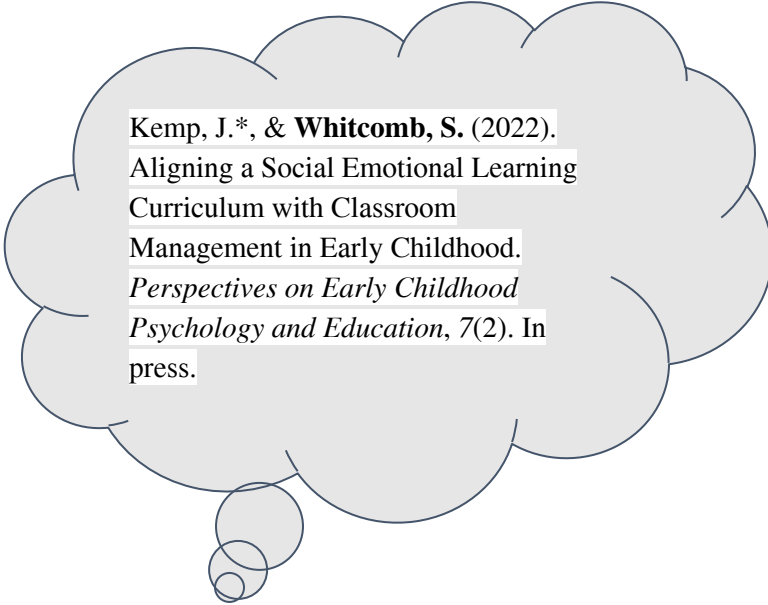 - Job-embedded learning structures

District PD structure 2017-2020 period: *PD Contact Structure = frequency of contact between training organization & school district that occurs for each individual PD opportunity*

Competency Drivers

What systems do you have for Coaching?
- Internal/external coach for:
  - Supervision
  - Teaching in vivo
  - Assessment and feedback
  - Support

Kemp, J.*, & **Whitcomb, S.** (2022). Aligning a Social Emotional Learning Curriculum with Classroom Management in Early Childhood. *Perspectives on Early Childhood Psychology and Education*, 7(2). In press.

1-hour teacher training session + weekly consultative support with PF significantly increased teacher use of classroom management strategies aligned with weekly SEL skills

Teachers increased their use of language related to all *Second Step* lessons in general.
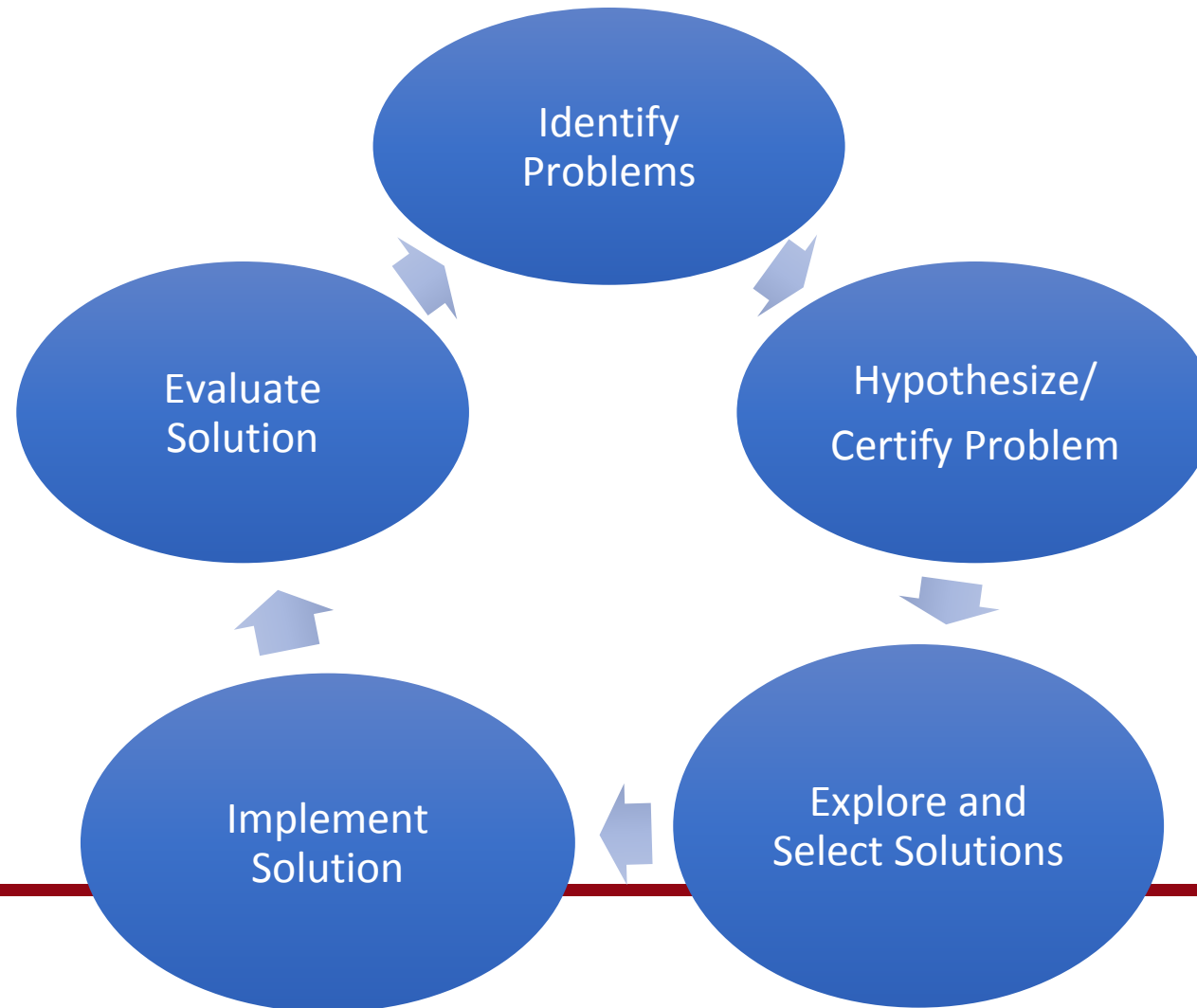
2/4 classrooms had a reduction in challenging behavior, this change was not significant overall (needed reduction across 3 classrooms).

Socially valid approach + Increased tcher self-efficacy

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Capacity for Renewal

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Closing Big Ideas

- **Self-awareness will help children and adults understand themselves and others**

- **An intentional focus on consistency, connection, and compassion can help us streamline our efforts**

- **Integration takes time and sustained focus on implementation drivers helps**

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Secretary Miguel Cardona ✓
@SecCardona

In the past, student access to structured mental health services in schools hasn't been implemented in a functional way. It's been ancillary & after the fact. We have the opportunity now to redesign schools & make sure that mental health services are a core part of school's DNA.

12:11 PM · Mar 27, 2021 · Twitter Web App

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

sawhitco@umass.edu

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