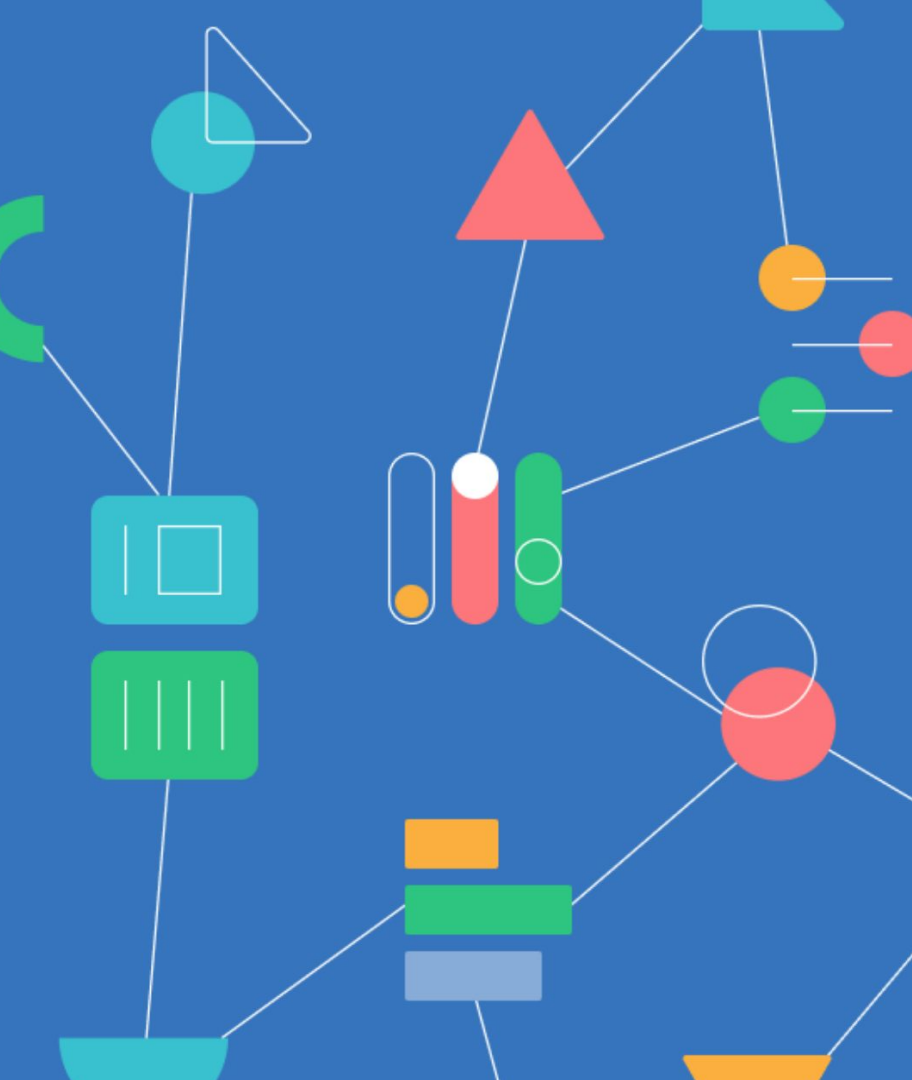# Branching Minds MTSS Summit

Branching Forward: Setting Intentions for MTSS in the New Year

TRACK: SEL & Behavioral Health
SESSION : SEL & MTSS: From Research to Practice
Practice
PRESENTER: Essie Sutton

Tell us about yourself!

1. District/organization
2. Role
3. Favorite holiday food

Agenda

- ❑ What is SEL
- ❑ Why is SEL important
- ❑ How to promote SEL in schools and classrooms
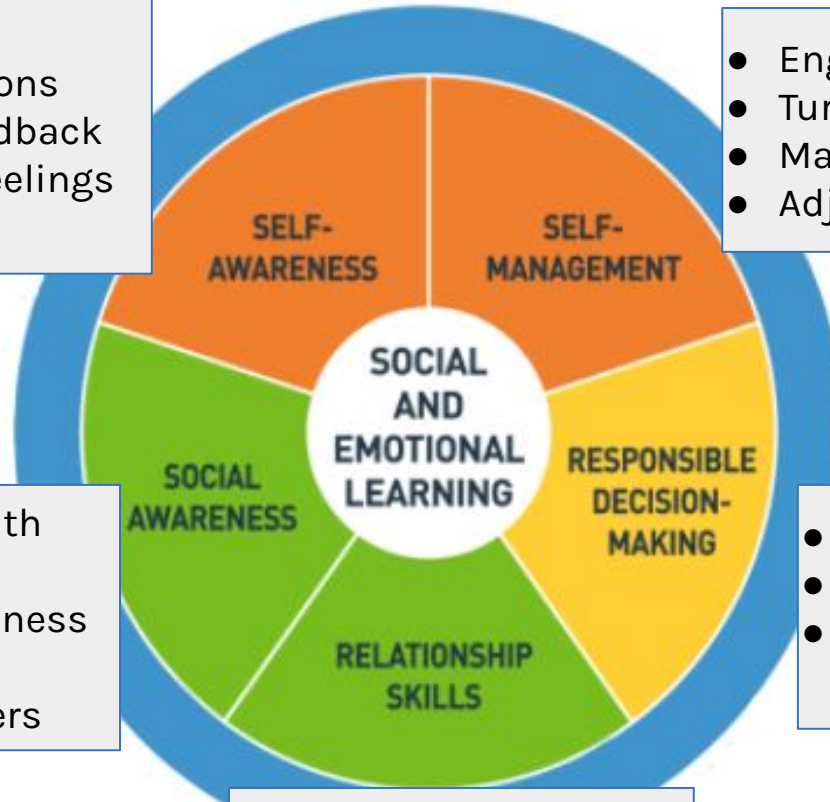- ❑ How does SEL fit into MTSS

What is SEL?

"SEL is the **process** through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the **knowledge, skills, and attitudes** to **develop healthy identities**, **manage emotions** and **achieve personal and collective goals**, feel and show **empathy** for others, establish and **maintain supportive relationships**, and make **responsible and caring decisions**." (CASEL, 2020)

SEL is **universal** and can be used to promote **educational equity.**

- Ask questions
- Ask for feedback
- Describe feelings

- Engagement
- Turn-taking
- Maintain focus
- Adjust to changes

SELF-AWARENESS

SELF-MANAGEMENT

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SOCIAL AWARENESS

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

- Cooperate with peers
- Show forgiveness
- Respectful towards others

- Take responsibility
- Follow rules
- Show good judgment

- Offer help
- Give compliments
- Express concern

Why is SEL important?

Virtually all educators report that it's important to develop key SEL skills in the classroom.

- 96-99% of educators surveyed reported that the CASEL 5 social-emotional competencies are somewhat or very important in the classroom
- 84% of educators surveyed believe that incorporating SEL into the core curriculum has become more important since the pandemic

https://s3.amazonaws.com/ecommerce-prod.mheducation.com/unitas/school/explore/sel-report-2021.pdf

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Why is SEL important?

Longitudinal research has shown that social-emotional skills in early elementary years predict:

- Years of SPED services
- High school graduation
- College completion
- Employment
- Need of public services (e.g., housing, public assistance)
- Involvement with police
- Substance abuse behavior

Jones et al., 2015; Moffit et al., 2011

Why is SEL important?

What do these results tell us?

1. Social-emotional skills, specifically social competences at a young age can be a critical indicator of their long-term outcomes
2. Teacher perceptions of students' social-emotional competencies are important (especially in early elementary)

What do these results **not** tell us?

- **How** do early social-emotional competencies lead to long-term outcomes

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Why is SEL important?

"Negative cascade" effect of early social-emotional skills impacting behaviors, relationships, and attitudes over time

Poor social-emotional skills

Goal of SEL is to offset these negative trajectories by:

- Teaching social skills and emotion regulation strategies
- Promoting positive relationships in schools and classrooms
- Improving student well-being and sense of belonging in school
- Developing skills for academic learning

Academic, behavioral, and mental health issues

Why is SEL important?

School-based social-emotional learning programs are effective

- Several meta-analyses show SEL programs are associated with improvements in:
  - Social-emotional skills
  - Positive attitudes
  - Prosocial behaviors
  - Academic performance
- Yearly growth in student social-emotional competencies are associated with improvements in Math and ELA

Kanopka et al., 2020; Mahoney, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2018; Soland & Kuhfield, 2021

How to Promote SEL in Classrooms

Classroom Practices & Interactions	• Classroom climate • Quality of teacher-student interactions
Evidence-Based SEL Programming	• SEL lessons • Hands-on activities • Training and support for staff
Embedded SEL in Academic Learning	• Addressing social-emotional skills/topics in ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science
Targeted Interventions and Supports	• Small group and one-on-one social-emotional support • Progress monitoring and assessment

How to Promote SEL in Schools

CASEL's School Theory of Action:

1) Establish a Shared Vision
2) Assess Resources and Needs
3) Embed Professional Learning
4) Adopt Evidence-Based Programs
5) Integrate SEL Schoolwide
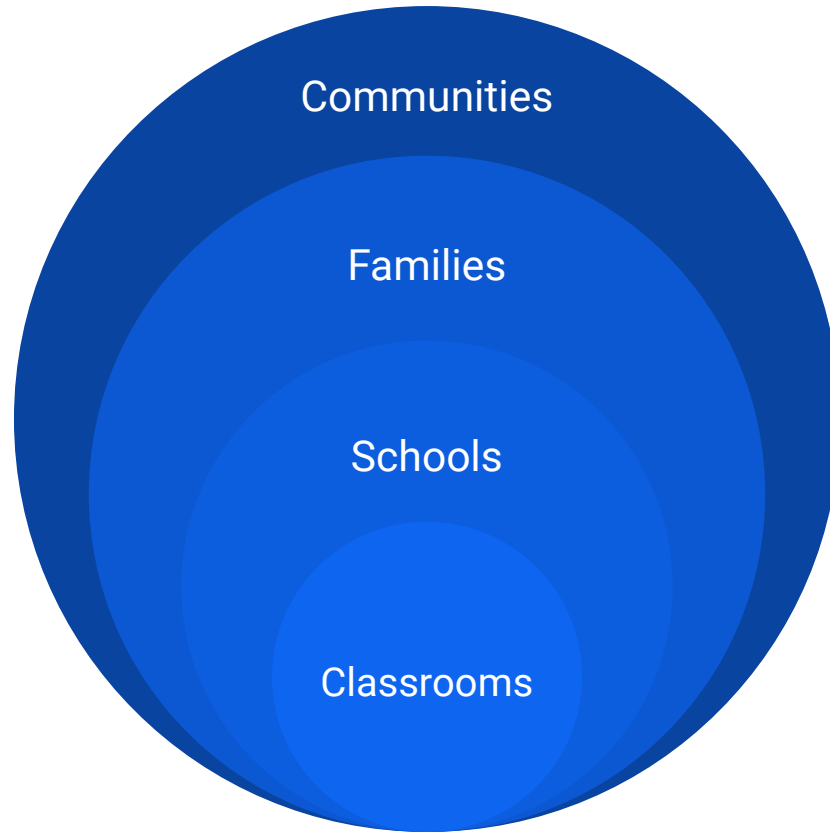6) Use Data for Continuous Improvement

CASEL 2021; Meyers et al., 2019

How to Promote SEL in Schools

Continuous improvement of SEL system-wide

- Assessing student social-emotional competencies
- Measuring school and classroom climate
- Tracking SEL implementation and fidelity
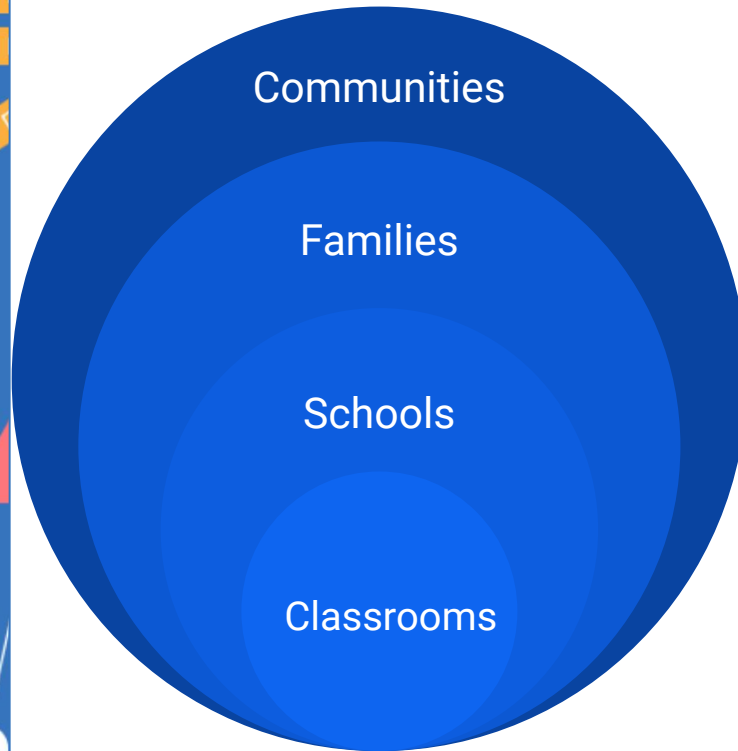- Getting feedback from teachers and students

How to Promote SEL System-wide

Communities

Families

Schools

Classrooms

**Check-in Questions:**

Which level or setting has your organization been the most focused on when implementing SEL?

Which level or setting do you think needs the most work or improvement?

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How Does SEL & Behavioral Health Fit Into MTSS?

- Most SEL is at Tier 1 level (Universal)
- **Evidence-based** assessments and screeners to identify students needing additional support
- Providing targeted social-emotional and behavioral interventions
- Using data to guide decision-making about support across all levels
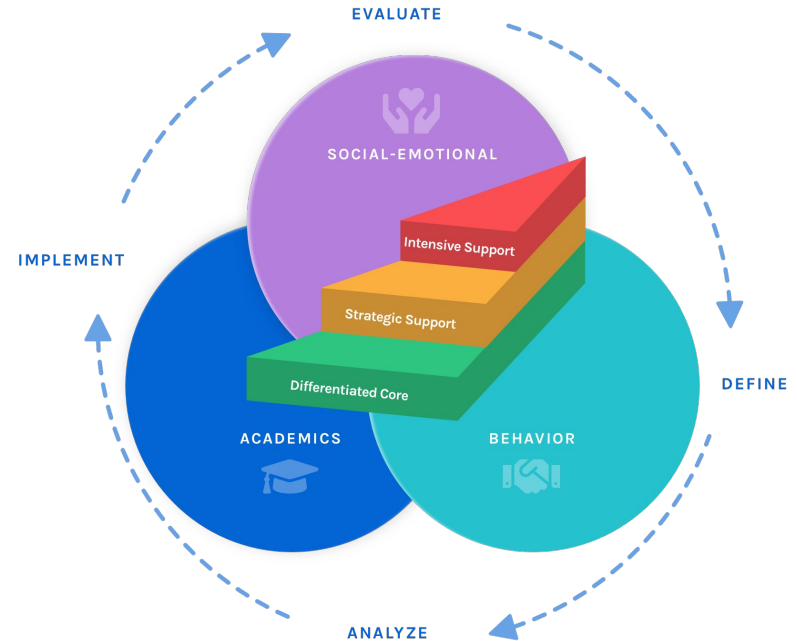
SEL & Behavioral Health in MTSS

A "Nested" Approach to Multi-Level SEL Support

Tier 3 → Intensive, individualized and long-term services for students already displaying persistent and intensified social-emotional and behavioral needs

Tier 2 → Small group and individual interventions for students needing social-emotional support or displaying social, emotional, or behavioral risk factors

Tier 1 → Universal prevention and promotion

Intensive Support

Strategic Support

Differentiated Core
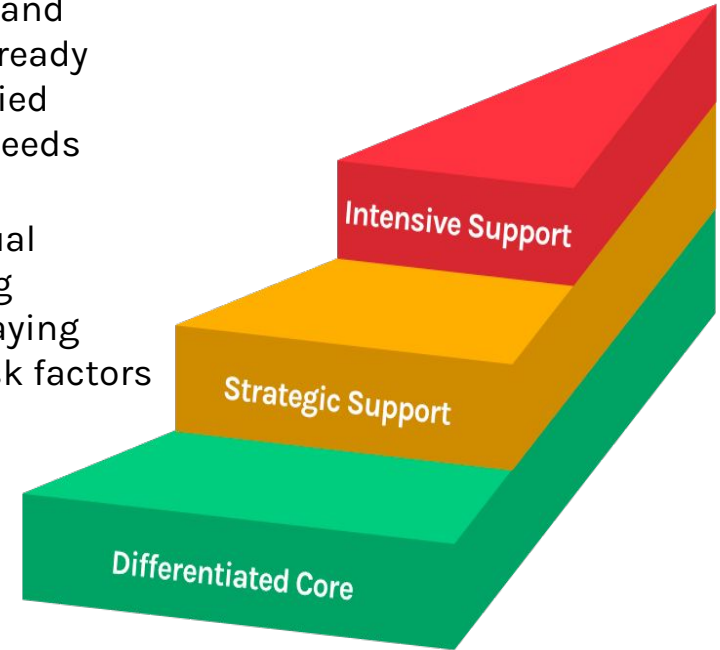
SEL & Behavioral Health in MTSS

A "Nested" Approach to Multi-Level SEL Support

- Tier 2 & 3 supports are coordinated with Tier 1 programs and practices
- Use of similar language and approaches
- Ongoing communication across staff members
- Process for reviewing data across tier levels

Intensive Support

Strategic Support

Differentiated Core

Bierman & Sanders, 2021
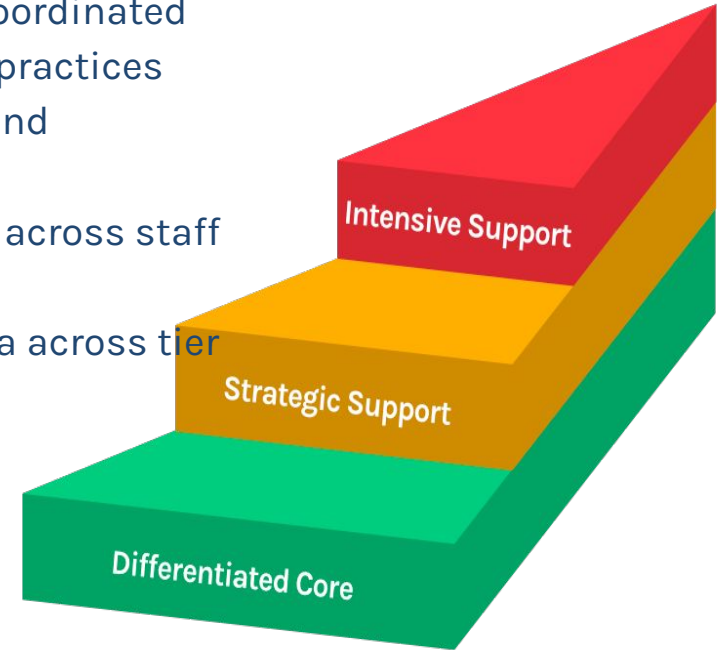
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Tier 2 Support for SEL & Behavioral Health

Behavioral Approaches

- Check-in/Check-out
- Positive Reinforcement (token economy)

Social-Cognitive Approaches

- Activities and lessons teaching explicit social-emotional skills
- Social Skills Training

Bierman & Sanders, 2021; Majeika et al., 2020

SEL & Behavioral Health in MTSS

Tier 2 Support for SEL & Behavioral Health

Common features of evidence-based tier 2 social-emotional & behavioral interventions:

- Implemented by trained staff member
- Incorporate cognitive restructuring (e.g., hostile attribution bias)
- Teach behavior coping (relaxation techniques)
- Include communication skill building
- Use of applied learning
- Opportunities for teacher/instructor feedback

Clifford, Nguyen, & Bradshaw, 2020

SEL & Behavioral Health in MTSS

Example: PATHS + Friendship Group

- PATHS: Evidence-based universal tier 1 SEL program
- Friendship Group: Tier 2 small group intervention for students at risk for emotional and behavioral disorder
- Programs were designed for paired implementation
  - Shared language and visual tools (e.g., control signals poster)
  - Similar sequence and timing of delivery

Bierman et al., 2020

SEL & Behavioral Health in MTSS

Example: PATHS + Friendship Group (RCT)

- Studied as part of a national, longitudinal study on the Fast Track multi-component prevention program
- Students were screened for elevated aggressive-disruptive behavior problems
  - Most also had deficits in prosocial and cooperative behaviors and emotional difficulties
- Followed students from 1st-5th grade
- Teachers received training on PATHS implementation and also received support from an education consultant
- Friendship Group was implemented as an extracurricular program
  - Parent component
- Weekly peer-pairing sessions

Bierman et al., 2020

SEL & Behavioral Health in MTSS

Example: PATHS + Friendship Group (RCT)

- Short-term outcomes (1 year) for at-risk group included:
  - Improved emotion recognition and coping
  - Improved social problem-solving
  - More positive peer nominations from classmates
  - Reduced aggression
- Short-term outcomes (1 year) for classmates of at-risk group included:
  - Reduced aggression
  - Improved peer relationships
  - Improved classroom climate
  - Fewer disruptive behaviors

Bierman et al., 2020

SEL & Behavioral Health in MTSS

Example: PATHS + Friendship Group (RCT)

- Longer-term outcomes for at-risk group included:
  - Less likely to have a conduct or aggressive behavior diagnosis by 3rd grade
  - Less likely to have an IEP

Bierman et al., 2020

Example: PATHS + Friendship Group: Comparing Multilevel SEL vs. Universal SEL

At-risk students who received multi-level had improvements in:

- Emotion recognition
- School readiness and adaptive approaches to learning
- Attentiveness
- Empathy and kindness

Also found that the most at-risk students benefits the most from the multilevel approach.

Bierman et al., 2020

SEL & Behavioral Health in MTSS

Three takeaways:

1. Research strongly supports the universal promotion of SEL in schools
2. Schools can align their frameworks for systemic SEL with an MTSS framework
3. SEL programs and practices are effective when they are aligned and coordinated across settings and tiers levels

Before you go...

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