



COLORADO
Department of Education

Using COMTSS to Transform School Climate and Increase Sense of Belonging

October 20, 2023
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Warm Welcome

Objectives

1. Understand the research that highlights the power of sense of belonging on successful outcomes.
2. identify school climate best practices that promote sense of belonging including safety, connectedness and engagement.
3. Understand how to use the 5 components of COMTSS to make systemic changes

The “Why”

The Science of Learning and Development

Children learn when they are:

- Healthy
- Safe
- Supported

Children's learning is impaired when their/they're:

- Physical needs are not met
- Fearful
- Traumatized
- Overcome with emotion



Whole Child (Whole Human) as a Focus

Whole Child Approach in Schools is defined by policies, practices, and relationships that focus on the comprehensive and interconnected needs of students that ensure that each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

-CDE (adapted from ASCD and CDC)



Healthy



NUTRITION
(Universal
breakfast,
healthy
lunches,
adequate time
to eat)



**OPPORTUNITIES FOR
PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY**
(Brain
breaks,
recess, PE,
sports)



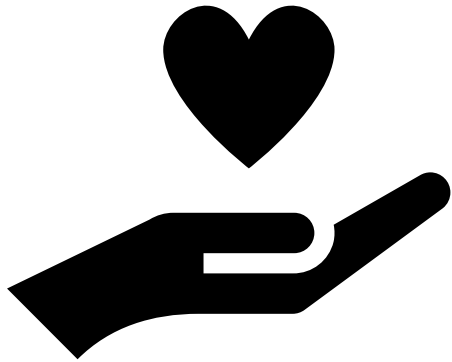
**HEALTH
SERVICES
PROVIDED IN
SCHOOL**
(School
nurse,
school-based
health center)



**HEALTH
EDUCATION**
(Aligned to
state
standards,
integrated
throughout
school day)



**MENTAL
HEALTH
PROMOTION**
(Mindfulness,
school-
mental health
professionals,
referrals to
outside
services)



Safe

- **Physical Safety:** the protection from violence, theft, and exposure to weapons and threats, and substance use in order to establish a secure learning environment.
- **Social-Emotional Safety:** An experience in which one feels safe to express emotions, is free from harassment and bullying, and whose voice is valued and respected.
- **Identity Safety:** is created when individuals are made to feel that their social identity is an asset rather than a barrier to success and where schools are intentional in refuting negative stereotypes, countering stereotype threat, and ensuring that all backgrounds are welcomed, supported, and valued.
- **Academic Safety:** refers to the feelings of security and confidence to take risks academically knowing that failure is part of the learning process. Academic safety allows students to feel challenged and excited to try something new.

Engaged



BEHAVIORAL ENGAGEMENT

ATTENTION,
PARTICIPATION, AND EFFORT
IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND
CLASSWORK



COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT

DEGREE TO WHICH
STUDENTS CONSTRUCT
MEANING FROM WHAT THEY
ARE LEARNING



EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

AFFECTIVE STATES (I.E.,
INTEREST, BOREDOM,
HAPPINESS, ANXIETY, ETC.),
THAT INDICATE HOW A
STUDENT IS FEELING ABOUT
LEARNING ⁹

- Fredericks et al., 2004; Yonezawa et al., 2009; Green et al., 2008

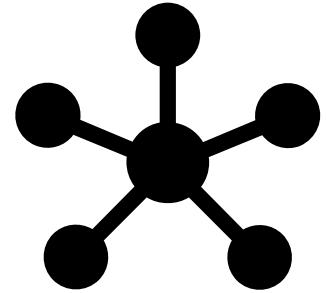
Supported

Supportive Relationships

- Caring
- Respectful
- Filled with trust
- Bi-directional

Supportive Environments

- Welcoming and Inclusive
- Consistent and Predictable
- Family School and Community Partnerships



Challenged



Instructional Practices

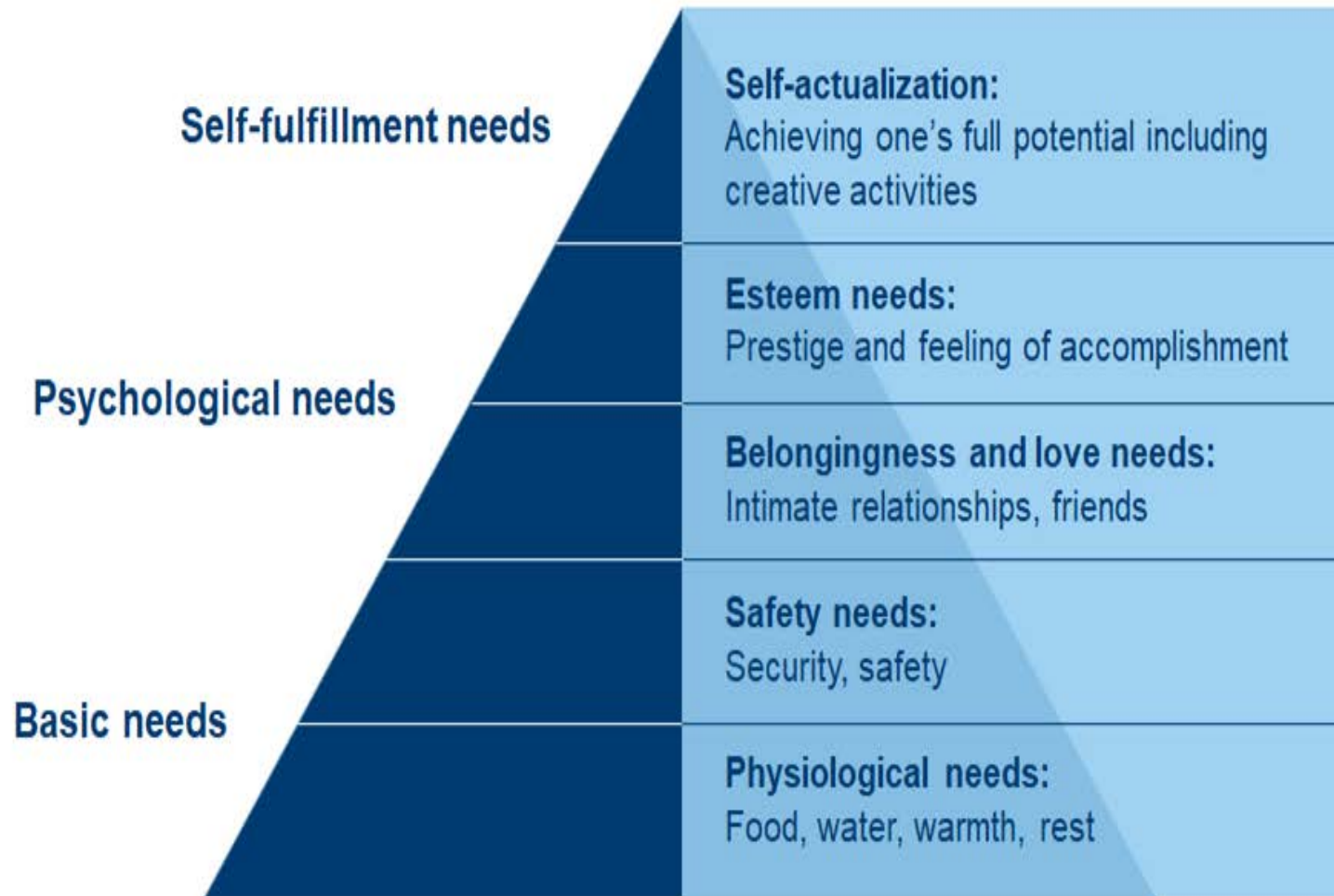
Differentiate
d
Scaffolded
Student-Centered



Personalized Learning:

Strengths
Needs
Skills
Interests

Hierarchy of Needs



Sense of Belonging



The extent to which all members of a school community (i.e., students, staff and families), feel accepted, respected, included and supported in the school environment.

Improved behavior

Improved attendance

Increased engagement

Increased school connected-ness

Decreased discipline issues

Decreased drop out rates

Increased academic achievement

- Cohen, J., et al. (2009).
- Taylor, R. D., et al. (2017).
- Loukas, A. (2007).



Student Outcomes



Increased self-
efficacy and
resilience
(Frazier et al., 2021)

Lower rates of
depression,
anxiety and stress
(Lester & Cross, 2015)

Decreased
bullying
*(Brown et al., 2011; Klein
et al., 2012)*

Decreased youth
suicide ideation
(Holt et al., 2015)

Improve social and
emotional well-
being
(Soutter et al., 2014)

Teacher Outcomes

Increased

- Teacher Retention
- Teacher commitment to work
- Job satisfaction
- Sense of personal accomplishment
- Perceived ability to positively affect students

Reduced

- Exhaustion and burnout
- Teacher attrition
- Student discipline issues

Improved

- Sense of agency
- Relationships and collaborations
- Voice in decision-making
- Sense of community

(Singh & Billingsley, 1998), (Cohen et al., 2009), (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008), (Guo & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2011), (Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2002), (Boyd et al., 2006; Cohen et al., 2009); National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003; National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 2016)

The “What”

Multi - Facets of School Climate

- Student Engagement/Co-Creation
- Relationships/Connectedness
- Student-Centered Discipline
- Staff Wellbeing
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- Trauma Informed Practices
- Mental Health/Trauma Awareness
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- Schoolwide Social Emotional Learning
- School Safety (i.e., physical, psychological, and identity)
- Family and Community Partnership



Domains of School Climate

POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE & CLIMATE

Interpersonal

Relationships

Social Support

Opportunities for Connection



Institutional

Supportive Environments

Safety

Supports for Wellbeing



Instructional

Engagement

Teaching of Behaviors,
Skills, and Mindsets



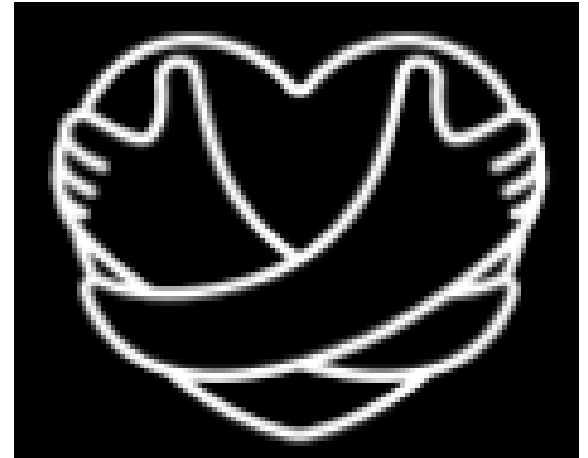
EQUITY – INCLUSION - CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Interpersonal



Supportive Relationships

- Caring
- Respectful
- Bi-directional
- Filled with trust
- Equity and Inclusion
 - Explicitly honor experiences
 - Celebrate self-expression
- Opportunities for Connection
 - Check in with students and each other
 - Be present
 - Build connections outside of the classroom



Institutional

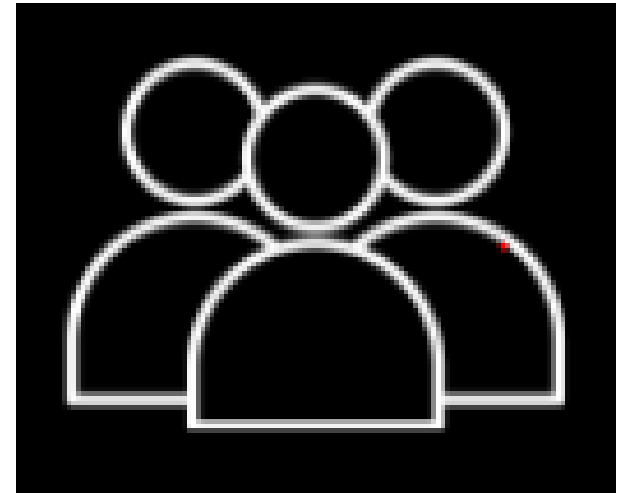
- Supportive Environments
 - Welcoming and Inclusive
 - Consistent and Predictable
 - Family School and Community Partnering
- Safety
 - Physical Safety
 - Social-emotional (psychological) safety
 - Identity Safety
 - Academic Safety
- Supports for Wellbeing
 - Physical and Mental Health Promotion
 - Stress Management and Resiliency



Instructional



- Engagement
 - Behavioral Engagement
 - Cognitive Engagement
 - Emotional Engagement
- Teaching of:
 - Behaviors
 - Skills
 - Mindsets



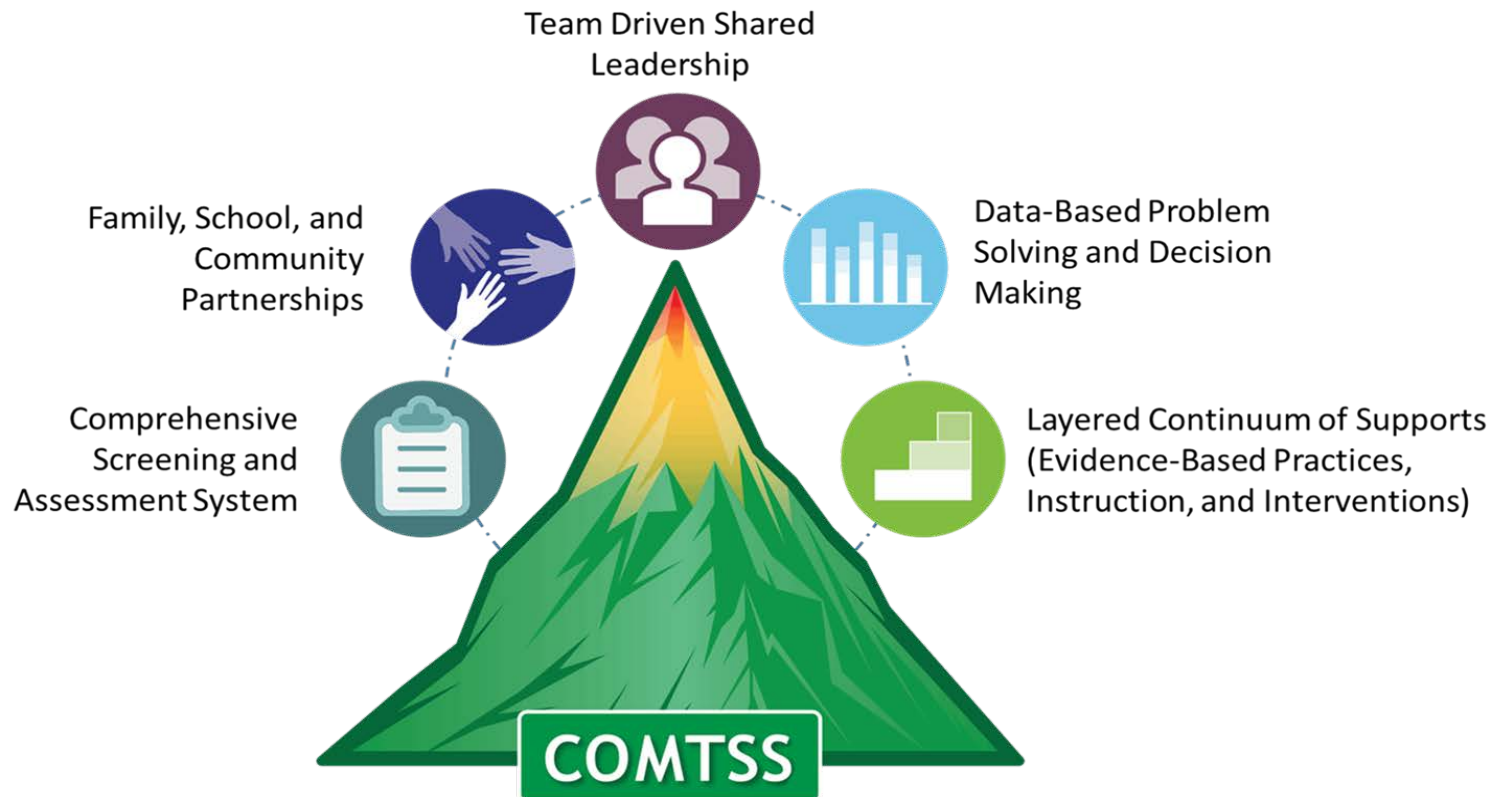
- Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Education (CLRE)

Activity

1. What strategies/programs and curriculum are in place in your setting to improve student, staff, and/or family sense of belonging?
2. How do you know if they are working?

The “How”

Colorado's Multi - Tiered System of Supports



COMTSS is defined as a prevention-based framework of team-driven, data-based problem solving to improve the outcomes of every student through family, school, and community partnerships; comprehensive screening and assessment; and a layered continuum of evidence-based practices applied at the classroom, school, district, region, and state level.

Team Driven Shared Leadership

*Teaming processes and structures that focus on **distributing responsibility** and **shared decision-making** across and within regions, districts, and schools to effectively design and use systems of training, coaching, resources, implementation, and evaluation.*



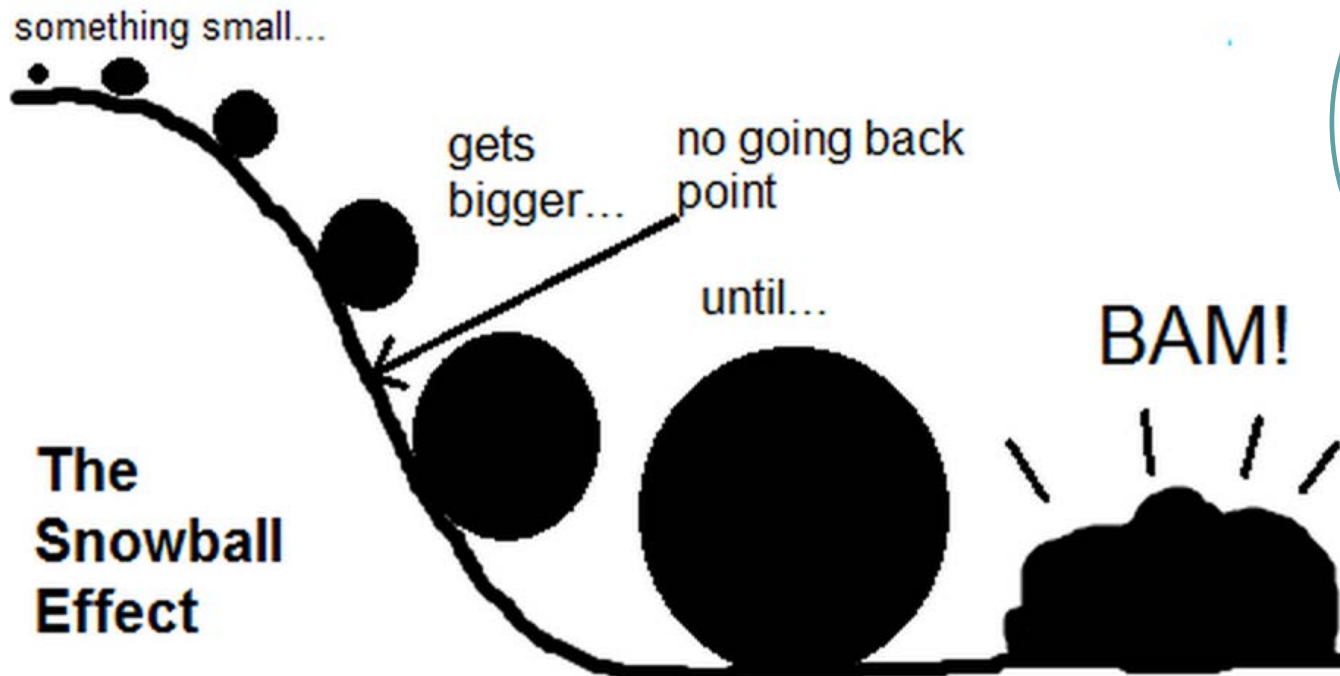
Team Driven Shared Leadership

1. Do you have a school-wide team that includes representation from diverse stakeholders?
2. How does this team ensure all members feel a sense of belonging?



Comprehensive Screening and Assessment System

The coordinated effort of gathering information across multiple measures to support decision making at the system and student level for the whole child.



Comprehensive Screening and Assessment System

1. What data are you already collecting that can inform your team on the needs around social, emotional, behavioral and mental health?
2. Are there data that you need but aren't collecting?

Data at Individual Level

- Perception Surveys (e.g., [TLCC](#), [HKCS](#))
- Behavior Data
- Referrals to Counselor/Mental Health Supports
- Universal Screenings for Social, Emotional, and/or Mental Health Needs
- Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism Data

Data at Policy and Practice Level

- [CO Healthy Schools Smart Source](#)
- [Trauma Responsive Schools Implementation Assessment](#)
- [PBIS Self-Assessment Survey](#)

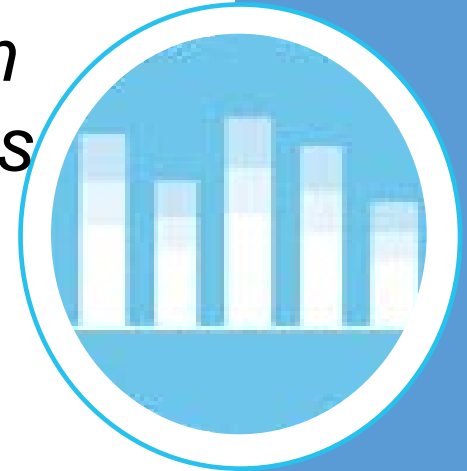
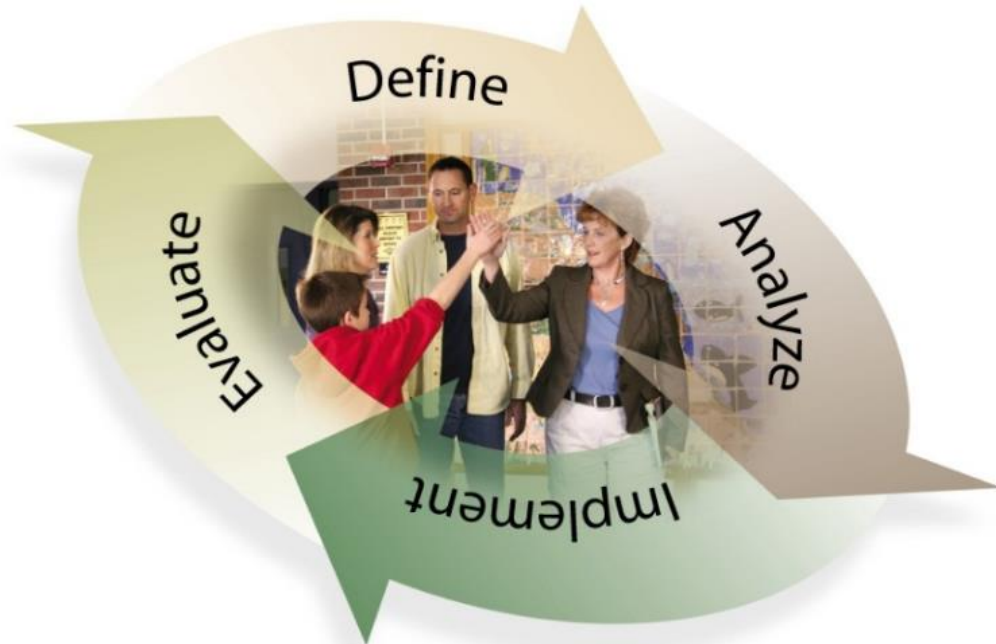
Other Data

- Observational data of classrooms and other school settings
- Focus Groups/Interviews
- Other Ideas in the [CEI Discovery Toolkit](#)

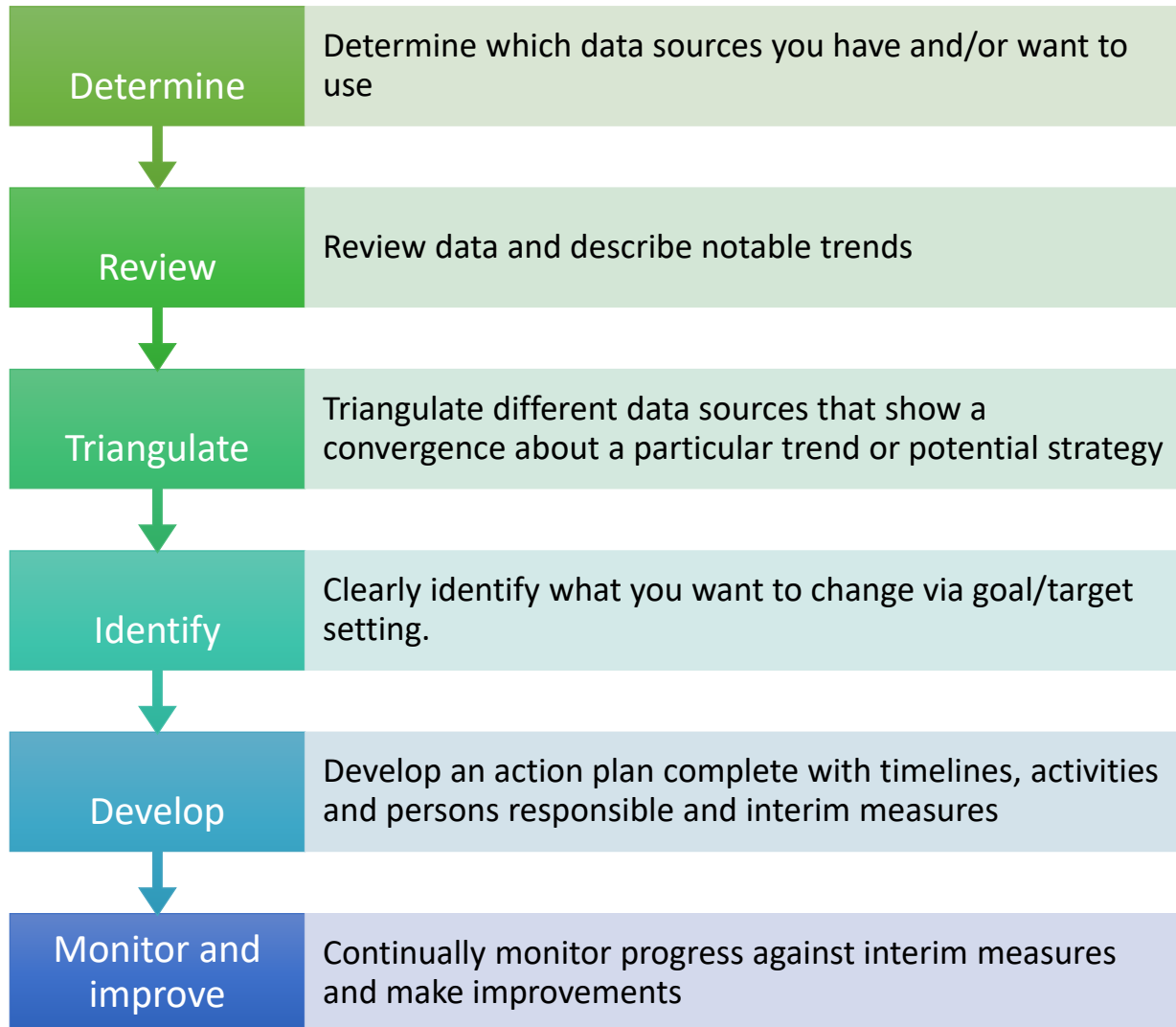


Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision-Making

*A continuous improvement process used by teams to **collect**, **analyze**, and **evaluate** information to inform decision making at the system and student levels*



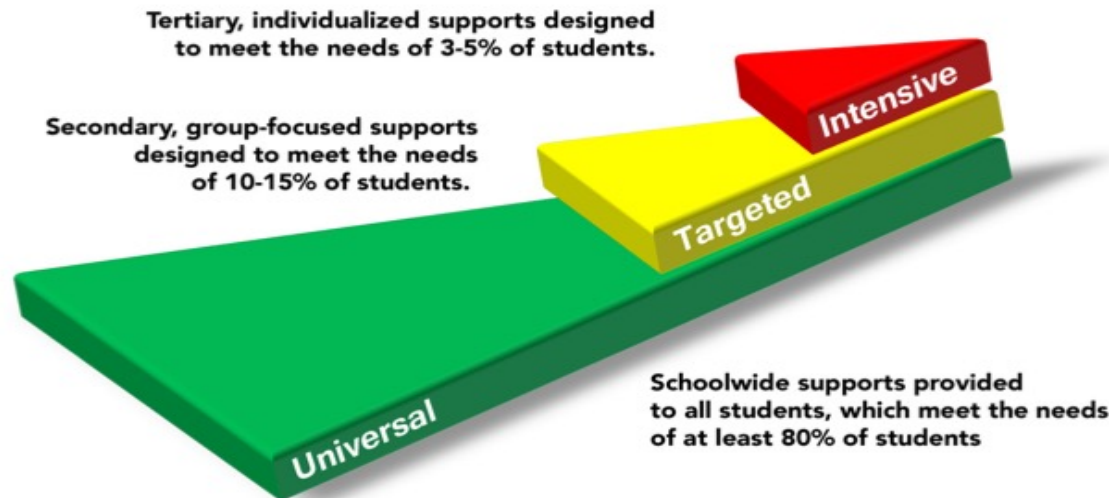
Data-Based Problem-Solving and Decision-Making



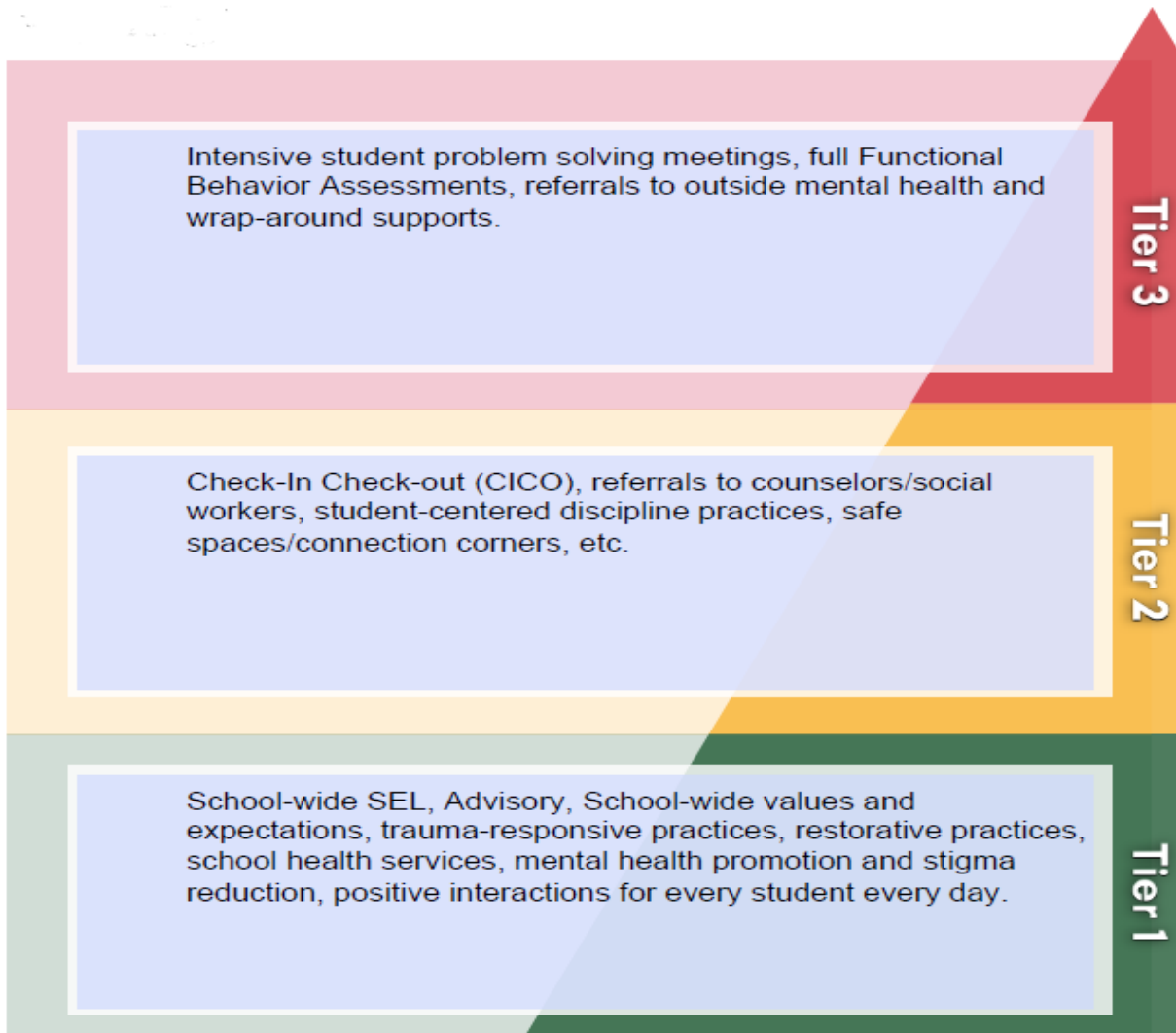
Are you currently using multiple data to inform decision making and action planning for school climate, SEL and mental health?

Layered Continuum of Supports

Ensuring that every student receives equitable whole child supports that are evidenced based, culturally responsive, matched to need, and developmentally appropriate through layered supports.



Layered Continuum of Supports



How are you layering academic, behavioral and social emotional supports for students, staff, and families to safety and sense of belonging?

Family, School, and Community Partnerships

Families, early childhood programs, schools, and communities actively partnering to develop, implement, and evaluate effective and equitable practices to improve educational outcomes for children and youth.



- The goal of a multi-tiered system of family-school collaboration is to create a continuum of coordinated partnership practices to support student success.



FAMILY
SCHOOL AND
COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS



Family, School, and Community Partnering

1. How are you including families in shared leadership and decision-making regarding and/or providing social, emotional, behavioral and mental supports?
2. Do they feel a sense of belonging in the school community?



For More information, please reference the [FSCP Framework](#):

Questions





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Thank you!!

Please contact us for support, training and technical assistance

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