



SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL,
& BEHAVIOR ACADEMY



Needs Assessment And Planning Process Overview

OBJECTIVES OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING PROCESS

With the help of your SEB Academy coach, your team will engage in a four-step process in order to:

- Identify existing social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) support efforts and initiatives to promote integration and alignment across the school/district.
- Reflect on the key elements of MTSS for SEB development and to establish a clear understanding of your current context.
- Prioritize focus area(s), articulate clear goals, and draft an action plan for strengthening your SEB MTSS.

OUTCOME

Through this process your team will create clearly defined **priorities** and corresponding **goals** centered in equity which will guide your short and long-term efforts in improving specified elements of your MTSS for social, emotional, and behavioral development in ways that are integrated and aligned with your current context and existing school/district efforts.

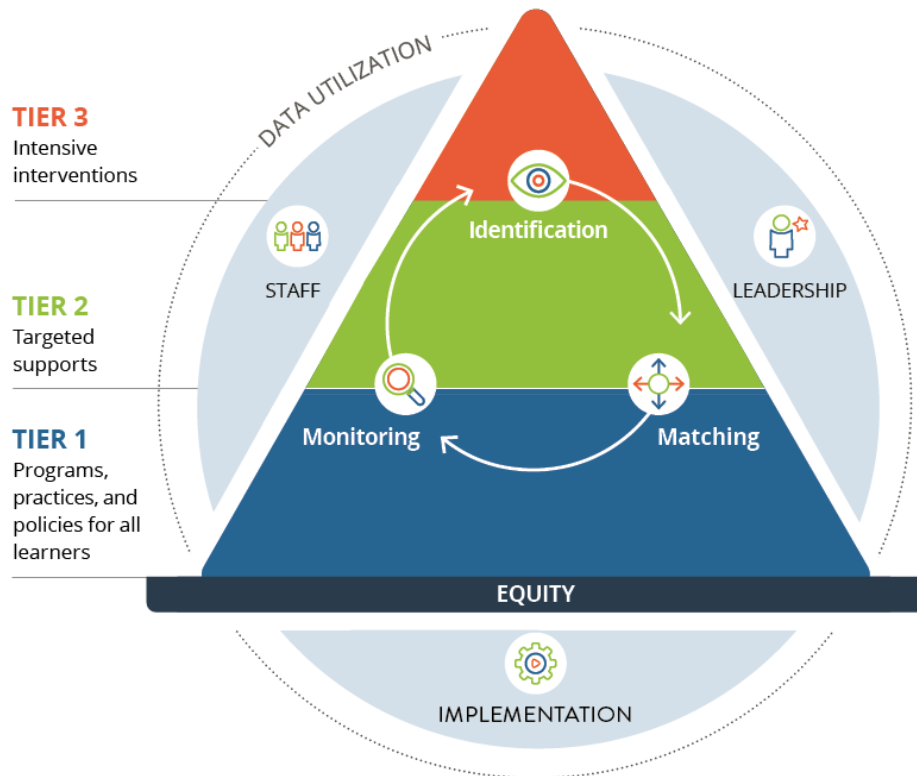
STEPS AND TOOLS



> Step 1: Self-Reflection Rubric

OBJECTIVE: Reflect on the status of key components of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) within the school/district.

OUTCOME: Identify specific areas of focus which will inform prioritization, goal setting, and action planning for the coming year.



DIRECTIONS

This tool prompts a high-level reflection on the five key components of a comprehensive multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for social, emotional, and behavioral development including, Team, Tiered Supports, Identification, Matching & Monitoring, Drivers of Effectiveness (leadership, implementation & staff) and Data Utilization. The purpose of this tool is to guide both initial implementation and sustained use of MTSS Systems, data and practices.

Administration of this tool should result in new or revised goals and related action steps. Teams are encouraged to engage with this tool to best identify areas of strength, but also areas of growth that support enhanced implementation. This tool is not meant for evaluation, but rather to prompt reflection, promote conversation, and increase alignment on the current state of MTSS elements. You are encouraged to be honest in your reflections and when in doubt, err on the lower rating. The Needs Assessment will be completed annually as part of the continuous improvement process and therefore evolution and adjustments are expected.

Because equity is the foundation of an effective MTSS, embedded in each item are equity considerations. When rating each element of the MTSS framework be sure to include the equity considerations in your rating and reflections.

Teams are encouraged to leverage the external perspective and expertise of their coach to complete the entire self-reflection and then dive deeper into reflection on a focus area(s) of their choice.

Rating Scale

0 = Not at all or unsure

1 = Barely, needs significant work and/or there is not currently documented evidence

2 = Somewhat, needs refinement

3 = Completely, consistently, and effectively in place. Just needs to be sustained

1. TEAM STRUCTURE

A team composed of individuals representing diverse roles, backgrounds, and perspectives meets regularly, using a consistent meeting format to reflect, plan, and act in support of the MTSS for social, emotional, and behavioral development. Input from community members outside of the team (staff, students, families), as well as other data, is gathered and incorporated into decision-making throughout the year.

Equity Consideration: The team prioritizes, considers, and uplifts the various identity groups represented in our school, district, and larger community. Every voice is honored and the team operates in an inclusive, culturally, and linguistically respectful manner.

<p>0</p> <p>The team does not exist.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>A team exists but is not representative and/or does not meet regularly.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>A representative team exists and meets regularly, but does not have consistent routines for reflection, planning, and acting in ways that promote an effective MTSS for SEB growth and input from community members is sometimes included.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>A representative team exists which meets regularly and engages in consistent structures for reflection, planning, acting, and incorporating feedback from community members.</p>
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NOTES

2. TIERED SUPPORTS

2a. Consistent and aligned social, emotional, and behavioral **universal** supports are guided by a documented framework within and across grades in ways that are developmentally appropriate and culturally affirming. Through both explicit teaching and implicit integration, all staff, within all contexts of the school environment, support the social, emotional, and behavioral development of students in ways that can be clearly articulated and/or identified by students, staff, and families.

Equity Consideration: The guiding framework is informed by the social identities, cultural practices, and values of the various groups represented in the school community. Universal supports are adaptive and responsive to the needs of all learners across different identity groups.

<p>0</p> <p>There is no clear vision or framework guiding universal social, emotional and behavioral supports for students. There is limited or inconsistent teaching and integration of such supports throughout the school/district.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>There is a framework and/or a somewhat of a vision guiding universal social, emotional, and behavioral supports for students. There is some teaching and integration of such supports throughout the school/district.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>There is a documented framework guiding universal social, emotional, and behavioral supports for students. Both explicit teaching and implicit integration of such supports exist in various spots throughout the school/district.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>There is a documented framework guiding universal social, emotional and behavioral supports for students. Explicit teaching and implicit integration of such supports exist throughout the entire school/district. Students, staff, and families are aware of and can identify consistent practices. The available supports meet the needs of all students.</p>
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2b. As needed for specific students at a particular time, **targeted** supports (e.g., SEB skill groups, check-in/check-out) are available both inside and outside of the classroom setting. These supports are clearly documented and understood, implemented by trained staff, and properly monitored/managed.

Equity Consideration: Targeted supports are responsive to the assets, cultural values, and linguistic repertoires of students. Implementation and progress monitoring are critically analyzed through a lens of inclusive, anti-racist practices to identify and address implicit bias and exclusionary practices.

<p>0</p> <p>Targeted supports are not available, inside or outside of the classroom for students with specific needs.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Some targeted supports exist, inside or outside of the classroom, for students with specific needs. There is limited documentation and/or insufficient understanding, implementation and monitoring of these supports.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Targeted supports exist inside and outside the classroom for specific needs. There is some documentation and/or somewhat consistent implementation and monitoring of these supports. The available supports meet the needs of students who would benefit from targeted supports.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Targeted supports exist, inside and outside of the classroom for students with specific needs. There is clear documentation and effective implementation and monitoring of these supports. The available supports meet the needs of all students who would benefit from targeted supports.</p>
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2. TIERED SUPPORTS

2c. As needed, **intensive** social, emotional, and/or behavioral supports (e.g., 1:1 counseling, behavior support plan, referrals to outside mental health providers) are available to students with elevated needs at a particular time. These supports are clearly documented and understood, delivered by trained staff, and properly monitored/managed.

Equity Consideration: The selection and implementation of **intensive** supports are responsive to the assets, cultural values, and linguistic repertoires of students. Implementation and progress monitoring are critically analyzed through a lens of inclusive, anti-racist practices to identify and address implicit bias and exclusionary practices.

<p>0</p> <p>Intensive supports are not available for students with elevated needs.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Limited intensive targeted supports exist for students with elevated needs. There is limited documentation and/or insufficient understanding, implementation, and monitoring of these supports.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Intensive supports exist for students with elevated needs. There is some documentation and/or somewhat consistent understanding, implementation, and monitoring of these supports. The available supports meet the needs of some students who would benefit from intensive supports.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Intensive supports exist for students with elevated needs. There is clear documentation and effective understanding, implementation, and monitoring of these supports. The available supports meet the needs of all students who would benefit from intensive supports.</p>
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NOTES

3. IDENTIFICATION, MATCHING, AND MONITORING

A clear process is in place within the school/each school in the district for identifying students who might benefit from additional social, emotional, or behavioral supports, matching the student needs to an aligned intervention/support, and monitoring students' responses to interventions. Staff, students, and families understand what supports are available and how to refer students and/or request support.

Equity Consideration: Identification, matching, and monitoring processes are critically analyzed through a lens of inclusive, anti-racist practices that are culturally and linguistically sustaining to identify and address implicit bias and exclusionary practices.

<p>0</p> <p>A clear process does not exist for identifying students who need additional support, matching those students to aligned supports, and monitoring those interventions.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>An informal process exists for identifying students who need additional support, matching those students to aligned supports, and monitoring those interventions. Some staff, students, and/or families understand what supports are available and how to access those support.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>A process exists for identifying students who need additional support, matching those students to aligned supports, and monitoring those interventions. Some staff, students, and/or families understand what supports are available and how to access those support.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>A clear and documented process exists for identifying students who need additional support, matching those students to aligned supports, and monitoring those interventions. Staff, students, and families understand what supports are available and how to access those support.</p>
<p>NOTES</p>			

4. DRIVERS OF EFFECTIVENESS

4a. School/district leaders demonstrate commitment to creating and sustaining a multi-tiered system of supports for social, emotional, and behavioral needs through articulating a clear vision, sharing clear goals, and providing supports (e.g., time, finances, learning, etc.) to those tasked with carrying out the various elements of an effective MTSS.

Equity Consideration: School/district leaders articulate their vision for equitable social, emotional, and behavioral supports, set clear equity goals, and ensure supports (e.g. time, finances, learning, etc.) are equitably distributed to those tasked with carrying out the various elements of an effective MTSS.

0	1	2	3
School/district leaders do not demonstrate commitment to creating and sustaining an MTSS for social, emotional, and behavioral needs through a clear vision, goals, and supports (time, finances, learning, etc.).	School/district leaders demonstrate some and/or inconsistent commitment to creating and sustaining an MTSS for social, emotional, and behavioral needs through a clear vision, goals, and supports (time, finances, learning, etc.).	School/district leaders demonstrate commitment to creating and sustaining an MTSS for social, emotional, and behavioral needs through some, but not all of the following: clear vision, goals, and supports (time, finances, learning, etc.).	School/district leaders demonstrate commitment to creating and sustaining an MTSS for social, emotional, and behavioral needs through a clear vision, goals, or supports (time, finances, learning, etc.) and are active participants on this team.

4b. Staff understand the importance of social, emotional, and behavioral support, can articulate their role in supporting an effective MTSS, and receive professional development and ongoing coaching (internal or external) throughout the year that is guided by the SEB vision and/or framework.

Equity Consideration: Staff receive professional development and ongoing coaching (internal or external) that supports their understanding of culturally responsive and affirming social, emotional, and behavioral supports, and helps them to critically examine potentially biased and exclusionary existing practices.

0	1	2	3
Staff do not understand the importance of social, emotional, and behavioral support, can not articulate their role in supporting an effective MTSS, and do not receive professional development and ongoing coaching (internal or external) throughout the year.	Some or most staff understand the importance of social, emotional, and behavioral support but don't necessarily understand or see the importance of their own role in helping students develop SEB competencies. Limited professional development has been provided on this topic.	Most staff understand the importance of social, emotional, and behavioral support, can articulate their role in supporting an effective MTSS, and receive professional development and ongoing coaching (internal or external) throughout the year.	All staff understand the importance of social, emotional, and behavioral support, can articulate their role in supporting an effective MTSS, and receive professional development and ongoing coaching (internal or external) throughout the year.

4. DRIVERS OF EFFECTIVENESS

4c. Staff implementing social, emotional, and behavioral supports understand the rationale behind the supports they are providing, engage in effective collaboration to provide supports, and monitor the fidelity of **implementation** through tracking, data collection, observations, etc.

Equity Consideration: Staff implementing social, emotional, and behavioral supports examine the supports they are providing to ensure strategies are culturally and linguistically sustaining for the students they are intended to support.

0

Staff implementing social, emotional, and behavioral supports do not understand the rationale behind the supports they are providing, do not engage in effective collaboration to provide supports, and do not monitor the fidelity of implementation through tracking, data collection, observations, etc.

1

Some staff implementing social, emotional, and behavioral supports understand the rationale behind the supports they are providing, engage in effective collaboration to provide supports, and/or monitor the fidelity of implementation through tracking, data collection, observations, etc.

2

Most staff implementing social, emotional, and behavioral supports understand the rationale behind the supports they are providing, engage in effective collaboration to provide supports, and monitor the fidelity of implementation through tracking, data collection, observations, etc.

3

All staff implementing social, emotional, and behavioral supports understand the rationale behind the supports they are providing, engage in effective collaboration to provide supports, and monitor the fidelity of implementation through tracking, data collection, observations, etc.

NOTES

5. DATA UTILIZATION

5a. The school/district collects a variety of **outcome data** related to students' social, emotional, and behavioral development (e.g., SEL assessment), disaggregates and analyzes the data, appropriately shares data with stakeholders (teachers, administrators, parents, etc.), and uses the data to inform, monitor and improve supports.

Equity Consideration: The school/district uses data metrics, data collection techniques, and communication strategies that are culturally and linguistically sustaining for all students, staff, and families.

<p>0</p> <p>The school/district does not collect a variety of "outcome data" related to students' social, emotional, and behavioral development (e.g., SEL assessment, discipline data, etc.).</p>	<p>1</p> <p>The school/district collects limited amount of data' related to students' social, emotional, and behavioral development and engages in some of the following: disaggregates and analyzes the data, appropriately shares data with stakeholders, and uses the data to inform, monitor, and improve supports.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>The school/district collects "outcome data" related to students' social, emotional, and behavioral development, and engages in most of the following: disaggregates and analyzes the data, appropriately shares data with stakeholders, and uses the data to inform, monitor and improve supports.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>The school/district collects a variety of "outcome data" related to students' social, emotional, and behavioral development, and engages in all of the following: disaggregates and analyzes the data, appropriately shares data with stakeholders, and uses the data to inform, monitor and improve supports.</p>
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5b. The school/district collects a variety of "**fidelity data**" to inform and evaluate social, emotional, and behavioral programs and practices and make modifications to implementation as needed.

Equity Consideration: The school/district examines fidelity data through an equity lens, disaggregating data to ensure equitable implementation of social, emotional, and behavioral programs.

<p>0</p> <p>The school/district does not collect "fidelity data" to inform and evaluate social, emotional, and behavioral programs and practices.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>The school/district collects a limited amount of "fidelity data" and rarely uses this data to inform and evaluate social, emotional, and behavioral programs and practices and/or make modifications to implementation as needed.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>The school/district collects "fidelity data" and sometimes uses this data to inform and evaluate social, emotional, and behavioral programs and practices and/or make modifications to implementation as needed.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>The school/district collects a variety of "fidelity data" and consistently uses this data to inform and evaluate social, emotional, and behavioral programs and practices and/or make modifications to implementation as needed.</p>
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NOTES

RATINGS

FOCUS AREA	RATING
1. Team Structure	
2.a Tiered Supports: Tier 1	
2.b Tiered Supports: Tier 2	
2.c Tiered Supports: Tier 3	
3. Identification, Matching, and Monitoring	
4.a Drivers of Effectiveness: Leaders	
4.b Drivers of Effectiveness: Staff	
4.c Drivers of Effectiveness: Implementation	
5.a Data Utilization: Outcome Data	
5.b Data Utilization: Fidelity Data	

REFLECTIONS

Based on your discussion and these rubric ratings, record the following to inform your next steps.

Our greatest areas of strengths are:

The areas that show the most significant gaps are:

The areas where there are most promising opportunities for improvement are:

➤ STEP 2: Prioritizing Areas of Focus

OBJECTIVE: Use the information gained through Steps 1 and 2 of the Needs Assessment process to prioritize areas of focus for the upcoming year.

OUTCOME: Identify 1-3 elements of an effective MTSS (outlined in the Self-Reflection Rubric) on which to focus and set aligned goals to guide your work for the upcoming year.

DIRECTIONS

1. Refer back to the ratings and reflections from your [Self-Reflection Rubric](#).
2. Knowing not all things can be tackled at once, prioritize the identified gaps and opportunities to determine which you will focus on this year.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Use the questions and the “Effort vs Impact” matrix to guide a discussion amongst your team.

- **Feasibility:** Do we have the staff, financial support, and organizational structure needed to successfully make change in this area?
- **Readiness:** Do we have the motivation and willingness to commit resources to address the given focus area?
- **Potential Impact:** Do we think you are likely to see change based on your efforts?
- **Match for the Need:** If successful, will this focus area be addressing a known need or gap in our school community?

Based on the discussion, which of the elements of an effective MTSS do you think your team is best poised to focus on this year?

- Team Structure
- Tiered Supports: Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3
- Identification, Matching, and Monitoring
- Drivers of Effectiveness, Leaders, Staff, Implementation
- Data Utilization

> STEP 3: Goal Setting and Action Planning

OBJECTIVE: Use the information gained through Steps 1, 2 and 3 of the Needs Assessment process to draft goals for your selected focus area(s).

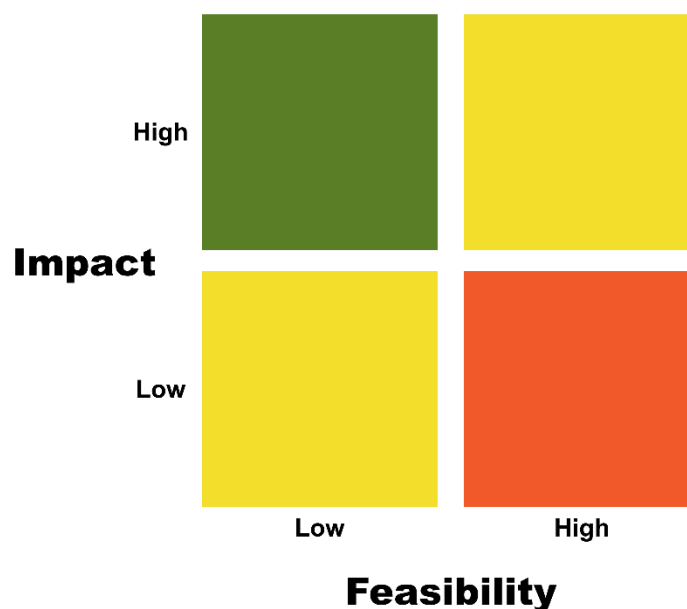
OUTCOME: Draft 1-3 goals aligned to each of your area(s) of focus which will be used to guide your work for the upcoming year.

DIRECTIONS

For each of the **focus areas** you identified as priorities in the previous section:

1. Draft a **goal** which has:
 - clear and specific action steps,
 - a lead who has the time and capacity to guide the work and
 - a timeframe that is realistic.
2. Draft “**success criteria**” to envision what success will look like for students, staff, and/or the school or district when this goal is achieved.
3. Identify possible **data** that can be collected to measure the impact of the goal, as well as, fidelity of implementation.
4. Record considerations, questions, and resources that might guide or support **potential next steps**.

When drafting goals and action steps consider balance between impact and feasibility:



EXAMPLE:

FOCUS AREA:

Data Utilization - leveraging existing outcome data

GOAL:

Our team will engage in two data review cycles (winter and spring) to collect, analyze and act on existing student outcome data (discipline referrals, SEL surveys, mental health screeners, and culture/climate surveys)

Action Step	Lead	Timeframe	Notes
Inventory existing data sources and determine which data sources are missing	SEB Team	Summer 2024	
Select data collection tools	SEB Team	Fall 2024	
Develop plan for rolling out data collection tool (including training staff)	Principal and SEB Team	Winter 2024	
Collect data	All teachers	Spring 2025	
Determine how data will be reviewed and shared with others (e.g., parent-teacher conferences, student support team or SST meetings, grade level meetings, etc.)	Principal and SEB team	Fall 2024 Winter 2024 Spring 2025	

Success Criteria: If we achieve this goal, what will success look like...

	Impact
For students? <ul style="list-style-type: none">All student needs will be identified and addressedDisparities in student needs by subgroup will decreaseSupports will be consistent across demographic subgroups	Discipline Referrals (K-12) SEL Surveys (4th-12th)
For staff? <ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff will feel confident that student needs are being identified and addressedStaff will leverage <i>data to inform their practices</i>	Mental Health Screeners (4th, 8th, 10th) Culture/Climate Surveys (4th-12th)
For the school/district as a whole? <ul style="list-style-type: none">Students, staff, and families will express confidence in the school's ability to identify and address needsStudents, staff, and families will feel consistently supportedDisparities in supports across subgroups will be eliminated	Implementation

> Our 2024-2025 SEB Academy Goals

Focus Area 1

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Goal 1

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Action Step	Lead	Timeframe	Notes

Success Criteria: If we achieve this goal, what will success look like...

For students?	Impact
For staff?	
For the school/district as a whole?	

Focus Area 2

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Goal 2

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Action Step	Lead	Timeframe	Notes

Success Criteria: If we achieve this goal, what will success look like...

Success Criteria: If we achieve this goal, what will success look like...	
For students?	Impact
For staff?	
For the school/district as a whole?	

Focus Area 3

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Goal 3

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Action Step	Lead	Timeframe	Notes

Success Criteria: If we achieve this goal, what will success look like...

Success Criteria: If we achieve this goal, what will success look like...	
For students?	Impact
For staff?	
For the school/district as a whole?	

➤ STEP 4: Working Smarter: Alignment and Integration

OBJECTIVE: Reflect on and document the currently existing goals, initiatives, and teams/working groups related to social, emotional, and behavioral supports.

OUTCOME: Determine potential areas of alignment/misalignment and collaboration/redundancy to promote streamlined, integrated, and effective progress.

DIRECTIONS

1. Identify all school/district priorities that have social, emotional, and behavioral development as part or all of their focus. Record any known corresponding initiatives aligned with those priorities.
2. Identify all existing teams, working groups, committees, etc. that have social, emotional, and behavioral development as part or all of their purpose.
3. Characterize the main features of each team
 - a. **Purpose:** Why was this group formed and why does it meet?
 - b. **Measurable outcomes/objectives:** What kind and level of change, improvement, etc. is expected?
 - c. **Target audience:** Who is expected to benefit from the efforts of this group?
 - d. **Meeting schedule:** How often, when, and for how long does this group meet?
 - e. **Membership:** Who is on this committee or group? How/by whom was membership determined?
 - f. **Connection to improvement goals:** How do the efforts of this group relate to the short and long term priorities of the school or district?
 - g. **Priority or need:** How important is this group to the school? How aware is the larger community about this group and the work being done?
4. After completing the charts below, consider the ways in which work could be streamlined, teams could collaborate, and efforts could be aligned.

Helpful Resource

+ [Integration and Alignment Technical Guide](#)

WHAT SEB PRIORITIES ALREADY EXIST IN OUR SCHOOL/DISTRICT?

EXAMPLE: *Middle school is focused on improving culture and belonging.*

WHAT INITIATIVES OR SPECIAL PROJECTS FOCUS ON SEB?

EXAMPLE: *Middle school is rolling out Project Wayfinder and formatting Advisory*

ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION - EXISTING TEAMS/WORKING GROUPS

TEAM	PURPOSE	EXPECTED OUTCOME	TARGET AUDIENCE	SCHEDULE OR MEETING CADENCE	TEAM MEMBERS	ALIGNMENT WITH MISSION, GOALS AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN (1 = LOW, 5 = HIGH)	PRIORITY (1 = LOW, 5 = HIGH)
EXAMPLE: School Culture Team	<i>develop and facilitate school wide celebrations and events</i>	<i>school-wide events that increase belonging and promote community</i>	<i>students, staff and families</i>	<i>monthly</i>	<i>assistant principal, classroom teachers, counselor, ABA</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
						1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
						1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
						1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
						1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5



Next Steps

- + Share gained insight with relevant stakeholders.
- + When prioritizing, setting goals, and developing an action plan refer back to the above to ensure consistency and collaboration and to avoid redundancy and/or conflicting efforts

ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION - RE-ORGANIZE

Now get organized! Based on your priorities from Step 2, your action plan from Step 3, and the analysis of what teams you have in place and their role, determine how to re-organize your teams to work more efficiently and towards your goals.

Consider:

- **Redundancy:** Are there teams with overlapping responsibilities? Is there more than one team working on the same goal? If so, will efforts across teams be reinforcing or redundant?
- **Integration/Collaboration:** Can any two or more teams working on similar or the same goals and collaborate to integrate efforts?
- **Alignment:** Do team structures align with goals? Are teams working towards our priorities and goals or are they misaligned to our priority and goals?

Record changes to team structures:

TEAM	CHANGE	NOTES
	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue <input type="checkbox"/> Merge <input type="checkbox"/> Reconfigure <input type="checkbox"/> Phase out	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue <input type="checkbox"/> Merge <input type="checkbox"/> Reconfigure <input type="checkbox"/> Phase out	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue <input type="checkbox"/> Merge <input type="checkbox"/> Reconfigure <input type="checkbox"/> Phase out	
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue <input type="checkbox"/> Merge <input type="checkbox"/> Reconfigure <input type="checkbox"/> Phase out	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue <input type="checkbox"/> Merge <input type="checkbox"/> Reconfigure <input type="checkbox"/> Phase out	

> SEB Academy GLOSSARY

Belonging: Belonging is the feeling that one's authentic self is seen by, affirmed by, valued by, and connected to the school and district. Belonging is closely linked to school climate, community, and positive relationships. Feeling a sense of belonging at school has a positive impact on motivation, engagement, and lifelong learning outcomes. In sharp contrast, a lack of belonging in schools has been connected to higher absenteeism, lack of motivation, and long-term negative feelings about learning. Belonging cannot be imposed on or taught to students; however, it can be fostered through intentional practices, policies, and systems that are planned with belonging at the center. Targeted work in areas such as relationship-building, valuing and affirming diverse identities, and creating meaningful opportunities for engagement, support students to feel stronger belonging to the school and district community.¹

Community Members: Community Members refers to all staff, students, family members, and community partners who are connected to the school or district.

Continuous Improvement Process²: An ongoing process of examining implementation by issuing data to address problems through incremental improvements and to maintain effective systems and practices.

Culturally Sustaining³: Culturally sustaining practices foster, amplify, and sustain the robust linguistic and cultural repertoires of learners as an essential component of whole-child schooling and transformational education.

Data Utilization: Every decision involving MTSS should be informed by data. To do so effectively, it is important to ensure the school and/or district is collecting the right type of data, using well-designed data collection tools, ensuring that educators have access to the data they need to make data-informed decision, articulating clear expectations for how data will be utilized to support MTSS decision-making, and providing ongoing support to educators to meet these expectations.

Effective Implementation: Effective implementation includes identifying and selecting evidence-based programs, practices and policies at all three tiers, as well as process for ensuring that these supports are well-implemented. Good implementation consists of finding a balance between maintaining fidelity to the support's core components, while adapting to fit with students' needs and local context. Steps that schools and districts can take to ensure effective implementation including providing ongoing training and support to staff on the specific supports

¹ The Belonging definition was modified from the following sources: LearnLaunch Institute. (2023). "Sense of Belonging for Students and Staff in K-12 Schools: Framework, Strategies, and Resources." Accessed 2023 from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qI97LS0oS1tbjqeRLlmed2MET-jOEfh/view>

² The Continuous Improvement Process definition was modified from the following source: Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (2023). *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Implementation Blueprint*. University of Oregon. www.pbis.org.

³ The Culturally Sustaining definition was modified from the following source: Alim & Paris (2017). What Is Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Why Does It Matter? in *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World (Language and Literacy Series)*.

they are implementing, measuring and monitoring fidelity, and engaging in ongoing mid-course corrections and continuous improvement.

Equity: Educational equity means that each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential. Equitable systems and policies within a school are those that enable all members of the school community to thrive; that recognize and address structural inequities; and that build upon the strengths and assets of students and others in the school community.⁴

Initiative⁵: A strategy intended to address or improve a situation (e.g., using a new approach to something). This may also be referred to as a program or practice that has been given priority within an organization.

Intersection of SEL, Mental health, and Behavioral Supports: Social-emotional learning equips students with the mindsets, skills, and competencies needed to develop and enhance resilience, emotion and behavior regulation, relationships with others, and positive coping strategies—skills essential for mental health and mental well-being. Mental health supports are most often used to help students who are showing signs of challenges related to emotional and social well-being, trauma, stress, depression, or anxiety. Behavioral supports include instructional and environmental features that promote, teach and reinforce skill development. Effective evidence-based social-emotional learning can help to foster emotional intelligence, strengthen conflict resolution skills, and prevent mental health problems.

Leadership Vision and Commitment: MTSS is a cohesive, school- or district-wide system of supports. For the system to work well, it requires the full commitment from the school and/or district leadership, as well as a clearly articulated vision for MTSS. In particular, effective leadership for MTSS requires leaders who understand the benefits of an MTSS framework, communicate to their entire staff a clear vision of MTSS, and lead their staff in developing structures (e.g., forming an MTSS coordinating team) and processes (e.g., protocols for identifying and referring students for Tier 2 and 3 support placement).

Mental Health: Mental health (MH) is a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Supports designed to foster mental health exist along a continuum—from promotion of positive mental health for all children and adults, to treatment for those with mental illness. In a school setting, universal mental health supports are rooted in evidence-based practice and focus on trauma-sensitive approaches, the development of social and emotional competencies, and a whole school culture that fosters mental wellness. Educators play a critical role in identifying, supporting, and/or referring students to mental health interventions.⁶

⁴ The Equity definition was modified from the following sources: National Equity Project, Accessed August 2020 from <https://www.nationalequityproject.org/education-equity-definition> and MA DESE MTSS Blueprint, Accessed August 2020 from <https://matoolsforschools.com/resources/mtss-blueprint>

⁵ The Continuous Improvement Process definition was modified from the following source: Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (2023). *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Implementation Blueprint*. University of Oregon. www.pbis.org.

⁶ The Mental Health definition was modified from the following sources: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Accessed August 2020 from mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health and Innovating Minds, Accessed August 2020 from <https://resources.innovatingmindscic.com/resources/definition-of-a-whole-school-approach-to-mental-health>

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)⁷: The practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals and applying data to important educational decisions. Schools with an integrated MTSS framework align several MTSS initiatives into one coherent strategically combined system meant to address multiple domains.

PBIS: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based, multi-tiered framework for supporting students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health. It is a way to create positive, predictable, equitable and safe learning environments.

Social, Emotional, and Behavioral (SEB) Initiatives and Programs⁸: SEB programs are any interventions, systems or practices implemented to improve social, emotional, and/or behavioral (SEB) competencies. Examples include PBIS, mental health, and social-emotional learning programs.

Social and Emotional Learning: Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a process whereby young people and adults build strong, respectful, and lasting relationships that facilitate co-learning. In a school setting, students should be supported to develop their individual competencies, skills, and mindsets in a way that is personally meaningful and relevant. SEL requires and enables a critical examination of the root causes of inequity and encourages youth and adults to develop collaborative solutions that lead to personal, community, and societal well-being.⁹

Staff Competency: Staff competency refers to staff demonstrating their commitment to playing their part in the MTSS system, as well as possessing the knowledge and skills required of them to play their part well. In the case of SEL and mental health, this includes everyone's commitment to helping students develop social and emotional competencies, while helping to identify, refer, and/or address students' mental health needs. To achieve optimal staff competencies, schools and districts must provide professional development and ongoing support to the different professional roles involved in a school and district setting.

Tier 1: Tier 1 refers to all the supports that benefit all students. Depending on the context, all students may refer to all students in the district (e.g., a district-wide effort to promote stronger relationships between students and trusted adults), in the school (e.g., school-wide assembly focused on specific SEL themes), or in the classroom (e.g., a classroom-based curriculum). Furthermore, Tier 1 supports can come in all kinds of forms—standalone curricula, classroom-based SEL practices, school-wide initiatives including those designed to engage families, etc.¹⁰

⁷ The Continuous Improvement Process definition was modified from the following source: Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (2023). *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Implementation Blueprint*. University of Oregon. www.pbis.org.

⁸ The Continuous Improvement Process definition was modified from the following source: Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (2023). *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Implementation Blueprint*. University of Oregon. www.pbis.org.

⁹ The SEL definition was modified from the following source: CASEL. (2020). "SEL As a Lever for Equity and Social Justice." Accessed August 2020 from <https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SEL-as-Lever-for-Equity-Slides.pdf>

¹⁰ The Tier 1 definition was modified from the following source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's [Multi-Tiered System of Support Blueprint](#).

Tier 2: Tier 2 refers to supports that target students who might benefit at a particular time from additional support with social-emotional competencies or have low to moderate mental health needs. Tier 2 supports are often times offered in small groups, either inside or outside the classroom, but can also include mentoring or other forms of individual supports that focus on low to moderate needs and therefore not intensive in their nature.¹¹

Tier 3: Tier 3 refers to supports designed to address significant mental health needs, including diagnosed mental health disorders, at a particular time. These supports are intensive and are often provided individually or in very small groups. While Tier 2 supports are offered by people with different roles in the school (e.g., classroom teachers, guidance counselors, school adjustment counselors), Tier 3 interventions are usually offered by licensed mental health providers.¹²

¹¹ The Tier 2 definition was modified from the following source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's [Multi-Tiered System of Support Blueprint](#).

¹² The Tier 3 definition was modified from the following source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's [Multi-Tiered System of Support Blueprint](#).



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