

# Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports & Alignment



**Structuring Guide for Behavior &  
Social Emotional Learning**  
2022-2023

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## **Introduction to Document**

Kansas *Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment Structuring Guides* have been created to assist teams in documenting the structures necessary to begin the implementation of a Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment (MTSS). This document may contain tools that are to be used in conjunction with content-area-specific documents for reading, mathematics, behavior, and social-emotional content areas. All Kansas MTSS and Alignment documents are aligned with the Kansas *Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment: Innovation Configuration Matrix* (ICM), which describes the critical components of an MTSS and what each looks like when fully implemented, and Kansas *Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment: Research Base*, which provides a basic overview of the research support for an MTSS.

[www.ksdetasn.org/mtss](http://www.ksdetasn.org/mtss)

## **Acknowledgements**

A significant commitment of time and energy from numerous Kansas educators and their districts, organizations, and partners made this document possible. Their efforts to learn and help others understand what it takes to make an MTSS a reality within schools is reflected in this document. This grassroots effort on the part of Kansas educators indicates a commitment to meeting the needs of every student and sharing wisdom from the field and the research. As the list of individuals and districts that have contributed to this effort over the past years has become too long to detail, a collective expression of gratitude is offered here to everyone who has contributed to the concepts, ideas, and knowledge that are reflected in all Kansas MTSS and Alignment documents. The contents of this resource were developed under an agreement from the Federal Department of Education to the Kansas State Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Kansas State Department of Education or the Federal Government should not be assumed. Kansas MTSS and Alignment is funded through Part B funds administered by the Kansas State Department of Education's Special Education and Title Services. Keystone Learning Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in this program and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Keystone Learning Services Executive Director, 500 E. Sunflower Blvd, Ozawie, KS 66070, 785-876-2214. Authorization to reproduce in whole or in part is granted. Permission to reprint this publication is not necessary.

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## Introduction

In Kansas, there is a belief that all children can learn. Fundamentally, every student should be challenged to achieve high standards socially, emotionally, academically, and behaviorally. A systemic framework for ensuring that all students have this experience is referred to as Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). Simply put, Kansas MTSS and Alignment is a set of evidence-based practices implemented across a system to meet the needs of all learners. An explosion of research on how children grow, develop, and learn has demonstrated that social, emotional, and intellectual development are inextricably entwined across the entire span of the time during which children attend school (Immordino-Yang, Darling-Hammond, Krone, 2018). Kansas MTSS and Alignment builds a continuum of promotion, prevention, supports, and early intervention to ensure that all children holistically develop and learn. Additionally, Kansas MTSS and Alignment establishes a system that intentionally focuses on leadership, professional development, and an empowering culture in addition to a focus on student development.

Kansas MTSS and Alignment incorporates a system of assessment, curriculum, and instruction. This systemic approach supports the continuum from struggling to advanced learners through the selection and implementation of increasingly intense evidence-based interventions in response to social, emotional, academic, and behavioral needs. Whether your program is implementing a single piece of content or planning to integrate reading, math, and social-emotional learning and behavior contents, we recommend that you begin with the [Phase One guide](#) and then proceed to the content guides. The Kansas MTSS and Alignment framework establishes a Self-Correcting Feedback Loop and an impact cycle process that includes ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of instruction to ensure that each Kansas student achieves high standards. A helpful resource as you use this guide is the Kansas MTSS and Alignment BSEL Repository:

<https://bit.ly/3JsPrkA>

Across the nation, schools use a variety of curricula, interventions, and methods to monitor students' social, emotional, and academic learning. The goal of Kansas MTSS and Alignment is to provide an integrated systemic approach to meet the needs of all students. To achieve this, resources must be used in an effective and efficient way. While Kansas MTSS and Alignment does not necessarily require additional resources or adding to existing practices, it does involve evaluating current practices to identify those that yield evidence of effectiveness, address areas that are missing, and replace ineffective or inefficient approaches with those that are supported by research and/or evidence.

Kansas MTSS and Alignment is a guiding framework for school improvement and accreditation activities to address the academic achievement and social-emotional development of all students.

## **MTSS and Alignment and Early Childhood**

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Early Childhood (DEC) advocates that, to support young children's social-emotional development and effectively address challenging behavior, educators must promote the use of culturally responsive, evidence-based practices in the context of program-wide, multi-tiered systems of support (Allen & Steed, 2016; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Education, 2015a; DEC, 2017). Positive social and emotional development during early childhood provides an essential foundation for both cognitive and academic success. Children who have strong social-emotional skills have higher academic achievement and are more likely to stay in school and have stronger economic and educational outcomes in adulthood (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2015). Unfortunately, emphasis on cognitive and academic preparation too often takes precedence over social-emotional development in an early school setting (Raver, 2002). To ensure that students have the skills they need to be successful, early childhood programs must equally emphasize social-emotional development with academics. At times, the application of an MTSS system will look slightly different from what is put in place for school-aged children. This guide will provide some basic information about MTSS for BSEL in preschool; however, further information can be found in the MTSS and Alignment Early Childhood BSEL Structuring Guide.

## **Introduction to Behavior and Social-Emotional Learning**

The primary intent of a tiered framework of supports for social-emotional learning (SEL) and behavior is to establish an integrated system that emphasizes relationships; promotes core behavioral skills, competencies, and norms for all students; reinforces those skills and norms consistently; and reflects on and adjusts behavior and social errors. It routinely collects and analyzes data to adjust these practices in order to improve school culture and climate and to provide intervention for students with additional needs. Similar to academics, a tiered framework for social-emotional learning and behavior includes a systematic plan to address standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention. More fundamentally, it provides grounding in relationships that foster healthy brain and nervous system development across time, from which all learning and social-emotional growth is possible. Below is a brief description of how each category looks within Kansas MTSS and Alignment.

- Relationships: Grounding in the science of relationships and learning, aligned with the Kansans Can Integrated Learning Process.
- Standards: Usage of the Kansas Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD) curricular standards and Kansas Early Learning Standards (KELS) as well as local determination of a school-wide positive culture and environment.
- Curriculum: Selection of a social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum/framework and local development of school-wide behavioral expectations or norms.
- Instruction: Selection of instructional practices or an instructional model that supports a relational approach to SEL and behavior. Identification of core self-care, empowerment, and/or response strategy practices that promote learning, well-being, and self-discipline with greater consistency.
- Assessment: Collection and analysis of climate data as well as attendance, behavior referrals, course grades, and universal screening data.
- Intervention: Selection of social, emotional, and behavioral interventions that are matched to school climate and student needs.

A convergence of research across many scientific disciplines reveals that, although “cognition and emotion have historically been dichotomized, they are inextricably linked, co-organizing and fueling all human thought and behavior.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore, when social-emotional learning and behavior are an integrated aspect of the school experience and are proactively and systematically addressed, a rich array of positive impacts arise, including improvements in:

- Classroom instructional time
- Positive student-teacher interactions
- Academic achievement (up to an 11-percentile point gain)

- Social and emotional skills and competency
- School climate
- Office discipline referrals (ODRs), suspensions, and expulsion
- Teacher satisfaction and retention<sup>2</sup>
- Risk factors and resilience (which were quantified in 2015 as an \$11 return to the community for every \$1 invested in SEL programming)<sup>3</sup>

When we think about preparing our students for the future, it is important to note that twelve of the sixteen 21<sup>st</sup> century skills identified by the World Economic Forum (2016) are social and emotional skills. Integrating a coherent social, emotional, and behavior approach into your Kansas MTSS and Alignment Framework is a core investment that makes sense in both the short and long term.

### **Getting Started – What’s Your Baseline?**

**Baseline Data.** Since every building and district already has something in place to address the social-emotional and behavioral needs of its students, Kansas MTSS and Alignment starts with a simple review process. Schools will gather some baseline quantitative and qualitative data to get a sense of the current status of their system. This data also helps pinpoint students’ needs and priorities for structuring.

**Components.** The BSEL Components (see below) provide a synopsis of all the structuring components of the social, emotional, and behavior portion of the Kansas MTSS and Alignment framework. The first column lists each of the seven components, starting with relationships. The second through fourth columns describe the increasing degrees of evidence that the component is in place.

The aim is to have as many stakeholders as possible complete the table below by providing their perception of how fully implemented the structure or component is. This will provide a qualitative snapshot of where your building or district currently resides on the structuring continuum.

Below each component is presented in a pink row listing the suggested data and artifacts that will help assess student and system needs based on *data*. Districts can access the Communities That Care (CTC) Climate Types Report, as it will be extremely helpful in this process. Building leadership teams should gather the relevant data for their building and bring it to the district review meeting/process.



The next task is to review what the data suggests compared to staff perception of the degree to which a component is in place in order to set priorities.

<b>Kansas MTSS and Alignment BSEL Components</b>			
Component	No/Low Evidence of Structures in Place	Some Evidence of Structures in Place	High Evidence of Structures in Place
School-Wide Positive Culture and Supports: Positive Relationships, Structured Expectations, Social Emotional Learning (SEL)			
Positive Relationships	Staff are not trained in relationship fundamentals that impact adult capacity to co-regulate and connect with students or foster student voice.	Some staff members are trained in relational fundamentals; staff members use strategies to co-regulate, connect, or foster student voice inconsistently.	All staff members understand relational fundamentals and use strategies to increase their capacity to co-regulate, connect with students, and foster student voice.
Structured Expectations	A clear, formal, consistent school-wide positive system to create consistency and predictability is NOT in place to enhance agency and self-regulation (e.g., norms or expectations and response system).	Some elements of structured expectations are in place (see examples in the “high evidence” column) but expectations are not consistent or have not been reviewed in a long time. Some elements may be outdated or counterproductive given current research (e.g., clip charts).	A formal, consistent school-wide positive system to create consistency and predictability exists to enhance agency and self-regulation (e.g., norms or expectations or a feedback & response system that is relational). The system is monitored for fidelity.
Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	No systematic SEL instruction or instruction lacks evidence-based scope and sequence. No measure for social-emotional growth locally.	SEL lacks an evidence base, does not meet Kansas Social Emotional and Character Development (SECD) Standards or State Board goals, and instruction is inconsistent (e.g., periodically taught or provided only by specialized staff such as counselors).	SEL skills taught by all staff systematically according to evidence-based scope and sequence or process. Teaching is monitored for fidelity, and skills are assessed. Kansas Social Emotional and Character Development (SECD) Standards and State Board goals are being met.
<b>School-Wide Positive Culture and Supports Artifacts:</b> SEL Curricula; SEL Implementation Schedule; SEL Fidelity Tools, Kansas Community That Care Survey (KCTC) Report or Similar Validated School Climate Survey; Social-Emotional Screener, Social-Emotional Growth Measure, Office Discipline Referrals, Suspensions, Norms			
Universal Instructional Practices to Increase Engagement	No instructional practices are universally evident.	The building may adhere to certain instructional models or practices however they have not been examined in terms of local data, needs, or fidelity to increase student engagement.	Research-based instructional practices or models match the needs shown through data for increasing student engagement and are instructional practices monitored for fidelity.

<b>Universal Instructional Practices Artifacts:</b> KCTC Climate Types Report, Social-Emotional Growth Measure, Office Discipline Referrals, Suspensions			
Feedback & Response System	Relational, growth-promoting feedback is not used or inconsistently used. No formal system exists for effectively responding to unskillful behavior to teach replacement skills and self-regulation.	Some elements are in place, but staff members may lack a shared understanding of relational, growth-promoting feedback or use it inconsistently, and/or the focus may be on consequence rather than promoting replacement skills, self-regulation, and maintaining relationships.	All staff members use relational, growth-promoting feedback, with strategies for monitoring fidelity of usage. The feedback and response system is documented with consistent understanding by staff, checked for fidelity, and used to promote replacement skills, self-regulation, and maintaining relationships. Data is used to inform school culture.
<b>Feedback &amp; Response System Data/Artifacts to Review:</b> Social-Emotional Growth Measure, Office Discipline Referrals, Suspensions, Disproportionality, KCTC Climate Types Report			
Data-based Decision Making	Behavior and social-emotional data are not analyzed to promote change in environment, student, and climate outcomes. Data is reported to the state only at the end of the year or maybe inconsistently gathered. Behavior majors and minors are not defined.	Some behavior and social-emotional data or majors/minors may be reviewed, but not in a consistent and ongoing process to inform instruction, practices, programming, and culture.	A robust array of behavior and social-emotional data is systematically gathered, reviewed, defined, and used to inform instruction, practices, programming, and culture; e.g., attendance, ODRS, and grades analyzed monthly; screener conducted three times a year, CTC annually.
<b>DBDM Data/Artifacts to Review:</b> Attendance, Office Discipline Referrals, Grades, Screener, KCTC Climate Types Report, Family Engagement Survey, Suspensions, Expulsions, Disproportionality			
Tiered Interventions and Supports	No clear inventory of social, emotional, and behavioral supports and interventions is readily accessible to all staff. Decision rules for entering and exiting interventions are not clearly defined or followed.	Various specialty staff members (e.g., counselors, behavior specialists) have an inventory of interventions and supports to work with students referred for behavior and social-emotional interventions. Decision rules for entering and exiting intervention may vary, and progress monitoring is inconsistent.	A comprehensive inventory of social, emotional, and behavioral supports and interventions is readily accessible to all staff. Decision rules for entering and exiting interventions are clear, and progress monitoring occurs to ensure student growth.
<b>Tiered Interventions and Supports Artifacts:</b> Progress Monitoring Data, BSEL Completed Protocol			

Should data indicate the need for improvement, educators can continue to increase structure for components (as indicated by moving to the right on the rubric) in order to increase consistency and improve results. It should be noted that not every building or district is going to need a high level of structure.

Schools can prioritize those areas in which the data indicate:

- fewer than 80% of students achieve success based on the ABCS (Attendance, Behavior Referrals/Office Discipline Referrals, Course Grades, and Screener for Behavior and SEL)
- climate types ratings are worse than state average
- no improvements in their SEL growth measure
- they're not meeting state board or KESA goals.

**How to Use This Guide.** This guide will provide details and resources for each of the components, following the scope and sequence outlined below that prepares staff, buildings, and communities for implementing all the social, emotional learning, and behavioral components of the Kansas MTSS and Alignment Framework. Each section will start with the title of the component, explain the goal of that component along with a description and research support, provide a checklist of essential elements, and pose final steps to consider.

1. Culture and Climate
  - a. Elements of Positive School Culture
  - b. Positive Relationships
  - c. Structured Expectations
  - d. Social Emotional Learning
2. Standards and Curriculum
3. Structured Expectations
4. Social Emotional Learning
5. Instruction
  - a. Universal instructional practices for social-emotional learning and behavior
6. Feedback and Response Continuum system
7. Assessment: Data-based decision making for social-emotional learning and behavior
8. All-Some-Few: Interventions and supports for behavior and SEL needs

## Culture and Climate

**Goal:** All staff systematically work to build a school culture in which relationships, safe and predictable environments, and a focus on social-emotional skill building are approached in an interrelated manner, resulting in a positive climate.

School *culture* reflects “how we do business.” It involves relating to one another through shared agreements or expectations, both explicit and hidden, the level of rigidity and flexibility in the system of school practices, and the outward skills and behaviors that schools promote.

School *climate* reflects how various stakeholders *feel* about their environment and relationships. Perceptions largely shape our experience of reality. Therefore, our perception of the climate can have powerful effects on our well-being and growth. By examining culture and climate together, schools can pinpoint the focus needed in relationships in the system to improve either climate or culture or both (Jones & Bouffard, 2012).

The Kansas Communities that Care Survey (KCTC) school climate data has revealed a pattern of rising rates of depression and suicidality among children and adolescents in recent years. Data from the U.S. Center for Disease Control ranks Kansas 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation in steepest rate of rising suicide since 1999. Up to 40% of students in some Kansas counties endorse one of the key diagnostic indicators of depression on the climate survey. The addition of student voice via the climate survey, along with other data such as chronic absenteeism, office discipline referrals, and social-emotional growth measures, help shape a school’s overall data profile for behavior and social-emotional learning. Schools will want to factor in the range of climate, attendance, office discipline referrals, and similar data to develop a strong Tier 1 Core that is responsive to the needs of the students in their buildings in order to achieve their social, emotional, and academic goals most effectively.

### **The Interrelated Elements of Positive School Climate and Culture.**

In Kansas MTSS and Alignment, we help schools examine at least three interrelated areas of positive school culture: (1) positive relationships that foster connection and belonging, (2) environments that are safe and predictable, and (3) learning and practice of social-emotional competencies that build agency and positive engagement. While each of these elements can and will be studied separately, it is important to emphasize that they operate in an interrelated fashion.

First, we will review two foundational relationship processes that foster connection and belonging and which must be in place for healthy brain and nervous system development. Those two processes run through every element of the MTSS framework. Relationships are the vehicle for fostering social-emotional *skill* growth: “teacher-student relationships, peer relationships, and staff-student relationships form the first and foremost platform for developing and practicing social-emotional skills in the school context” (Oberle, Domitrovich, Meyers, & Weissberg, 2016).

The second element of positive culture is safe and predictable environments. Building on

relationships, safe and predictable environments are also a result of structure in the school culture. This often takes the shape of policies, practices, routines, rules, expectations, and norms. From a student development perspective, the intention of the structure is to create safe and predictable environments in which growth is optimized and equitable. Such structures will range from rigid to flexible, depending on their purpose, the culture and climate needs, and the developmental status of the students involved.

For example, clear definitions, rules, and protocols for major behaviors that must be reported to the state require specificity because they involve issues of safety. Expectations for daily behavior in different locations of the school need to be clear yet show some flexibility for the different contexts involved. A more highly structured routine for teaching expectations may be needed for younger children, for heterogeneous groups, or for problem areas shown by data. Depending on how students mature, norms that express their values and needs for working effectively on a group project may be more appropriate. Norms, much like adult group/team norms, may look more like principles which they learn to flexibly apply to various situations, holding each other accountable to their shared agreements. Teachers can regularly prompt reflection on group norms as a structured practice, much like they might regularly prompt the use of expectations before entering a challenging setting.

The third element of positive school culture is the practice of social-emotional competencies, both in the context of explicit social-emotional learning instruction and in the context of academic discussions, projects, and group work. Embedded throughout the school day, practice with a range of social-emotional skills builds students' agency and efficacy as they mature, enables them to extract meaning and relevance from the topics being explored, enables their ability to build relationships and effectively problem-solve, and strengthens their engagement in their education.

Each of these elements of positive school culture is reflected in the traditional areas of standards and curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention. This structuring manual will assist teams to further explore these elements within that traditional context.

## Positive Relationships

**Goal:** All staff members understand relational fundamentals and use strategies to increase their capacity to co-regulate, connect with students, and foster student voice.

### Description and Research

The following list outlines research that provides support for the importance of building a system grounded in relationships:

- Healthy brain and nervous system development is fundamental to social, emotional, and academic learning and well-being (Immordino-Yang, Darling-Hammond & Krone, 2018).
- The brain and nervous systems have a long developmental window from birth to the late 20s, with especially sensitive periods during early childhood and adolescence (Cantor, Osher, Berg, Steyer & Rose, 2018).
- Healthy relationships are a *key* vehicle for supporting the brain and nervous system's ability to organize, regulate, and integrate throughout this developmental window (Osher, Cantor, Berg, Steyer, & Rose, 2018; Porges, 2015).
- Two primary relational processes form the core of healthy relationships: serve and return interaction and co-regulation (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004; Osher et al., 2018).
- Strategies that build adults' capacity to co-regulate enhance both their own and students' health, well-being, and resiliency (Fredrickson, 2013; Kolk et al, 2013; Kolk & Singer, 2016).

An explosion of knowledge and convergence of research from diverse fields are helping to identify the power of developmentally positive relationships to shape brain architecture and nervous system development in ways that foster learning, growth, and well-being (Cantor, Osher, Berg, Steyer & Rose, 2018). Evidence has recently clarified that learning is fundamentally social and emotional in nature and that academic, linguistic, cognitive, social, and emotional development are deeply intertwined (Jones & Kahn, 2017). Key insights from research support the design of school and classroom structures and practices that foster positive, long-term relationships in which people feel seen, known, and valued. A culture grounded in positive, supportive relationships with a focus on developmentally integrative academic and emotional support encourages student agency, connectedness, engagement, and efficacy (Cantor, Osher, Berg, Steyer & Rose, 2018).

The process known as “serve and return” is at the heart of integrated learning, because it is the fundamental relational interaction that shapes brain architecture. Within serve and return, one simply makes a bid for attention or an interaction (a serve), and the other person shares his or her point of attention and responds (a return) (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). This requires that we be available and able to notice and tune into students' developmental and cultural expressions (serves) and be willing and able to create responses (returns) that strengthen trust and connections while supporting, celebrating, and/or extending the next step in their development to promote agency. The process involves paying close attention to verbal and nonverbal cues, using just the right amount of support, and responding consistently over time and based on the context of the situation. For a compelling illustration of this interaction and what happens when it is lacking, watch “The Still Face Experiment” by Dr.

Ed Tronick here: <https://bit.ly/3cZsMjB>

Noticing bids for connection and performing developmentally appropriate serve-and-return practice is foundational to relationships and applies to every age and stage of life. In Kansas MTSS and Alignment, we also specifically embed it within the instructional practice of positive feedback as discussed in the Feedback Continuum section. For an example of how it applies even between adults, watch this short video from the Dr. John Gottman Institute about the importance of responding to bids for connection in partner relationships: <https://bit.ly/3ztxfCq> Or read this blog post: <https://bit.ly/3Jt1LBk>

Co-regulation. Serve and return is the outward, explicit relationship in action, and it pairs with the deeper, implicit process playing out at the nervous system level, called co-regulation. Co-regulation occurs when the regulated nervous system of the adult sends cues of safety and connection to the child's nervous system. These cues act like food for the developing nervous system, fostering its ability to increasingly regulate over time. When deprived of this "nutrition," children's nervous systems enter a stress response, making them more susceptible to fight-flight-freeze behaviors, as visible in Dr. Ed Tronick's "Still Face" video. Repeated exposure to fight-flight-freeze" behaviors can impede the nervous system's ability to organize and regulate, erode health and resiliency, and contribute to issues such as anxiety and depression. Co-regulation provides the tools to offset this exposure and build a healthy nervous system. "Individuals co-regulate each other's physiology, which means that the quality of a person's relationships and social interactions shapes their development and health, both of the body and brain" (Immordino-Yang, Darling-Hammond & Krone, 2018). Every relationship counts.

What are the cues that nourish the nervous system through coregulation? When an adult is in a regulated state, the ventral vagus nerve creates a circuit that connects the heart, larynx, middle ear, and the upper facial muscles, especially around the eyes and the brain. Just as we digest and breathe without conscious effort, the regulated heart organizes this circuit automatically so that our voice is soft and inviting (rather than gruff or shrill), the middle ear opens up to detect the wide range of sound for tuned-in listening, and the eye gaze becomes kind and warm (Porges, 2015). As with our breath, we can become aware of this process and use it more intentionally to connect with others and benefit our health.

Relational processes are important throughout life, and they underpin all subsequent structures in the social-emotional and behavioral content of the Kansas MTSS and Alignment framework. It is also important to be aware of periods of dramatic brain development when sensitivity to relationships and the environment trigger both great plasticity and growth as well as real vulnerabilities. The dramatic growth periods occur in infancy and early childhood and again during adolescence. Providing strong, positive relational interactions especially during these windows as well as buffering the effects of stress, supporting assertiveness and conflict resolution skills, and bolstering basic self-care like sleep, nutrition, movement, and nature are critically important to minimize vulnerability to mental health concerns (Immordino-Yang, Darling-Hammond & Krone, 2018). Indeed, Kansas students themselves speak to the critical importance a caring adult relationship can provide in the school context. In a longitudinal study of over 700 Kansas students with disabilities one-year post-graduation, the most salient positive experience that helped them reach their goals was a supportive staff member (Clavenna-Deane & Coates, 2019).

Schools should examine student climate data to discern the strengths and needs of the student body based on their feedback and perceptions. Staff members can amplify the foundational relational processes in each element of their MTSS to meet these needs as part of a responsive

and robust Tier 1. In addition, Kansas MTSS and Alignment strongly recommends that every school adopt the Continuum of Positive Feedback as an instructional practice.

<b><u>Elements of a Positive Relationships</u></b>
1. Staff members are trained and understand the foundational relational processes of serve and return and co-regulation
2. Staff members use strategies to increase their capacity to co-regulate, connect with students, and foster student voice.
3. Climate data is examined to discern strengths and needs of the students

### **Final steps**

These questions culminate your activities with systemic positive relationships.

- Does your plan address all of the relational system elements?
- How will you document this component? (KESA Connection)
- Which stakeholders do you need feedback from? (Empowering Culture and Leadership Connection)
- What are your professional development needs? (Professional Development Connection)

## **Standards and Curriculum**

Tier 1, or the core curriculum, lays out a college- and career-ready path for achieving the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral gains that districts desire for all students. Efforts at the Tier 1 level provide the opportunity to level the playing field in order for all learners to benefit from the instructional experience (Lane, Menzies, Ennis, & Oakes, 2013). In setting the course, Tier 1 uses data collection mechanisms to detect students' needs and identify parts of the educational system that are inhibiting the district's realization of its objectives.

At all grade levels, staff members need to consider what core skills and knowledge will be required of all students and the core curriculum materials they will use to provide relevant instruction. This typically takes the form of the systematic instruction of social-emotional learning (SEL) as well as teaching and reviewing behavioral expectations consistently across the building. These instructional efforts should be embedded within the curriculum and throughout the school day.

## **Structured Expectations**

**Goal:** All staff members provide a positive, safe, and predictable environment, with a focus on relationship building.



## Description and Research

In framing thoughts on behavior, consider the following quote:

“If a child doesn’t know how to read, we **teach**. If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we **teach**.

If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we **teach**. If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we **teach**.

If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we... teach? ...punish?” (Herner, 1998, p.2)

Why is it so hard to finish that last line as quickly as the others? In many schools across the country, schools have already begun to take a more instructional and preventative approach to behavior. In fact, research from fields such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) indicates that establishing common expectations for the students leads to a more positive, safe, and predictable school environment, which enables student learning and creativity to flourish (Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005; Sprick, Knight, Reinke, & Mckale, 2006).

When creating a positive culture and environment, a good starting place is teaching what behaviors we expect to see from students. If we want students to have an intrinsic understanding and an ability to exhibit these expected behaviors, we have to build relationships with them. The previous section on establishing positive relationships lays the groundwork for reshaping the culture and climate in the school. When we promote a positive culture and environment, schools communicate to their stakeholders that they value each of the unique experiences and challenges that each student brings to their school. We know that providing consistency and predictability is key to successfully achieving this. One way to provide consistency and predictability is to create meaningful, proactive, and relevant rules or expectations that students can adhere to in order to have the best chance at success. Some would refer to this in broader terms as norms. Norms are specific expectations that teachers and students establish together that manage behavior toward one another and the school environment (Bisson, 2018). This is how schools do business. Sturgis and Casey stated that, based on research in the learning sciences, students need physical and emotional safety in order to learn (Bisson, 2018). In other words, if we want students to be more available for learning, we need to create an environment in which they feel safe to take chances and make mistakes. Norming can help promote this environment through a sense of belonging, teaching cooperation and communication, and encouraging empathy and caring (Bisson, 2018). The following process offers one way to create norms for students and staff:

1. Start with a discussion with the students about how they want their class to function.
2. Generate a list of the rules to follow.
3. Consolidate the list into 3-5 expectations. It is important to have a list that is relevant to the students’ developmental age and to keep the list short so that everyone can remember them.
4. Explicitly teach the expectations. Use examples and non-examples to help students learn what the expectations look and sound like in their environment.
5. Model and practice the expectations frequently. (Bisson, 2018)

Students come to school with a variety of experiences and expectations about acceptable behavior and social interactions based on their home and cultural environments (Bireda, 2002; Tatum, 1997). In fact, younger children are just beginning to recognize that adult expectations may differ from one setting to the next (Thompson, 2002). The school for all ages of children is

very much a melting pot when it comes to understanding expected school behaviors. The following list provides various evidence-based as well as succinct reasons for explicitly teaching all students the expected behaviors at the school-wide level:

- Provide safe, predictable, consistent learning environments
- Promote success in the school environment
- Enhance relationships with a positive focus
- Provide context for practice and reinforcement of behavioral skills (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; OSEP Center for PBIS, 2015).

Furthermore, when expected behaviors are explicitly taught at the classroom level, the following situations often result:

- Creation of smooth and efficient classrooms
- Increased student engagement and instructional time, improved academic success
- Transfer of responsibility for routine tasks to students
- Teaching of more appropriate functional behaviors

It is realistic to assume that each school will have different needs based on their student population and climate. Some schools may find success with implementing rules, norms, or expectations, teaching them to students, and giving them frequent feedback (behavior-specific praise). Other schools might need a higher level of structure in the form of a more formal framework, such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, CHAMPS, Safe and Civil Schools Foundations, or Restorative Practices. Schools can start by looking at their school-wide data (most schools start by analyzing their office discipline referrals or ODRs) and having a basic understanding of the needs that their students and staff members exhibit in order to make the determination about the level of structure the building will need. Once that determination is made, leadership teams will agree on how to create rules, norms, or expectations that support a safe, predictable environment. In order for students to be successful, schools should implement consistency regarding agreed-upon behaviors and social interactions. For these reasons, Kansas MTSS and Alignment encourages leadership teams and their building staff members to collectively create, explicitly teach, and regularly model positively stated rules and expectations for all student and adult behavior, whether they choose to adopt school norms, expectations, or a more structured framework like PBIS, CHAMPS, or Restorative Practices.

**Process for teaching behavior.** Each building should determine its own process for teaching behavior through gathering stakeholder input and creating unique and customized reflections of the values of their community. Teams can ask themselves the question: Where do we focus most of our energy? For example, do most of the office discipline referrals come from the hallway? If this is the case, then the staff members are probably focusing most of their energy on correcting or responding to behavior in the hallway. This would be a good place to start with teaching their students what is expected in the hallway in order to promote a positive culture and environment. We know from research that taking a proactive approach to teaching behavior (i.e., how to be most successful in school) is more powerful than taking a reactive or punitive approach. Teams can remember that behavior is an opportunity for teaching and learning. Norms and expectations serve as the bedrock for the school and help to unite the entire staff and community around shared goals. These norms or expectations should be posted visibly throughout the school as a reference point and a reminder of the high expectations that the greater school community has

for the students within that building. When you have visitors in the building, such as substitute teachers or consultants, they have a better chance of exhibiting and helping enforce norms if they can refer to them throughout the school. In essence, they become standards for your building. Some commonly used structures to create consistent norms or expectations among buildings are as follows:

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports – <https://www.pbis.org/>
- Safe and Civil Schools - <https://www.safeandcivilschools.com/>
- Center on Innovations in Learning - <http://www.centeril.org/>

Once buildings have established their norms or expectations, they can develop the curricular details for how, when, where, and by whom teaching them will occur. Teams often create a plan for teaching behaviors in an explicit manner. They can take the form of simple, one-page lessons that give a brief description of expected behavior. Lessons should include examples and non-examples demonstrating what the behavior looks like in various school contexts (Taylor-Greene et al., 1997) and opportunities for students to practice the expected behavior. The depth of these lessons can be either broad or specific, depending on students’ and school’s needs.

Leadership teams should work together to create their plans for all needed areas in the school. During implementation, the team will also use data to determine which expectations might need re-teaching (i.e., a large number of office referrals from the cafeteria in March would prompt the team to reteach and reinforce the rules for the cafeteria). Teams may also use their data to identify additional areas in which lessons may need to be created.

With these steps completed, you have created the standards and curriculum portion of your behavioral MTSS, which will help you to prevent and teach the expectations in your building while also providing a safe and predictable environment.

<b><u>Elements of a Safe, Predictable, School-Wide Environment</u></b>
1. Gather information from stakeholders on important behaviors
2. Use stakeholder feedback to develop norms or expectations
3. Form an initial draft of your school-wide expectations and then gather final feedback from staff and student groups.
4. Adults model school-wide norms or expectations
5. Develop a plan for teaching school-wide norms or expectations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give multiple ways of teaching the behavior (examples and non-examples), opportunities to practice, etc.</li> </ul>
6. Embed norms or expectations across the school day

### **Final steps**

Use these questions to conclude your activities with creating a positive culture and environment:

- Does your plan address all of the elements?

- How will you document this component? (KESA Connection)
- Which stakeholders do you need feedback from? (Empowering Culture and Leadership Connection)
- What are your professional development needs? (Professional Development Connection)

## Social-Emotional Learning

**Goal:** Social and emotional learning skills are taught by all staff systematically according to evidence-based scope and sequence or process. Teaching is monitored for fidelity, and skills are assessed. Kansas Social Emotional and Character Development (SECD) Standards and State Board goals are being met.



### Description and Research

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is “the capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others” (Elias et al., 1997). The rapidly growing evidence of SEL’s impact includes the largest meta-analysis of its kind, which revealed significant gains in attitudinal, behavioral, and academic outcomes and an 11-percentile-point gain on standardized test scores (Durlak et al., 2011). In fact, solid SEL implementation yields results similar to, and in some cases higher than, strictly academic universal interventions. Additionally, a 2015 cost-benefit analysis released by the Teachers College of Columbia University demonstrated that, for every dollar invested in social-emotional learning, there is a return of eleven dollars, as measured by school and community benefits, such as enhanced educational outcomes (e.g., attendance rates, test scores, graduation rates), reduced crime, lowered substance abuse, and decreased teen suicide attempts (Belfield et al., 2015). These benefits align with educational interests and student success as well as broad community interests. Locally, stakeholders across Kansas resoundingly cited social-emotional factors as the most important factors for success and expressed a desire a stronger focus on these skills (Watson & Neuenswander, 2015).

The Kansas Department of Education has been a leader in promoting the importance of SEL. Kansas was one of the first states in the nation to develop and adopt SEL academic standards in April 2012, with a document titled the [Social, Emotional, and Character Development Standards \(SECD\)](https://bit.ly/3OWzxjb): <https://bit.ly/3OWzxjb>, updated in 2018. These academic standards support districts in SEL instruction and lay the groundwork for progress toward several state-board goals, including social-emotional growth measured locally and graduation and post-secondary success. The [Kansas Early Learning Standards \(KELS\)](https://bit.ly/3PQCRxz) (<https://bit.ly/3PQCRxz>) incorporate social-emotional learning to support districts with SEL implementation in the critical early years and support the board goal of kindergarten readiness.

Additionally, KESA embeds the use of Kansas SECD and KELS academic standards into its language for accreditation. Supported by research, stakeholder consensus, and the convergence of the standards, goals, and accreditation in Kansas, SEL is strongly recommended as part of a district's integrated Tier 1 Kansas MTSS and Alignment for the benefit of all students PreK-12. Within the Kansas MTSS and Alignment system, districts will select an evidence-based curriculum or a research-based framework that meets the needs of their students and community. This SEL program will also align with Kansas standards, which incorporate the five SEL domains. The five CASEL domains include self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and decision-making skills. See the graphic above.

Kansas MTSS and Alignment further recommends that districts consider a trauma-aware approach due to the pervasive nature of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and their impact on learning as well as other toxic stress cited by new research, which has been correlated with the spike in depression and suicide among children and adolescents (Twenge, 2017). Many districts have communicated local concerns regarding this steep rise in depression and suicide. A trauma-aware approach to teaching social-emotional skills and responding to behaviors that potentially indicate trauma and/or mental health concerns should be an essential part of the core SEL approach in a district. As such, districts may need to vet programs and practices that address co-regulation, support staff members' social-emotional competencies and self-care, and build students' self-regulation skills, such as brain breaks and breathing exercises and physical movement like yoga or tai chi.

Indeed, districts would be wise to make sound program investment decisions based on community data regarding strengths and challenges. It will be important to identify the strengths to leverage that can shore up existing challenges. Therefore, as districts consider program adoption, they are advised to collaborate with community partners as stakeholders. The community mental health center, police department, and juvenile justice authority are agencies cited in legislation through the Senate Bill 367 (SB367) as intervention partners, and leaders from these agencies can provide data about the needs and challenges to assist with program decisions.

Additionally, businesses, youth-serving organizations, community faith leaders, and parents bring important perspectives for developing a broader vision of the kinds of skills to build and enhance in the community. Convening this mix of stakeholders along with staff representing multiple disciplines can help ensure that districts are vetting culturally relevant programs in the development process.

For examples of evidence-based curricula, districts can review which ones CASEL has reviewed by accessing their website [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org). For an example of a research-based framework, districts can review the Kansas Can Competency Framework website <http://www.cccframework.org/>. Durlak and colleagues (2011) determined that key practices, such as school-wide *teacher* delivery of SEL with fidelity, using sequenced, active, focused, and explicit instruction resulted in increased benefit to the overall social-emotional competency of

the school and students. Therefore, to structure the school system to support teaching an SEL curriculum with fidelity, teams should provide professional development for all staff, a specific time built into the schedule for explicit lessons and skill practice, and ways to monitor implementation and embed the concepts and language throughout the day. Additionally, many districts have found it useful to “cross reference” key SEL terms into their behavioral expectations to reinforce a common, school-wide language.

<b><u>Elements of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)</u></b>
1. Adopt a research-based curriculum or framework that fulfills the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is aligned with the Kansas Standards (KELS and SECD)</li> <li>• Has an evidence-based scope and sequence or process</li> </ul>
2. Develop a sequence or plan for teaching curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement school-wide teaching involving all staff</li> <li>• Plan when it will be taught</li> <li>• Plan how to teach school-wide using common language</li> <li>• Plan to embed concepts throughout the school day</li> </ul>
3. Teaching is monitored for fidelity
4. Determine a method to measure/assess this component

### **Final Steps**

These questions culminate your activities with social-emotional learning.

- Does your plan address all of the elements for social-emotional learning curricula?
- How will you document this component? (KESA Connection)
- Which stakeholders do you need feedback from? (Empowering Culture and Leadership Connection)
- What are your professional development needs? (Professional Development Connection)

### **Instruction**

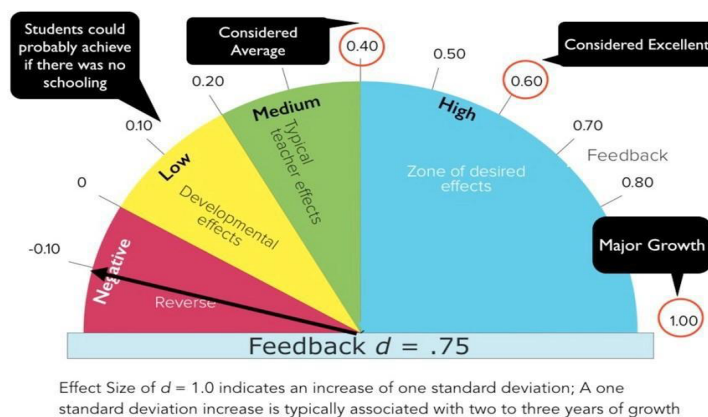
In Kansas MTSS and Alignment, supporting students’ success begins in the core environment with the use of standards, evidence-based curricular resources, and evidence-based instructional practices.

Various evidence-based practices align with a multi-tiered system of supports, such as systematic and explicit instruction, scaffolding, and differentiation. This is one of the conceptual differences between the core instruction represented in the Kansas MTSS and Alignment and what may have occurred in previous systems. Differentiation often has many meanings and applications. For the

purposes of this guide, though, differentiated instruction is defined as ways teachers can modify curriculum, teaching methods, resources, learning activities, and student products to address the needs of individual students and/or small groups of students in order to maximize the learning opportunities for each student in the classroom (Hattie, 2012; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000).

Ensuring fidelity in implementing differentiation and other instructional practices is essential to produce achievement results and student success. Planning for fidelity should include these critical steps (Dieker & Kennedy et al., 2014; Scheeler, 2008):

- Selecting evidence-based instructional practices
- Implementing these practices with explicit guidance on when, how, and where
- Conducting walkthroughs with punctual, constructive feedback and reflective opportunities
- Identifying professional development needs based on walkthroughs and staff feedback



Within the context of behavior and social-emotional learning, specific instructional practices support the delivery of the Tier 1 components: teaching social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum and behavioral norms, reinforcement of the skills and behaviors, and consistent responses when students do not display the skills and behaviors.

These practices follow a model of how to prevent, teach, reinforce, and correct (PTRC) with certain practices aligning directly with each prong of this model (Colvin, 2007). Preventing and teaching within the Kansas MTSS and Alignment focuses primarily on using proactive instructional practices that support student engagement during the teaching of SEL skills and behavioral norms (see previous sections on structured expectations).

Reinforcement strategies align directly with fostering systemic positive relationships that teams adopt through the Kansas MTSS and Alignment process (see previous section on Positive Relationships). Response strategies align directly with the response system that teams adopt through the Kansas MTSS and Alignment process (see Feedback & Response Continuum section below).

When adopted school-wide, instructional practices will also support and enhance the teaching of core academic curricula. As a result, teams research various universal instructional practices and

models that support the teaching of the core curricula and lead to the consideration of one or more practices or one model to be selected and trained among all staff members.

## **Instructional Practices**

**Goal:** Teams will consider their data when researching instructional practices to adopt one or more that will strengthen their core and respond to the most common concerns in their system.

### **Description and Research**

All schools will have had early practice in and adopt the continuum of positive feedback as the key instructional strategy that simultaneously fosters relationships, skills, and safe environments while helping students grow and mature in expressing agency and self-regulation over time. Additional instructional practices may be needed, while others may need to be eliminated in order to be responsive to the school's current climate data and to achieve the outcomes desired.

There is a large body of research surrounding the educational practices and influences to inform the selection of best practices to improve student engagement and achievement. This Visible Learning website (<https://www.visiblelearningmetax.com>) continually updates with the newest research surrounding instructional influences, practices, and strategies.

This information is often expressed as an effect size (" $d$ "). Dr. John Hattie (2012) coined the effect size range for effective practices as the Zone of Desired Effects. Hattie found through a detailed meta-analysis of thousands of practices that an effect size of  $d=.40$  or above indicates average to above-average effectiveness and translates into a full year or more of student growth. The graphic visualizes the  $d=.40$  hinge point that marks the beginning of the Zone of Desired Effects. If a teacher is using a practice that falls within the blue zone, the resulting growth should equate to a year or more growth in one year's time.

Response to intervention, which is embedded within the Kansas MTSS and Alignment framework, has a high effect size, indicating that, when used with fidelity, it is associated with more than a year's growth. However, some practices can also lead to negative or low impacts that result in either less than a year's growth for students or the reversal of growth for students. These practices should be minimized due to their insignificant or detrimental effects. According to Hattie, influences such as high mobility, student retention, and depression have a detrimental or *negative* effect size. There are many instructional practices that can positively affect student outcomes available to educators. What follows is a brief explanation of a few effective instructional practices that have a direct connection to a school's behavior and social-emotional learning framework.



## **Opportunities to Respond**

When introducing the concept of opportunities to respond, Anita Archer stated, “learning is not a spectator sport.” This reinforces the active involvement teachers have in their instruction when using opportunities to respond. Opportunities to respond (OtR) are defined as “teacher behavior that elicits a student response” (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013, p. 41). OtRs involve a perky pace, rapid student response, high rates of questioning, and immediate teacher feedback to increase engagement and reduce and eliminate minor disruptions (Carnine, 1976; Skinner, Smith, & McLean, 1994; Skinner, Belfior, Mace, Williams-Wilson, & Johns, 1997). The Council for Exceptional Children’s Academy for Effective Instruction guidelines asserted that the optimal student response rate of 4-6 OtRs per minute had the greatest impact on engagement, achievement, and retention of new material presented. The minimum rate to still achieve engagement was 3 per minute (1987). Some examples of opportunities to respond are as follows:

- Choral Responding, such as thumbs up/down, whiteboards, verbal responses, colored paper, and head nods.
- Random Responding, such as drawing names from cards on sticks to call on students or using playing cards associates with cards on students’ desks to call on students.
- Individual Responding, such as tallies in a grade book next to the students’ names to monitor the rate of responding or calling on a student to summarize what another student said.

This practice is a form of success questioning, and it demonstrates direct/explicit instruction and teacher clarity, which are all considered moderate to high practices within the zone of desired effects. Additionally, OtRs are often used in the Prevent and Teach component of the PTRC model and with the feedback continuum that the Kansas MTSS & Alignment schools adopt.

## **Pacing and Active Engagement**

OtRs naturally increase the pace of instruction and rate of delivery of content and student responses. Pacing creates the illusion of speed by using a variety of activities to meet the lesson objective, and it results in active student engagement. Archer and Hughes (2011) suggest using “a rate of presentation that is brisk but includes a reasonable amount of time for students’ thinking/processing, especially when they are learning new material” (p. 3). Various approaches exist to improve the pace of instruction, such as adding multiple OtRs to a lesson, changing the type of work or activity within the lesson, altering the method of presentation to increase student talk and decrease teacher talk, choosing multiple ways to group students, and chunking the lesson into parts while making the parts interactive. Each of these adaptations will maintain student attention and promote engagement in the content. When using any of these instructional

practices, it is essential that teachers be prepared and organized when embedding them in lessons. Establishing routines and procedures for any of these practices paves the way for the impact of the practice to be larger. Active engagement is listed as moderate to high effect in the zone of desired effects, and the use of pacing to promote engagement is used in the Prevent and Teach component of the PTRC model.

### **Active Supervision**

Active teachers produce engaged students. Active supervision is a hallmark classroom management strategy that promotes positive interactions with students and teaching of behavioral norms, rules, or expectations. Three actions make up this strategy: moving, scanning, and interacting positively with students (Lane, Menzies, Ennis, & Oakes, 2015; Rosenshine, 2012). Having established routines and procedures allows for active supervision of students during guided or independent practice. Actively supervising students, especially during independent practice, sends the message that the teacher cares about the students, their engagement, and the choices they make in the classroom. Effective teachers often circle the room, scan the students for engagement and possible questions, and maximize opportunities to interact positively with students through feedback and behavior-specific praise. This practice often prevents problems from occurring, creates a more efficient work environment, and reduces minor classroom behaviors. Classroom management, which is most closely related to this practice, has moderate to high effects in the zone of desired effects and is used in each of the components of the PTRC model. Moving and scanning practices enable teachers to teach, prevent, and reinforce; interacting also allows teachers to reinforce as well as correct privately and fluently.

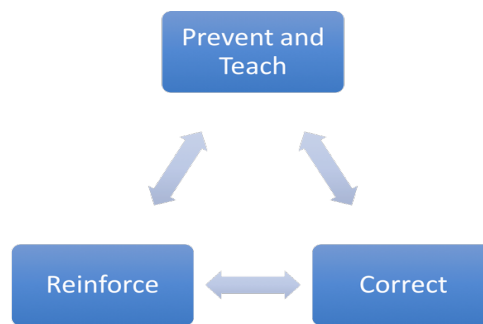
### **Choice Making**

Like many of the aforementioned strategies, choice making can increase the engagement of the whole class; however, this particular strategy can benefit individual student engagement specifically. Learner choice is a defining feature of personalized learning. Personalized learning maximizes the benefits of choice making and minimizes risk when it is co-designed. The teacher makes choices about instructional methods and the amount of practice necessary based on current and desired skills. She/he then coaches students to choose goals based on their interests and to demonstrate learning through choices related to content, products to produce, or processes

to engage in to reach those goals (Murphy et al., 2016). Additionally, choice making offers an antecedent-based, positive behavioral support to use with students who present challenging behavior. Choice making is most effective when the student is offered two or more equitable options, is allowed to independently select the option of choice, and is provided with easy access to that choice (Jolivette, Stichter, & McCormick, 2002). Furthermore, choice making influences the development of self-determination by allowing students to have autonomy in their decision making and opportunities to take action with their learning based on their preferences and interests (Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, 2017). In fact, choice making is one of the seven essential components of self-determination (Wehmeyer & Field, 2007). Teachers who successfully use choice making to engage students with challenging behavior often allow students to access activities they enjoy, allow agency in the non-assessed materials of the content, and create a menu of choices that can transfer between different projects. Autonomy and allowing students to self-set expectations through choices is listed as high in the zone of desired effects; additionally, the use of this practice would address both preventing and teaching as well as correcting in the PTRC model.

### **Pre-correct, Remind, Reinforce**

Similar to choice making, following a pattern of pre-correction, reminders, and reinforcement can be effective in whole group settings specifically for increasing the engagement of students with challenging behavior (Lane, Menzies, Ennis, & Oakes, 2015; Sprick, Knight, Reinke, & McKale, 2006).



In designing social-emotional learning lessons, Merrill (2007) suggested following this repeatable pattern in every lesson to explicitly teach social-emotional skills and expected prosocial behavior.

Specifically, this sequential practice is essential for new or potentially challenging content (Lane, Menzies, Ennis, & Oakes 2015; Smith, Lewis, & Stormont, 2010). During pre-correction, teachers anticipate potential errors, mistakes, or concerns that could elicit confusion, disruptions from misunderstanding directions, or frustration from the challenging nature of the content. Then, teachers account for these potential concerns by scaffolding new instruction onto previously instructed skills, allowing students to gain confidence in the content based on prior knowledge. Next, during the reminder step, teachers will prompt students of the expected

behaviors that will be necessary for the new skill or behavior. With verbal as well as non-verbal prompts and reminders, teachers can effectively reduce disruptions from students by increasing their engagement and decreasing their confusion and latency to start a task due to misunderstanding. Finally, reinforcing students when they follow the prompted reminder and when they engage in the new skill being taught will increase the likelihood that the students are engaged the next time they encounter new or challenging learning. This repeated pattern achieves similar results to OtRs, behavior-specific praise, and effective feedback, thus landing in the moderate to high effect in the zone of desired effects while also meeting the full cycle of the PTRC model.

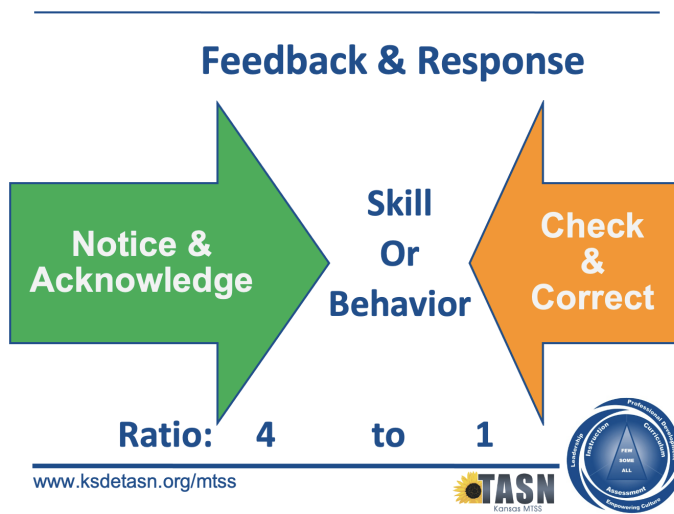
<b><u>Universal Instructional Practices Elements</u></b>	
1.	Determine practices already occurring in classrooms and buildings
2.	Analyze building-wide data to determine needs
3.	Fill gaps and replace low-effect practices with higher-effect practices for your building.
4.	Compile a system for training staff on the set of practices
5.	Create a system to monitor the fidelity of use of set of practices
6.	Meet the component goal
7.	Determine a method to measure/assess this component

### **Final Steps**

These questions culminate your activities with social-emotional learning:

- Does your plan address all of the Universal Instructional Practices Elements?
- How will you document this component? (KESA Connection)
- Which stakeholders do you need feedback from? (Empowering Culture and Leadership Connection)
- What are your professional development needs? (Professional Development Connection)

## Feedback & Response Continuum



**Goal:** All staff members consistently use the feedback continuum, while responding effectively to unskillful behavior in a manner designed to teach replacement skills, self-regulation, and preserve relationships. A ratio of 4:1 positive feedback to corrective response is maintained for all students to increase learning and engagement within a positive school-wide culture.

### Description and Research

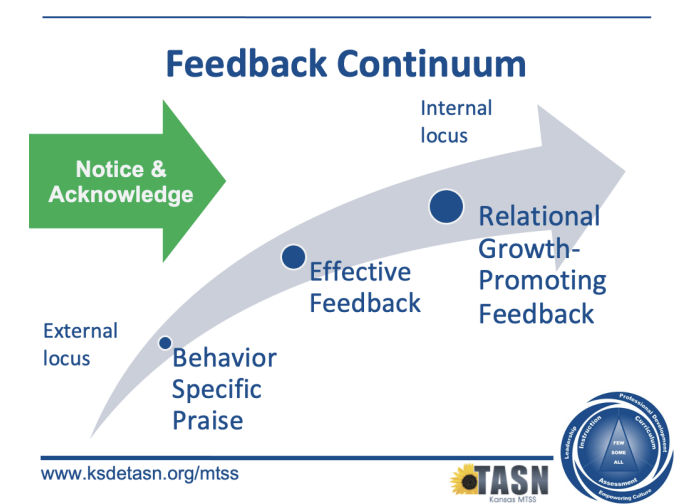
A large body of research shows that an educational approach that is relational and has enough structure while supporting autonomy deeply engages students' intrinsic motivation and internalization of skills and attitudes needed to persist (Reeve & Cheon, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Jang & Reeve, 2012).

A robust way to put this into practice is through feedback. Feedback is fundamental to the learning process. If we're focused on learning, then *student* feedback is essential. Furthermore, research points to the power of positive teacher feedback for learning and growth (<https://www.visiblelearningmetax.com/Influences>).

Conversely, the corrosive effect of inconsistent, arbitrary, punitive, or sarcastic responses on relationships, learning, and well-being are well documented (Fisher et al, 2019). Instead, when behavior is not skillful, a continuum of effective responses is designed to “check and correct” barriers to productive engagement and relationships. The response *maintains an instructional focus* in a manner that honors relationships, aims to prevent misbehavior, and encourages replacement skill use, while not exacerbating trauma and mental health needs, which are often underlying factors in unskillful behavior (Yoder, 2014).

Both continua are designed with consideration for the three basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, which, when met, promote better emotional, behavioral, and academic functioning among students (Ryan & Deci, 2021). A positive school culture and climate will be reflected with much more emphasis and time spent on the ends of the continua that engage student voice. When adults build a culture in which they know how to look for and build on signs of interest, effort, or growth, students experience a climate conducive to voice,

agency, and learning. When adults build a culture in which they look for mistakes and problems while taking for granted or marginalizing small steps in interest, effort, or growth, students experience a disempowering climate that invites boredom, apathy, acting out and disengagement. Instead, it is important to be strength based, even when being attuned and responsive to risk-based needs. Let’s take a closer look at both continua.



### The Feedback Continuum

In short, feedback is the *communication loop* that either invites engagement and growth or impedes it. Therefore, to deepen student engagement and learning, Kansas MTSS and Alignment helps schools use the feedback continuum systematically. The feedback continuum is designed to notice and acknowledge a students’ learning process in a manner that fosters their sense of agency, voice, and efficacy.

**Behavior-Specific Praise.** Behavior-specific praise clearly states the desired behavior that the student performed and provides the student with immediate feedback on that performance. This feedback tends to pair well with implementing school-wide expectations. Additionally, the praise simply reports what was observed without personal judgment on the student (Sprick, Knight, Reinke, & McKale, 2006). Because praise is based on school needs and expectations, it is a type of feedback that is mostly externally focused. When used to acknowledge effort or success with a desired behavior, it can encourage continued effort or a repeat performance *if a student feels connected to the educator*. For those learning a new skill, it can also provide encouragement to stick with it *if a student feels connected to the educator*. Often, adults deliver praise in a way that embeds judgment, such as:

- **Example 1:** “Jason, *I like how* you’re walking down the hall with arms and feet to yourself.” This is a clear example of externally focused praise. If Jason feels connected to the educator and wants to please him or her, this positive recognition of his effective behavior will likely encourage him to repeat it. If Jason doesn’t feel connected, it may “go in one ear and out the other.”
- **Example 2:** “Jason, I noticed you are walking down the hall with arms and feet to yourself,” simply reports what was observed in meeting expectations.
- **Example 3:** “You really tackled that word problem with gusto!” is an observation with a less external locus but still provides encouragement regarding the behavior.

It is important to remember that, for praise to have the most desired effect, the teacher and student should have a positive relationship established.

**Effective Feedback.** Effective feedback typically includes clarity about what in the performance is going well or hitting the mark and what could use some adjustment. It may be celebratory, it may stretch and expand the student’s thinking, or it may provide clarity to the student’s work, an activity, or the lesson’s objective. It tends to be task oriented and can encourage continued effort if the student is interested in at least some aspect of the task.

Effective feedback provides “specific information to students about their performance with the purpose of clarifying misinformation, confirming and fine-tuning understandings, and restructuring current schemas” (Lane, Menzies, Ennis, & Oakes, 2015, p. 89). This type of feedback shapes instruction and student mastery of the content when it is delivered as an explanation of what is correct and not correct and offers authentic encouragement to keep working until success is achieved (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

It is important for teachers to take care to be clear and succinct with their feedback, or it may be lost on the receiver. Feedback may need to be chunked. Here are some examples:

**Example 1:** “Sally, your expression in this essay is emotionally compelling and motivates me to expand my ability to give feedback.”

**Example 2:** “If you provide one or two more examples of what that feedback looks and sounds like, your audience will better understand *how* to expand their ability to give feedback.”

This feedback represents both the internal locus of control (highlighting the effect of a mastered skill) and external locus of control (evaluation of an area to improve). It offers a two-fold benefit in that it allows the student an opportunity to validate what she did well and to fine-tune her learning to correct any initial misunderstandings she may have. It has the added benefit of allowing the teacher to see how well students are mastering the concept.

**Relational, Growth-Promoting Feedback.** This feedback can do any of the things outlined in effective feedback, with the added dimension that it is designed to help us build connections between ourselves and others. It can be a simple sentence, often in form of a question, and simultaneously be deeply meaningful because it will:

- Foster a sense of agency
- Enhance relationship connections
- Elicit a sense of curiosity or reflection
- Offer an implied compliment, gratitude, or belief in the ever-expanding capacity of the person
- Intend to benefit ultimate well-being
- Invite 2-way communication/feedback

**Example 1:** “I’ve noticed that your grade in social studies is improving, Darlene. You’ve developed a solution that is working for you. How were you able to do that – what things are you doing differently?”

**Example 2:** “Jason, I see you’re walking down the hall with hands and feet to yourself. How were you able to do that so well, even when Jimmy poked you?”

Such feedback invites a deeper reflection or awareness of one’s internal locus of control *while* simultaneously fostering a connection with the teacher. Because Darlene and Jason have to reflect on, understand, and share how they were able to self-regulate, they will more fully own that learning now. This feedback allows students to feel accomplished, “seen,” and complimented. Serve and return and co-regulation tactics are uniquely embedded within this interaction. Note that, if a student has difficulty reflecting on or describing how they were able to do something, they may lack some of the self-awareness and metacognitive skills to do so. It is also possible that the success may be so new that it will take more reflection time than allowed for in a typical exchange. In that case, return to the elements of effective feedback to help consolidate the student’s learning.

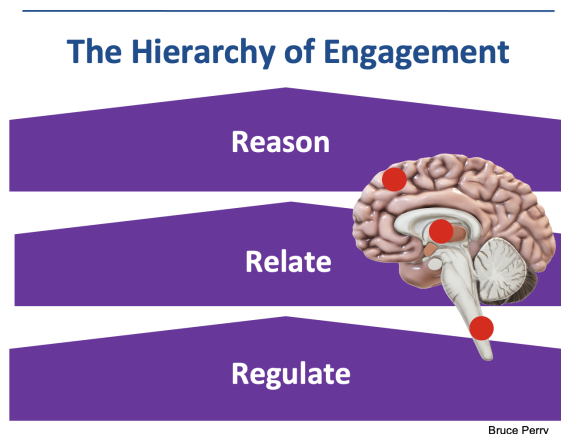
Since we offer feedback along a continuum, the context, relationship, and developmental readiness all help determine which type of feedback can provide the best option. For example, young students learning a new skill might thrive on behavior-specific praise until they become more fluent. Older children and adolescents may need a higher proportion of effective feedback to foster achievement. Relational, growth-promoting feedback can be used at any age. Growth-promoting feedback can quickly strengthen a new relationship, put a challenging relationship on a better path, or build on a student’s sense of efficacy because of its foundation in the serve-and-return process.

### **Response Continuum for the Classroom**

Similar to the Feedback Continuum, having a consistent and proactive system in place to respond to unskillful behavior when it occurs is an essential part of core instruction in a positive, safe, and predictable classroom environment based on norms, expectations, and social-emotional competencies.



Most unskillful behavior that fails to meet norms or expectations are addressed in the classroom as “minors.” They can arise due to lack of understanding, lack of practice and fluency with the skill, or due to stress or overwhelm. The idea of being trauma-aware lends itself to staff members being cognizant of the responses they are choosing to address the behavior. Choose interactions



that remain proactive and preventative, even when challenging, dysregulated behavior occurs (Colvin, 2015; Sporleder & Forbes, 2016). Good response techniques and practices always aim at treating students with dignity and respect (Sprick, 2009). The response continuum is designed to follow what neuroscience reveals about the hierarchy of engagement built into the brain and nervous system. Namely, our systems require we experience a state of regulation and relatedness before being able to fully access our reasoning capacity (Perry, 2018). This reflects the popular

saying that we must “Maslow before Bloom.”

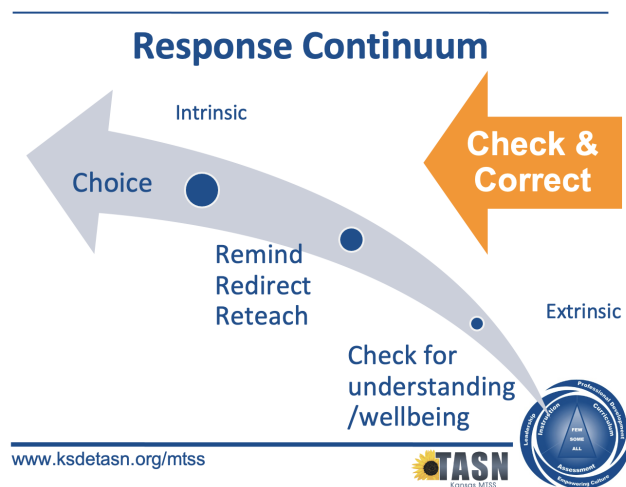
Therefore, teachers’ responses should be calm, fluent, within soft-speaking proximity to the student, and focused on checking if the student is okay, prompting or practicing skills embedded in your school-wide expectations or norms, and providing reasonable/agreed-upon choices where possible. Let’s take a closer look at the Response Continuum.

### Check for Understanding/Well-being

Often when students are dysregulated or escalated, staff members can become

similarly dysregulated and escalated. However, it is our role and crucial for staff members to remain calm, safe, supportive, and regulated. This is because teaching self-regulation is first and foremost a non-verbal communication between the educator’s nervous system and the students’ developing nervous system, called co-regulation. Therefore, in the hierarchy of engagement, we address regulation first and foremost through our own regulation, which offers the opportunity for functional co-regulation. A dysregulated adult cannot regulate a student. Remember the safety cues for co-regulation and enact the following principles when responding anywhere along the continuum:

- Speak calmly
- Use a supportive stance
- Minimize excessive or emotional body language



- Keep a reasonable distance
- Move slowly yet deliberately toward the problem situation
- Speak respectfully and privately
- Establish eye level position
- Be brief
- Stay with goal of being safe and supportive
- Avoid power struggles
- Give students space

Depending on the behavior, the first verbal interaction might most appropriately be to check and see if the student is okay. The educator can ask, “I notice you seem a little different today. Are you okay?” Thus, the nonverbal communication and verbal communication help to both regulate and relate. As an initial step in gauging stress levels, the student’s feedback will enable the adult to know what additional strategies or supports might be helpful or needed. This is where can remind the student and/or practice with them (e.g., take a deep breath, use the break card, or use another in-class support).

On the other hand, the situation may simply appear to call for checking to see if the student heard and/or understood the directions. Examples: “Where do you think is the best place for you to start on that?” or “What clarification do you need to get started?” or “What will be your first step on this?” This may be enough to cognitively engage and regulate the student in getting started, or the teacher may find the student needs the instructions chunked down a bit, there may be a misunderstanding, or they may be feeling anxious, overwhelmed, or bored about some aspect of the instructions.

If the latter is the case, this feedback from students offers educators an opportunity for autonomy-supportive responses that normalize the mistake, anxiety, or overwhelm and remind students of the instructions or SEL skill that can help them manage the situation. This leads us to the next group of strategies on the continuum:

**Remind, Redirect, Reteach, etc.**

These strategies are often part of regulation as well, but at a cognitive level when the physiology is sufficiently regulated. Sometimes it is clear that the most efficient step is just to redirect the student. They may have generally good understanding, but delay cognitive engagement a bit to crack a joke or socialize. This may be their version of a brain break, but if it gets others off track, redirection is usually efficient. Example, “Ryan, will you come get this example research paper for your group to analyze?” or “Ryan, I’ll be over in 2 minutes to look at your answer to question 10.”

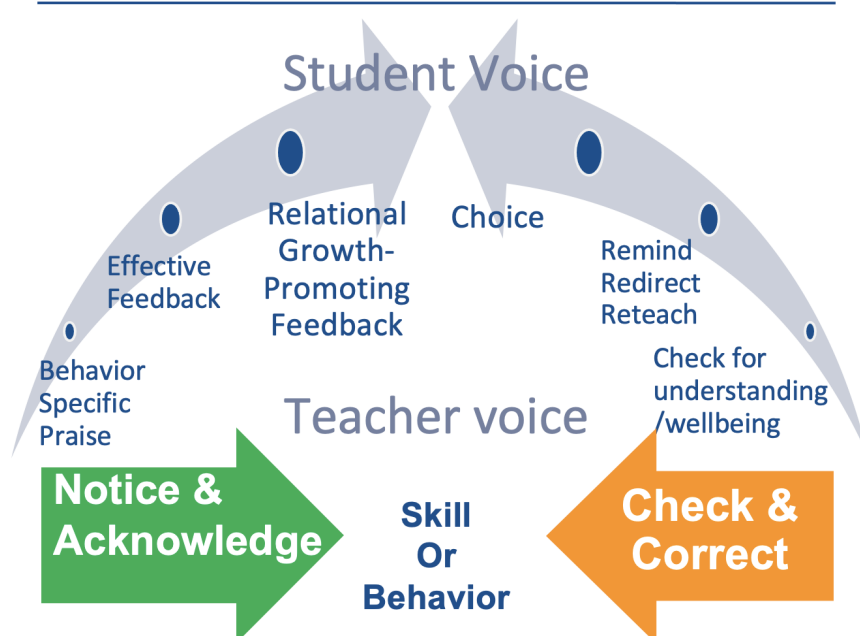
On the other hand, some students may have trouble keeping everything in mind. They may have misunderstood, or may need reminders or fewer steps to start with. Others lack fluency with some skills and may need a brief re-teach with the reminder. Examples: “I can see how you thought I meant x. To clarify, our goal is to accomplish z, and so you will need to demonstrate y.” or “Other students have felt overwhelmed with the research paper assignment too, and have found that setting mini-goals and deadlines helped. Let’s look at how to chunk this down...”

## Choice

This response strategy supports student agency, self-regulation, and the SEL competency of responsible decision-making. Choice is always a strong core strategy anyway. But for students who have learned to enact power struggles, choice can also be a response strategy that tends to be effective. The underlying positive need is to be self-regulating. Thus, educators offer choice alternatives that are acceptable depending upon the circumstances, such as choosing to complete a reading or a math assignment, choosing to work independently or with a partner, etc. Student “voice” is reflected in selecting their preference that best fits their needs at that time. Choice in this context is shown to make starting an academic task more manageable for the student and completion more likely (see Fastbridge Interventions in the training and resources tab).

Teams participating in Kansas MTSS and Alignment training will adopt or adapt the short and simple continuum for how to respond to students in a safe, supportive, calm, and proactive manner. Using the trauma-informed principles in the bulleted list with students who are being challenged with dysregulated behavior along with your Response Continuum maintains a teaching stance that utilizes the hierarchy of engagement. Any of these response strategies may also pair as layered, in-class supports for students receiving intervention, reminding and allowing them to practice a replacement skill.

The Feedback and Response Continua are taught to all staff and become a part of the common language and consistent system that the school and district adopt to increasingly empower authentic student engagement leading to increased skills, voice, agency, and learning. What we know from research, and from Kansas data, is that it is not enough just to respond when behavior is unskillful, although that is necessary. Rather, students need our proactive and positive engagement in feedback that helps them become more skillful and self-reflective, too.



<b>Elements of the Feedback &amp; Response Continuum</b>
1. All staff are trained in the Feedback Continuum
2. Plans for monitoring fidelity of implementation are in place
3. Data, such as from the KCTC, corroborate effective implementation
4. Staff are clear about minor behaviors handled in the classroom and adopt or adapt the Response Continuum and a supportive co-regulatory approach when responding to and deescalating behavior
5. Plans for monitoring implementation fidelity are in place
6. Data, such as the IMIS, corroborate the Response Continuum/System is in place

In conclusion, a feedback and response continuum that provides clear and consistent language while also being restorative and relationship-focused puts into practice the essence of a functional multi-tiered system of supports for behavior and social-emotional learning. For more information on what to do for major behaviors in which the office becomes involved, please see the Tiered System of Supports.

### **Final Steps**

These questions culminate your activities with the feedback and response continuum:

- Does your plan address all elements of a feedback and response continuum designed to foster and deepen student engagement?
- How will you document this component? (KESA Connection)
- Which stakeholders do you need feedback from? (Empowering Culture and Leadership Connection)
- What are your professional development needs? (Professional Development Connection)

### **Assessment: Data-Based Decision Making**

**Goal:** All staff members understand how to use social-emotional and behavioral data to strengthen Tier 1 instruction and inform interventions.

### **Description and Research**

Data sources in a multi-tier system are used for a variety of purposes. Therefore, it is essential

that a comprehensive and aligned assessment system be in place to facilitate the necessary instructional decisions for curricular areas such as reading, math, and social emotional learning and for behavior. A comprehensive system includes valid and reliable data for the purposes of universal screening and outcomes in social-emotional learning and other academic areas, including behavior, that ensure the mental, physical, and cognitive well-being of the whole child and support students to be college and career ready.

Teams will identify the data sources that ensure a robust system for measuring the health of their system as well as identifying students who need additional support. Decisions should be made about who will collect, administer, score, and interpret each data source. Whether all staff or only an assessment team are designated to administer and score the assessments, such as a screener or a climate survey, training will be necessary. It will be important for all staff members to understand the use of data and how to interpret the instructional implications. Below is an explanation of the data sources in a robust MTSS framework, why they are important, and how to use them.

### **Kansas Communities that Care Survey**

School climate data, or how students perceive and feel about their environment, relationships, and self, is essential feedback for strengthening school culture. Climate entails the “50,000-foot view” that helps leaders make hypotheses and plans around key systemic adjustments that may be needed in policies, practices, programs/curricula, professional development, and family/community engagement practices to meet your students’ needs and enhance school culture. The Kansas MTSS and Alignment has created a user-friendly one-page Climate Types report for districts that engage in our training and complete the KCTC. The report outlines four climate types and allows schools to easily see the hot spots and areas of strength from the student body perspective. The climate types report also contains recommendations about MTSS behavior and SEL structures that can improve outcomes for a given climate. An annual review of this data can show changes from year to year, can reveal relationships over time among various data sources, and may reveal longitudinal growth in school culture. This report can be accessed within the district Annual Measures of Student Success (AMOSS) system.

This data can be used to corroborate SEL skill assessment data and BSEL risk data. On the other hand, if school climate data is vastly different from these other data sources, this can also reveal some needs around fidelity and systemic implementation. It can be an important part of telling a district’s story around social emotional growth.

### **Social Emotional Growth: Strengthening Instruction**

Strength-based measures that help educators discern if students are gaining the knowledge and skills in social emotional learning are needed to inform instruction. These often come in the form of chapter or unit tests or observations within an evidence-based social emotional learning curriculum. Alternatively, some assessment systems offer specific strength-based skills

assessments that are reliable and valid.

### Intervening in Risk: The ABCS of Data

There are four main pieces of data used when assessing a student’s social-emotional and behavioral needs. They can be remembered using the acronym ABCS: Attendance, Behavior Referrals (ODRs), Course Grades, and Screener for social, emotional, and academic behaviors. These four foundational data sources successfully identify a large majority of students at risk for social-emotional and behavioral needs.

It is important to understand the relationship between these data sources, as they interact with each other and overlap quite regularly. If risk is seen in one of the data sources, risk likely will be seen in at least one other data source.

Statistical Relationships between Data Sources

Student Averages across Data Sources	SRSS Risk Category		
	Low (n=422)	Moderate (n=51)	High (n = 12)
ODR	1.5	5.02	8.42
GPA	3.35	2.63	2.32
Course Failures	.68	2.78	4.17

Adapted from (Lane, Parks, Kalberg, & Carter, 2007)

The chart above organizes the relationship between risk levels on one universal screener for social-emotional learning and behavior, the Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS), the corresponding average number of Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs), the average GPA, and the average number of course grade failures. Not surprisingly to most teachers, there is a high correlation between being identified at risk on a universal screener and having office referrals, failing 2 or more courses, and having a low GPA. The benefit of looking robustly at this data on a regular basis is that teams can intervene early for students exhibiting at-risk factors before a pattern of school failure is established.

It is recommended that organizations collect data sources to look at trends in the concerns that are identified through the screener. Since the screener only *identifies* risk, and decisions regarding specific intervention cannot reliably be based on the screener alone, it is necessary to have the other three sources (attendance, behavior referrals, and course grades) to verify the risk and determine more detailed decisions.

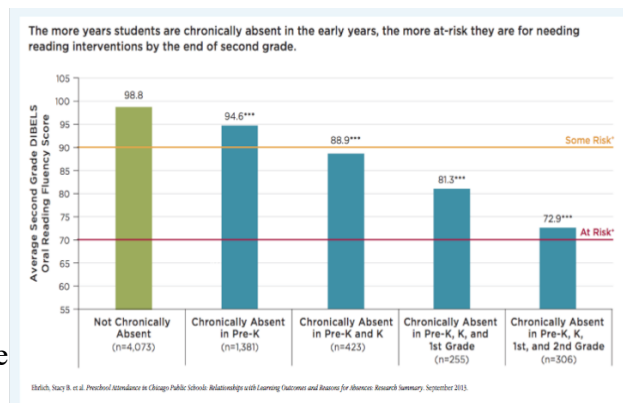
Additionally, further evidence exists for the use of more than one data source to identify and verify student risk. For example, if an educator only focused on the traditional ODRs, which is the behavior referrals through which one would be identifying students with externalizing behaviors, one will likely miss students with internalizing behaviors such as those who are shy, withdrawn, depressed, or anxious. Students with internalizing behaviors may act out or cause disruptions to the learning of others, so they may not be identified using only ODRs.

Furthermore, only monitoring ODRs will indicate when students have already failed; it will not show risk prior to a student presenting minor behavior concerns or students demonstrating emotional needs (Oakes, Lane, Cox, & Messenger, 2014).



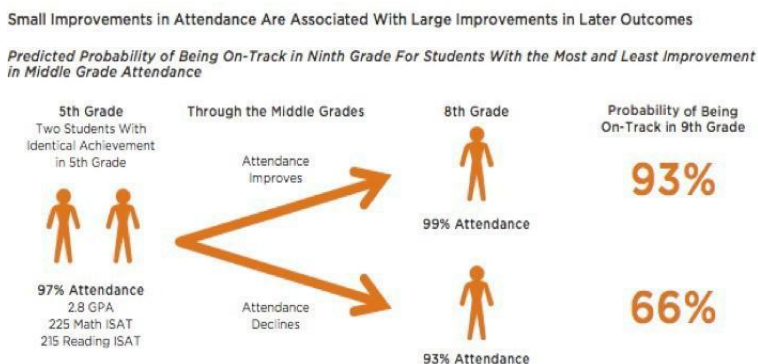
Think of this robust system of multiple data sources like a security system in which you have sensors on the doors and windows, motion sensors in the house, microphones throughout the home, and connections to the fire alarms within the home. Any one of those alarms could go off and alert someone to investigate. Sometimes only one alarm gets tripped, sometimes more than one, but the overlapping protection helps to ensure that all issues are detected. Occasionally false alarms will go off. In the case of social-emotional and behavioral needs, though, it is better to have a false positive through which an educator can verify the presence of the risk than to have a false negative in which the risk went undetected and the student ended up harming him/herself, others, or property.

Provided here is a description and supporting evidence for each of the four ABCS data sources. Also included in this section are the other referrals, which account for bullying and counseling referrals and nurse visits. These other referrals are not usually gathered in the initial stage of implementation but are often added once the ABCS sources are being collected with fidelity on a regular basis.



**Attendance.** Intuitively we know that having students in school and in class equates to availability for learning. Students must attend school regularly to benefit from what is taught there. However, each year, an estimated 5 to 7.5 million U.S. students miss nearly a month of school through both excused and unexcused absences (Jensen, Sprick, Sprick, Majszak, & Phosaly, 2013). This lost instructional time exacerbates dropout rates and achievement gaps.

It erodes the promise of early education and confounds efforts to master reading by the end of third grade, as is evidenced by the chart above. This chart identifies that students in preschool, kindergarten, and 1st grade who were absent more than 10% of the time demonstrated moderate to significant reading risk on the academic screener, DIBELS, reinforcing a relationship between attendance and achievement.



Attendance has a significant impact on secondary settings as well. The graphic above uses a study conducted with Chicago public schools to determine the root causes of their dropout problems. This large-scale study launched the Early Warning Systems tool from the National High School Center, which uses attendance and course grade data to identify if students are on track or off track for graduation and how to intervene early if they are presenting as off track (Heidrich, 2017). As is noticeable in the figure, two students with similar achievement scores and similar attendance scores leave middle school and move on to ninth grade. When one student’s attendance begins to falter, so does that student’s grades and subsequently his or her ability to stay on track for graduation. With a decline from 97% attendance to 93% attendance, the impact to staying on track was exponential, leaving the student with a 66% chance of being off track. Off track is defined as failing a core course and having to repeat it to gain credits to graduate. Repeating courses places students off track and increases their chances of dropping out.

Chronic absenteeism is defined by Attendance Works (2017) as missing 10% or more of school days (both excused and unexcused). This has been associated with low school attachment, delinquency, involvement with illegal drugs, emotional maladjustment, family dysfunction later in life, and increased likelihood of dropping out of high school.

**Behavior referrals.** The second data source for social-emotional learning and behavior comes from the behavioral referrals, which are titled Office Disciplinary Referrals (ODRs) in K-12 systems and behavioral incident reports (BIRs or behavior tracking) in preschool systems. Schools will need a consensus understanding of how to define and identify majors and minors as well as for how to submit behavior referrals.

ODRs and BIRs/behavior tracking are hallmark data sources for positive behavioral interventions and supports ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)). Collecting robust behavior referral data translates into multiple types of reports that look at building-, classroom-, and student-level needs around



core curriculum and instruction. When teams analyze behavior referrals, they often see trends in school-wide needs, such as re-teaching of cafeteria expectations when the ODRs indicate a spike in referrals from that setting. Behavior referral data analysis can also provide feedback on school climate by comparing the number of referrals in each month from a non-implementation year to an implementation year. As districts reach sustainability, teams are encouraged to look deeper for trends across other referral data items, especially within in-school and out-of-school suspensions (ISS and OSS), detentions, and other behavior-related data.

The following critical components of ODR data are tracked within Kansas MTSS and Alignment:

- What behavior?
- Which student?
- Where (location of incident)?
- When (time of incident, day of week)?
- Who made the referral?
- Why did the behavior occur (function)?
- What proactive strategies were first attempted by the teacher to minimize the behavior

For preschool and/or other early primary classrooms, a system should be created to track behavioral incidents. Some schools use a Behavior Incident Report (BIR) to track concerning behaviors. The following additional data are useful in developing interventions and supports to meet student needs:

- What activity (e.g., arrival, snack, transition, story, dramatic play)?
- What grouping (e.g., independent, small group, large group)?
- Which adult noted the behavior (in classrooms in which more than one adult may be included)?

In the Kansas MTSS and Alignment, teams use a template that provides state definitions for state-reported behaviors such as bullying and harassment and adjust and adapt those definitions for their specific communities. They use these few behaviors as a launch pad for digging into defining the more variant behaviors which make up minor behavior that is responded to in the classroom (“minors”). It is recommended that, when creating these common definitions, teams gather generous bi-directional feedback from staff members so consensus can be reached with as many voices represented as possible. This effort towards common language sets the foundation for a consistent environment that is safe and predictable for staff and students to grow.

While this discussion can result in subtle differences in how a staff member defines a behavior and whether it is a major or minor, it is still critical to discuss so consensus can be reached. For example, some staff members feel very strongly that using foul language, no matter the intent, is an office-managed behavior (or a “major”), while other staff members believe there is a range to

which foul language constitutes a minor versus a major behavior. Adding a description to the definition that speaks to the intent of the utterance might be a realistic compromise for this debate. Finding common ground in this discussion will be critical so that the Building Leadership Team has faith that the Office Discipline Referral data they analyze is reliable and valid. More importantly, consistency reduces the confusion and mixed messages for students as they move from one environment to another.

**Course grades.** High school grade point average (GPA) has consistently been found to have the most significant relationship with students' college course success (Hodara & Lewis, 2017). Specifically, a one-unit increase in high school grade point average (for example, an increase from 2.0 to 3.0) increases a student's likelihood of earning a C or higher from 25 to 29 percentage points in college English and 27 to 33 percentage points in college algebra. Conversely, if students' GPAs are lower than 2.0, the likelihood of failing the course and having to repeat it the next year increases as well. Failing core courses in high school such as English, math, science, and social studies results in students being off track to graduate. Developing a robust early warning system that identifies students who are at risk of being off track is essential in a Kansas MTSS and Alignment framework. When students are identified as at risk of failing a course early in the quarter or semester, the school has ample opportunity to establish supports to facilitate passing the course and receiving the credit.

Many middle and high schools have a D/F list that is generated towards the end of a semester to determine who will need to retake the course. The Early Warning System Tool (AIR, 2015) indicated that this data comes too late and is not preventative. Instead, using the common process of generating an eligibility list can be expanded to monitor and respond to course grade risk while it can make a difference. Alternatively, district and building teams create queries within their student information systems to track course grades for middle and high school students at least quarterly with the goal of moving to monthly. This sophisticated tracking system includes all three of the aforementioned data sources to determine early in the semester which students need assistance to get back on track. When teams establish an early warning system and connect at-risk/flagged students with evidence-based interventions (see Tiered Supports & Interventions section), the number of students who graduate on time can increase dramatically (Allensworth, et al., 2014).

**Social emotional behavior risk screener.** Much like universal screening tools in reading and math, the universal screening tools in social-emotional, and behavior are a quick way to identify the students who are at risk. Universal social-emotional behavior screening tools such as the Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS; Drummond, 1994), Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997), and Social, Academic, Emotional Behavior Rating Scale (SAEBRS, MySAEBRS; Kilgus, Chafouleas, & Riley-Tillman, 2013) enable teams to quickly identify students in grades K-12 who may be at risk before their behavior escalates or results in disciplinary response.

These tools are quickly applied by teachers and require minimal time investment, but they can prove invaluable in the early identification of students who may need additional support. For

optimal effectiveness, screeners should be completed three times a year, with the first administration occurring approximately four to six weeks after the start of the school year, the second before winter break, and the third administration approximately six weeks before the end of the school year (Lane, Menzies, Kalberg, & Oakes, 2012). When administering the screener, whether student completed or teacher completed, it is recommended that schools follow the screener administration guidelines with fidelity.

Some screeners focus on identifying internalizing and externalizing risk (e.g., the SRSS and the SRSS-IE, Lane et al., 2009) without an option to group. Some screeners focus on risk within social and emotional needs as well as academic concerns (e.g., SAEBRS, SDQ) and have categories that lend themselves to grouping. Still other screeners are focused solely on social skill areas and can be linked to class-wide or individual interventions (Social Skills Improvement System [SSIS], Gresham & Elliot, 2008). No matter which screener a team chooses, it is important to research the screener’s administration and scoring guidelines to determine how best to use the data collected.

**Other referrals.** When teams are well structured for ABCS data sources, Kansas MTSS and Alignment recommends they develop systems for organizing data from other important referrals as well. Tracking bullying referrals, counseling referrals, and nurse visits provides excellent additional information for teams when they are considering the “why” or the function of the behavior. These referrals supply deeper information on the student and why there is a risk factor present. Students who have had repeated bullying referrals or have been repeatedly victimized by a bully will likely have additional needs that should be considered when thinking of interventions. Similarly, students who frequently visit the nurse during a certain time of day or who have self-referred or been referred to the counselor repeatedly may have internalizing needs that need to be considered in developing interventions. Tracking these particular types of referrals provides teams with further information when they are making data-based decisions.

<b>Elements of Data-Based Decision Making</b>
1. Obtain Kansas Communities that Care Climate Types Report Data from AMOSS
2. Collect strength-based SEL knowledge/skill data
3. Collect data for attendance, course grades, discipline referrals
4. Collect Universal Risk Screener data
5. Compile data for district-, school-, and/or grade-level views

**Final Steps**

These questions culminate your activities with response system:

- Does your plan address all elements of data-based decision making?
- How will you document this component? (KESA Connection)
- Which stakeholders do you need feedback from? (Empowering Culture and Leadership)

Connection)

- What are your professional development needs? (Professional Development Connection)

## Tiered Interventions and Supports

Goal: All staff members utilize in-class Tier 2 supports for students with behavioral and social-emotional needs; some staff members provide more intense Tier 2 and 3 supports and interventions.

### General Knowledge – A Tiered Approach

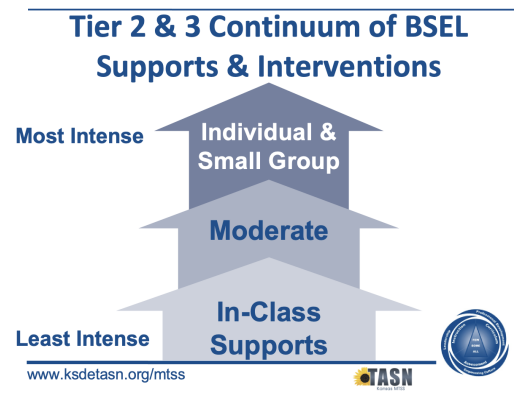
Due to the intricacies of human development, even in a nearly perfectly designed Tier 1 Core, there will always be a need for additional support for some students. Because social, emotional, and intellectual development are inextricably entwined, the need for support in one area may necessitate support in another (Immordino-Yang, Darling-Hammond, Krone, 2018). Therefore, teams should evaluate their currently available interventions and supports and create a systematic plan to address potential student needs.

In Kansas MTSS and Alignment, these interventions are organized in a protocol format for ease of problem solving and decision making. Protocols provide teams with a systematic way to organize and quickly identify what interventions will be delivered after screening measures have indicated that students have a need for support (Sprague and Golly, 2004). Supports and interventions for behavioral and social-emotional learning risk fall along a continuum of intensity. This drives both the development of a school’s protocol and effective decision-making about student needs.

Teams take stock of the interventions and supports in each building and identify whether they are in-class supports, moderate, or high intensity in nature. To that end, Kansas MTSS and Alignment has synthesized the research as follows (Gist, 2019, Walker & Barry, 2019, Colvin, 2007):

**In-Class Supports** are low-intensity supports that are often “low-hanging fruit” and a great place to start. A teacher can quickly eliminate small, less-intense behaviors with just a few tweaks here and there in the classroom setting. In-class supports are simple, low- or no-cost supports and interventions that can reduce low-intensity behaviors quickly and keep students in class, engaged, and ready to learn (Lane et al., 2013). Some examples of in-class supports are:

- Increased OtRs: While an increase in opportunities to respond can take many forms, one example is using a handheld white board for quick responses to help a student who has been blurting out answers repeatedly in class (Archer & Hughes, 2010);
- Increased 4:1 ratio: More positive feedback from the feedback continuum can encourage



and reinforce progress and increase engagement. Notice which type of feedback tends to best engage the student, and amplify that (McCleskey et al., 2017);

- PRR: Use the “pre-correct, remind, reinforce” sequence for a student who struggles with transitioning from structured, teacher-led activities to small group or independent activities (Colvin & Scott, 2015);
- Calm Down Pass or Break Card: Use a calm-down pass to allow a student to get a drink or walk around a designated space if the student is feeling agitated or overly sensory stimulated (Jensen, et al., 2016);
- Visual Supports: Use a visual support or signal for a student that helps him or her self-regulate during independent work time (Holt, Ferguson, & Brun, 2018);
- Choice-Making: Offer two or more equitable options, allowing students to independently select the option, and provide easy access to their choice (Jolivet, Stichter, & McCormick, 2002)
- 2x10 Strategy refers to spending 2 minutes a day for 10 days engaged in a student-led, informal conversation about the student’s interests. This strategy provides an opportunity for the teacher to learn about the student’s interests and connect with him or her throughout the rest of the day after showing an interest in the student (Mendler, 2015).

Additional possibilities include Behavior Contracts, Self-Monitoring Sheets, and Visual Schedules. These in-class supports all have two things in common: (1) They are supported by the classroom teacher, aide, paraeducator, or instructor in that class or setting, and (2) They are evidence-based instructional practices that are simple to include in a regular classroom lesson.

**Moderate intensity.** Moderate intensity supports and interventions can be either in-class supports and/or targeted Tier 2 interventions. They often address moderate concerns that prevent the student from being successful across multiple settings. Examples include repeated foul language, repeated disrespect or disruptions, lack of time management skills, or difficulty initiating or maintaining friendships with peers after being taught the skills. Such interventions are usually delivered daily but for a limited period of time, often across various parts of the day. Their purpose is to develop proficiency and fluency with a targeted behavior or skill that the student has learned but is still struggling to use in an efficient, polished, or appropriate way with peers or adults in every setting (Walker & Baker, 2018). Schools using screening and assessment systems such as Fastbridge are encouraged to explore any training and resources for interventions housed there. Some additional examples of moderate intensity support or interventions are:

- Check in Check out (CICO) is often considered both a small-group intervention and an in-class support. The small group time is usually delivered daily as a check-in in the morning and a check out at the end of the day, with a CICO coordinator to prepare and review the Daily Progress Report (DPR) while coaching and encouraging the student. During the day, it serves as an in-class support because the classroom teacher completes a quick rating on the DPR for each class period (Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010). For example, a CICO for a student who struggles to be respectful with teachers enables him

to be rated throughout the day on the degree to which he follows directions, seeks clarification when frustrated, and asks respectfully for a break when needed.

- **ODR Re-entry Procedure:** This refers to trauma-informed steps taken after a student has been out of class due to a behavior or Office Discipline Referral (ODR). Often, when students return to class, their behavior can re-escalate. This is the result of two possible problems: (1) Students are sent back to class too soon when they haven't deescalated to a calm state yet (Colvin, 2004) or (2) students and staff have not repaired the relationship, resulting in the setting itself still eliciting toxic stress. This second possible problem can be addressed through restorative practice principles for a simple, effective, and compassionate re-entry. The procedure is for the staff member and student, once in a calm state, to debrief and collaboratively problem solve how to prevent the trigger from occurring again (Greene, 2014) and alternate strategies or signals to use if it does (e.g., use a replacement behavior, such as a Break Card). A commitment to start fresh includes providing a strong focus on solid instructional practices and a normal routine. Engage the student in the current class activity with frequent opportunities to respond in the manner the student prefers and high rates of behavior-specific praise, effective feedback, and growth-promoting feedback to build behavior momentum (Colvin, 2015).
- **2X10 Strategy:** Instituting a 2x10 strategy between a teacher and student who lacks a positive and strong adult connection at school is often considered an in-class support and is also an intervention. This could be due to being shy, withdrawn, or feeling invisible, or it could be due to acting-out behavior. 2x10 refers to spending 2 minutes a day for 10 days engaged in a student-led, informal conversation about the student's interests. This strategy provides an opportunity for the teacher to learn about the student's interests and connect with him or her throughout the rest of the day after showing an interest in the student (Mendler, 2015). Reaching out to students who have had difficulty making and sustaining healthy relationships with adults is key.
- **Sensory Breaks:** Setting up an opportunity or an area in the classroom for sensory breaks to occur during a student's day is considered an in-class support and an intervention. Additionally, it can be a low- or moderate-intensity support, depending on how often it is needed and the structure associated with the sensory break. Some students may need sensory breaks in their day before or after a high-stress or challenging class or task. Some students may need sensory breaks multiple times throughout the day to maintain focus and attention to a task (KSDETASN, ATBS, 2018).

**High intensity.** The final intensity level is often delivered as small group or individualized interventions. The purpose of Tier 3 interventions is to *acquire* skills and *develop* commonly acceptable behaviors. Students who need high-intensity interventions can be those having acute concerns (e.g., major discipline referral for high stakes behavior, suicidal ideation or attempt), or concerns that have been sustained or chronic, often represented by multiple data sources that show risk and multiple concerns that the PLC has been trying to problem solve. Some examples

include students who have had physical altercations with other students, students who have displayed self-harm, students who repeatedly elope (or run from the classroom or setting), or students who repeatedly act out when presented with challenges or stress during their school day. Depending on the need, these interventions are often delivered either once a week or daily. Typically, they follow a scope and sequence of a curriculum that is designed to address a particular behavior(s) of concern. In addition, the team usually collects informal or formal diagnostic data during the intervention for a possible functional behavior assessment (see <http://basicfba.gseweb.org/> for more information on an FBA or behavior intervention plan). Often these interventions are delivered by a designated interventionist. An interventionist can be any adult in the building who is trained or has taught the intervention or curriculum and has an affinity for working with students who are at risk for behavior and social-emotional learning needs. Therefore, teachers, paraeducators, aides, office staff, counselors, and administrators are all eligible to be interventionists. Some examples of intensive interventions are:

- ODR Intervention for Escalated “Major” Behavior: Administrators create and follow a set of consistent procedures for students having an escalated behavioral incident. When stress levels are high, the part of the brain that engages in critical thinking and problem solving is not available (Sporleder & Forbes, 2016). Schools should have strategies and supports that allow students to bring their stress levels down so that true conversation and learning can take place. Often strong emotions are expressed through challenging behavior, and the goal is to enable students to become more fluent in expressing emotions with words rather than challenging behavior (Sporleder & Forbes, 2016; Walker & Barry, 2018). Once a student is de-escalated and calmer, the administrator or interventionist processes with the student about their stress levels, and often will become aware of critical events or toxic stress in a student’s life. A trauma-aware school strives to address or provide supports regarding toxic stressors, and conveys that verbalizing feelings is supported, expected, and respected while the high expectations and norms for the school are maintained. Sporleder and Forbes (2016) recommend the following steps to assist the student to process the dysregulated behavior: (1) Review what happened, (2) Discuss other responses to the situation, (3) Problem solve viable solutions, (4) Discuss how to make amends with the people involved, and (5) Discuss consequences that may occur as a result of the situation (p. 173). Re-entry Procedures (see Moderate Intensity Supports above) are implemented, and any additional appropriate interventions are assigned and logged (e.g., Social Skills Group, Self-Regulation Group).
- Suicide Risk Intervention: Kansas legislation requires schools be trained and have assessment and intervention plans for intervening with suicide risk. A crisis response [checklist](#) has been developed related to suicide, along with a full toolkit available at [KSDE](#).
- Social Skills Groups: Social skills instruction that is usually delivered once a week for 30-45 minutes and digs deeply into a social skills curriculum. Ideally, the group of students is a mix of students with Tier 2 or 3 needs and peer models of students who can

demonstrate the expected social skills (Clavenna-Deane & Morningstar, 2017).

- **Self-Regulation Groups:** Self-regulation instruction is usually delivered either once a week or daily and may focus on self-awareness, calm down strategies, or mindfulness strategies that are from a particular curriculum. Issues that are often flagged for this type of intervention can vary and include being prone to anger or aggression, high impulsivity, or risk for self-harm. Consideration for who is grouped together is important (Merrill, 2007).
- **5 Point Scale, Social Stories, If-Then Charts:** Individualized, daily interventions might consist of starting the class by processing with the student using a 5-point scale to determine how regulated the student's emotions are, then if the student's emotions are regulated, the teacher may review a social story at the start of an activity that describes the activity and the student's role in the activity. Finally, during the activity, the teacher may have an if-then chart that visually displays the steps and connections of the task so the student can see how progress is being made (Buron, Brown, Curtis, & King, 2012; Holt, Ferguson, & Brun, 2018).

While these interventions, such as the 5-point scale, social stories, and if-then charts, may seem like low-intensity in-class supports, they are used in this capacity as high intensity because they are very individualized and used repeatedly to keep a student focused, engaged, and calm during stressful settings, environments, or activities. Furthermore, deeper skills instruction has probably occurred in either a social skills class, a self-regulation instruction group, or during individual instruction with the teacher. Coordination between interventionist and teacher in the use of the 5-point scale, social story, and an if-then chart is necessary.

- Additional possibilities include Triage, Wrap-Around, Renew.

High-intensity interventions all have in common an interventionist who delivers the intervention and regular communication between the interventionist and the team about skills being taught and how to reinforce those skills throughout the day.

### **Record Your Current Continuum of Supports and Interventions**

In Kansas MTSS and Alignment, teams record their current supports and interventions either directly on a protocol or on a document the district develops. Schools can find a most current example of the Kansas MTSS BSEL Protocol at our Repository website: <https://bit.ly/3br9Zxc>

First, brainstorm and list on the protocol every possible behavioral or social-emotional support or intervention that each member of the team has either used or seen used by a colleague.

- Use the interventions described in the previous pages as a place to start activating your thinking on what you have in your building.
- Access interventions in your screening/assessment system, such as Fastbridge to see if



you already use any of those.

- Access websites with various evidence-based interventions listed to see if any of the ones listed on those webpages exist in your building, such as:
  - Grandview Elementary School [www.mccsc.edu/Page/2617](http://www.mccsc.edu/Page/2617)
  - PBIS World [www.pbisworld.org](http://www.pbisworld.org)
  - National Center on Intensive Intervention [www.intensiveintervention.org](http://www.intensiveintervention.org)
  - What Works Clearinghouse <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>
  - Evidence-Based Interventions [www.ebi.missouri.edu](http://www.ebi.missouri.edu)
  - School Mental Health Initiative [www.ksdetasn.org/smhi](http://www.ksdetasn.org/smhi)
  - Suicide Prevention Resource Center <https://www.sprc.org/effective-prevention/strategic-planning>

*\*Note: Some of the interventions and supports on the websites above are not evidence-based, such as In-School Suspension, Out of School Suspension, Detentions, and Seclusion/Restraint. These are not recommended as Tier 2 or 3 supports or interventions, as they are punitive in nature and do not provide a teaching opportunity.*

It is important to collaborate to get a full accounting of supports and interventions being used in the building. While building leadership teams may start taking stock during training, it is also important to gather feedback from PLCs on any interventions and supports that are being used throughout the building of which the building leadership team may not be aware. Be sure to talk with counselors, social workers, psychologists, special education teachers, title teachers, at-risk coordinators, and transition coordinators, as these professionals may also have established interventions and support for behavior and social-emotional needs.

### **Validate Your Continuum of Supports and Interventions**

When considering which supports and interventions to keep on the finalized BSEL Tier 2 & Tier 3 Implementation Protocol, follow this succinct guidance based on the work by Stormont, Lewis, Beckner, and Johnson (2008):

1. Ensure that all levels of support relate directly to universal social-emotional learning and/or behavioral norms and expectations for your building and district.
2. Emphasize a relational, trauma-informed approach at every level.
3. Embed **evidence-based** in-class supports, small-group interventions, and individualized supports within a consistent system of implementation designed to meet the common needs in your building as well as legal requirements.

**Relating T2 and T3 to the Core.** Considering the MTSS Triangle, Tiers 2 and 3 are built upon a strong Tier 1, not off to the side in their own silos. The tiers must be connected so that supports and interventions align with the Core, since continuity and fluidity in movement between tiers increase rates of success. All students have access to the core, and any student can move in and out of intervention and support based on the data and problem solving, not a label. Movement is

designed to be fluid. Identify whether the supports and interventions you've listed are in-class, moderate intensity, or high intensity in nature.

If, after taking stock, your team determines that certain supports or interventions are not aligned with your core SEL skills, your rules/norms/expectations, or your systemic positive relationships practices, it may be best to remove them from your final protocol. In addition, some interventions on your list may be outdated if they do not support this relational, trauma-informed system you are building. When finalizing and validating your new protocol, staff members have the opportunity to determine whether gaps exist that need to be filled and which items to consider discontinuing or replacing because they are now misaligned with your system, have not been effective, or are not research based. Collaborating with counselors, social workers, psychologists, special education teachers, title teachers, at-risk coordinators, and transition coordinators will provide an avenue for continuous improvement of the protocol over time.

Additionally, many of the entitlement programs within education (e.g., Title 1, Special Education, English as a Second Language) may already have associated services and programs with students who qualify for them. The MTSS is not meant to supplant or replace these programs, but rather to work in conjunction with them to better meet the needs of **all** students.

Within Kansas MTSS and Alignment, participation in a Tier 2 or 3 intervention or support neither requires an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), General Education Intervention (GEI) plan, or low-income status, nor does having one exclude a student from participation. Rather, students receive intervention and support **based on data and problem solving**, not a label. Due to the complex nature of these programs, this collaboration may take time to work together seamlessly and effectively, but when accomplished, it leads to a more dynamic and responsive MTSS. Including staff members from these programs in PLC and BLTs will help to make the system more efficient and responsive.

### **Incorporate Decision Rules and Progress Monitoring Plans**

The supports and interventions on your validated protocol are most easily used when they are arranged in order of intensity. Districts that use the Kansas MTSS and Alignment BSEL protocol will notice a table for attendance supports and interventions, then a table for in-class supports and interventions, followed by tables for Tier 2 then Tier 3 supports and interventions. Since buildings will sort and group students by intensity level of risk, this makes looking for and assigning supports and interventions efficient.

After schools have listed their supports and interventions in the tables and then validated them to decide what will officially remain in their system of Tiered Supports and Interventions, it is important to have clarity around the decision rules for entering and exiting the intervention, and how implementation and student progress will be monitored.

By arranging the listing according to intensity level, educators have already started acknowledging some decision rules. That is, if a student is determined to be at low T2 risk, schools will not be assigning any T3 supports or interventions except in very unusual

circumstances. So, the entry criteria are built in by design. On the other side, how do we determine when a student is ready to exit the support or intervention? Typically, this is either when the student is meeting T1 thresholds in the risk data source and/or he or she is achieving 80% efficacy in the intervention maintained for at least 6 data points (i.e., 6 weeks). Educators should list the specific exit criteria for each support or intervention in the protocol.

The discussion about entry and exit criteria assumes or relies on progress monitoring data. Schools progress monitor interventions to ensure that students are responding and growing. Educators will list on the protocol *what* they will do to monitor progress and *how frequently*. The more intensive the intervention, the more frequently progress is monitored. For example, in a T3 intervention, schools would likely progress monitor weekly (which could include reviewing points from a Daily Progress Report or DPR). Students make adequate progress if they are at or above the aimline for 3 consecutive data points/weeks. A student may be ready to exit or “fade from” the intervention when they maintain that for 6 consecutive weeks. It is important to make the rules clear for each support or intervention so that staff know what growth looks like and the system maintains the proper fluidity that makes it sustainable and students successful.

### **Use a Continuum of Supports and Interventions at Screening Time**

The supports and interventions on the validated protocol are used along with the BSEL ABCS data (attendance, behavior office discipline referrals, course grades, and risk screener) to assign and log appropriate supports and interventions to students. This can be handled in a couple of ways.

Schools typically screen 3 times per year: Fall, Winter, and Spring. Universal risk screening can be conducted at those times, and the additional ABC data can be gathered as well and used to sort and group students by intensity of risk to assign supports and interventions. Alternatively, many secondary schools run weekly eligibility and attendance lists. Schools could decide to build on those monitoring processes to determine students who may need support and interventions for grades and attendance and keep a running log in order to intervene early enough to help make a significant difference. Then at universal screening time, educators are likely to find additional students at risk who need support and interventions and who did not show up on those other data sources. Screening may also indicate a need to intensify, layer, or adjust supports and interventions for some students who may already be receiving supports or interventions based on other data, but who also now show up on the screener.

Either way, building leadership teams will also want to analyze and reflect on the validity of the data being collected and make any necessary adjustments to improve data collection and systemic practices.

Elements of Tiered Interventions and Supports
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- |  |
|--|
| 1. List all current interventions and supports in the building |
|--|

<p>2. Take stock of whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they are evidence based and trauma informed</li> <li>• they align with the core for teaching SEL and behavior</li> <li>• there are gaps in being able to support and intervene for: attendance, behavior, emotional concerns, social concerns, supportive learning skills such as study and organizational skills; and</li> <li>• whether there are important gaps in your continuum of intensity (in-class supports, moderate, intense)</li> </ul>
<p>3. Validate and finalize your BSEL Protocol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remove items that do not align with the core for teaching SEL and behavior</li> <li>• remove items that are outdated according to research or are misaligned with a relational, trauma-informed system</li> <li>• fill any important gaps</li> </ul>
<p>4. Incorporate decision rules and progress monitoring procedures for all supports and interventions on your BSEL Protocol</p>
<p>5. Use your BSEL Protocol when sorting and grouping students into supports and interventions based on screening data 2 to 3 times per year.</p>

### **Final Steps**

These questions culminate your activities with the Tiered Interventions & Supports component:

- Does your plan address all elements of interventions and supports?
- How will you document this component? (KESA Connection)
- Which stakeholders do you need feedback from? (Empowering Culture and Leadership Connection)
- What are your professional development needs? (Professional Development Connection)

### **Putting It All Together**

Kansas MTSS and Alignment schools use an impact cycle to address and implement each component to ultimately design or refine their MTSS Framework. However, the real power of the system is in how all the pieces work together to create an empowering culture that deeply engages students as they learn and develop.

As teams ensure that each school works through the impact cycle, obtaining the knowledge they need to refine and implement their system, educators will find they have created the following artifacts that aid in the implementation of Kansas MTSS and Alignment framework and often can be used within the KESA accreditation process:

- Leadership teams

- Self-correcting feedback loop and communication plan
- Core beliefs, vision/mission statements, team norms
- Master schedule to support tiered instruction
- Assessment plan and schedule
- Tier 1 protocol with SEL curriculum and instructional practices identified
- Practices that build relationships and support a safe, predictable, and supportive culture.
- Expectations or norms
- Feedback and response continua
- Tiered supports and interventions descriptions within a BSEL protocol
- Action/communication plan
- Professional development plan
- Family engagement plan

Not every team will create the same artifacts to document and carry out its MTSS. As many schools and districts have several components already operational, it is important to take what is working well and expand/improve rather than re-create one from scratch. For example, use the data-based decision making (DBDM) process or track the fidelity for implementing the targeted BSEL components for impact on student growth. Most importantly, MTSS should be documented in some way and be easily accessible to those who need additional information.

## **Conclusion**

In a global community, it is essential for schools to provide our nation's youth with a high-quality education. Kansas MTSS and Alignment provides a framework for delivering effective instruction, responding quickly to the first signs of concern, and efficiently utilizing district and community resources to achieve high standards for all students. By considering the diverse academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of your student population, districts choosing to implement Kansas MTSS and Alignment are taking a substantial step forward in providing high-quality educational experiences for all students.

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