

## TIER 1 TEACHING IN PRACTICE: Examining the Use of SEB Strategies, Mental Health Resources, and Identifying Areas of Need for Future Support

### Abstract

Schools are incorporating a range of social, emotional and behavioral (SEB) supports in order to support the mental health of school-aged students as mental health concerns remain a challenge for up to 20% of our PreK-12th grade students. However, these supports can often be viewed as additional work being added onto an already overwhelming workload for teachers. As such, it is important to recognize how these SEB supports are often already integrated into the work teachers are currently doing in schools. In this case study, a survey was disseminated across PreK-12 general education teachers in a Northeastern school district; this survey aimed to determine how the teachers were currently using Tier 1 practices to support SEB and mental health needs within their MTSS framework. This survey was used to highlight areas of strength, in addition to areas for future support based on teacher feedback. After describing and reviewing the survey results, we reflect on this process, as well as offer considerations for districts to further support educators in the future.

Mental health concerns are a critical challenge for approximately 13-20% of school-aged (PreK-12) students (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2022; Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023). As such, this is a concern that schools are working to address with a range of strategies and student supports focused on the social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) needs of our students. However, these supports are often taking place in classrooms, and some teachers may feel this is “just another thing” being piled onto an already overflowing plate. Teachers continuously adjust their teaching practice during and since the pandemic in response to changing expectations and policy. These changes are asked of teachers in addition to the typical demands of lesson planning, grading, meetings, professional development, parent-teacher conferences, extra help for students, and more. There simply isn’t enough time in a school day to complete what is expected of teachers given this intensifying workload. These past few years have also seen increased challenges, stress, and burnout for teachers (Lin et al., 2024; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2023). Further, and likely contributing to these feelings, teachers often do not feel they have enough opportunities to develop new skills, have access to resources needed for their job, nor receive sufficient allotted time from districts and schools in managing these multiplying expectations (Lin et al., 2024). This creates a difficult dynamic for educators in supporting their own students when they do not feel supported themselves.

Despite these challenges, because of the heightened mental health concerns for our students, there is still a real need for schools and teachers to implement interventions and initiatives focused on supporting students’ SEB skill development, and by extension, their mental health—though the question remains: how can these supports be incorporated into the classroom in a way that is not overwhelming or creates additional stress for educators?

It is possible and beneficial to integrate SEB and mental health supports into the systems that are already in place in schools (Barrett et al., 2018; Eber et al., 2019). These systems and frameworks may include Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Social Emotional Learning (SEL), or an Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF). Santiago-Rosario et al., (2023) conducted a literature review and found that Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) implementation improves mental health outcomes as well as SEB outcomes particularly in elementary aged students. Implementation of PBIS is associated with student outcomes such as improved on-task behavior, improvement in student behavior, and a higher likelihood of demonstrating prosocial skills and emotional regulation (Santiago-Rosario et al., 2023). However, many schools, districts, and teachers that are currently implementing PBIS may not recognize the SEB and mental health efforts that are already in place for their students through these systems

and frameworks. It is important and necessary to recognize that each of these initiatives should not be viewed as separate endeavors, though they often are.

The following reflection of research examines and analyzes surveyed responses from general education teachers within a Northeastern school district that is currently implementing PBIS. A survey was disseminated across general education teachers (PreK-12) in this district to determine how the district/teachers were already using Tier 1 practices to support SEB and mental health needs within their PBIS framework. Though these differing initiatives are often viewed as siloed in districts and in classrooms, the hope here was to highlight and illuminate that these initiatives in this district should not be and are often not separate. Further, this survey was used as a needs assessment to identify areas for future support for general education teachers based on their feedback. After the description of the survey and results from this district, we offer our reflection on this process and the challenges we faced, as well as possible considerations for districts to further support educators moving forward.

## **METHODS**

### **Framework**

This survey was created using Harlacher and Whitcomb's (2022) book *Bolstering Student Resilience: Creating a Classroom with Consistency, Connection, and Compassion* as a framework for each of the survey questions. As we considered how best to support SEB and mental health needs of students, and how Tier 1 teachers were likely already supporting this in their classrooms, the three C's (consistency, connection, and compassion) became our overarching framework as each of these areas are critical to helping support students social and emotional learning in classes (Harlacher & Whitcomb, 2022). The survey questions focused on the area of consistency asked teachers questions about how they created a classroom environment that is unambiguous by asking questions centering around if they had classroom expectations, routines, if they taught these structures explicitly, and more. The area of connection questions asked how teachers were able to create an instructional environment where they were able to build relationships with students, and also one that asked students to engage in prosocial behaviors. Lastly, the survey asked teachers questions in the area of compassion; we wanted to examine which

practices they used to understand how students are feeling, and how they were responding in order to empower students to use adaptive coping strategies rather than maladaptive behavior (Harlacher & Whitcomb, 2022). All of these questions aimed to examine practices in teacher's classrooms, and each stemmed from this framework, and at its core, the overarching ideas from this book.

When used together, the three C's include practices and strategies that create protective factors for students, and by extension, help to create a protective environment for students as well (Harlacher & Whitcomb, 2022). This book not only outlines these core components of teaching and supporting students' social, emotional, and behavioral supports, but also helps to outline what this may look like in action for educators and in their classes (Harlacher & Whitcomb, 2022). As such, it allowed us to frame our survey questions to see how teachers were using (or not using) practices that align with supporting students SEB health in their classes.

When examining practices aligned with these three C's in a classroom, we wanted to survey teachers about how they were using consistency, connection, and compassion in both their instruction, and in their implementation. As such, we broke down the three C's to align with specific survey questions in both the areas of instruction and implementation to help us gain a better understanding of each of these specific areas (see Table 1). This helped us to understand which areas were areas of strength and helped us to start to understand areas for future support. Further, when examining areas of strength, this helped to illuminate spaces that teachers were already using these practices as a part of their day-to-day teaching; by highlighting these three C's in action, we hoped to show teachers that they are not only already incorporating some of these practices in their classrooms (without "another thing" being added onto an that overflowing plate), but also, that they are incorporating these practices well.



**TABLE 1** – Three C’s Framework with Survey Questions

THE THREE C’S			
	Consistency	Connection	Compassion
Instruction	<p>I have asked for student input in creating the classroom expectations and structures.</p> <p>I explicitly teach classroom structures and expectations, using concrete examples.</p>	<p>I explicitly teach pro-social skills and social, emotional, and behavioral skills to students, in addition to academics.</p>	<p>I have a toolbox of strategies and practices that I can integrate into my classroom in order to support my students’ social, emotional, and behavioral needs.</p> <p>I am flexible in my choice of social-emotional strategies/practices, and adjust my teaching based on student data.</p> <p>I have utilized the mental health resources for students in our district.</p>
Implementation	<p>I work to create safe, predictable routines in my classroom.</p> <p>I have clear classroom expectations for activities in my classroom.</p>	<p>I work to make meaningful and positive connections with my students.</p> <p>I ask for student voice and input in my classroom in regards to academic content and materials.</p>	<p>I encourage student ownership over their work, and their behavior.</p> <p>I collect data on my students’ social, emotional, and behavioral needs.</p> <p>I can predict when challenging behavior occurs in my classroom.</p> <p>I validate my students’ emotions.</p> <p>I know how to respond to student behavior because I understand what they are communicating.</p> <p>I am aware of the mental health resources for students in our district.</p>

## SURVEY DESIGN

In creating this survey, we were intentional to define social, emotional and behavioral (SEB) practices in the introduction so that teachers had a common definition; we were also intentional to ensure we identified how these supports were already integrated in their work as a district with PBIS/SEL. We stated: “Social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) practices are data-driven strategies that can be implemented in order to nurture the *whole* student in the classroom, in addition to teaching them academically. These practices, in addition to mental health resources in the district, help us to support our students more holistically and are included in our work related to PBIS and SEL. By utilizing SEB practices, and mental health resources, we are helping to enhance the wellness of individuals and in the school as a whole. This survey aims to understand how teachers are currently supporting the social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) needs of their students in their classrooms, in addition to their students’ mental health needs. Further, it serves to understand how teachers may need additional training and resources themselves in order to more easily utilize these supports.” Through this introduction, our hope was to frame SEB supports through common language for these overarching ideas, and to remind these teachers that this is work they are already doing in their day-to-day practices with PBIS/SEL.

The survey included 19 questions total; 16 were five-point Likert scale questions, and the final three were open ended. The five-point Likert scale utilized the following options: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The open-ended questions asked teachers to identify the grade bracket they were currently teaching in, as well as asked teachers to identify which SEB practices they were currently using themselves, and which mental health resources they were aware of in their districts.

Each of the five-point Likert scale questions of this survey aligned with one of the three C’s outlined in Harlacher & Whitcomb’s (2022) book: consistency, connection, and compassion. Each of these questions is framed as a statement where each statement outlined a specific practice that teachers could identify as a part of their classroom. The questions for this survey were created by the two authors of this paper; one author of this paper is also a

co-author of *Bolstering Student Resilience: Creating a Classroom with Consistency, Connection, and Compassion* (Harlacher & Whitcomb, 2022). Whitcomb helped to assess and align each question into the three C’s outlined in our framework; further, in doing so, she was able to help us ensure that each question aligned closely with one of the C’s, and thus, helped to ensure each portion of the framework was represented and being assessed through our survey in some capacity. While we recognize this survey is not validated, we felt it would serve as a starting point in examining a broader picture of practices being used by teachers in this district. As such, we chose to focus on these questions to understand which PBIS practices were being used in classrooms across grades in this district; further, we aimed to capture how the incorporation of SEB and mental health supports were likely work already taking place in classrooms. The area of “compassion” aligned most closely with specific practices to support SEB and mental health needs, and as such, there were more questions that fell into the category of compassion than the other C’s; while this area had more questions than the other areas, each area was integral in creating a comprehensive understanding of the practices and foundations being used by teachers in the district as a whole. Additionally, we felt these survey questions would also serve as a needs assessment to identify how we can support the integration of any practices that teachers did not feel they were using.

## SAMPLE

This survey was distributed across this district to general education teachers and to school counselors. For this reflection, we focused on the PreK-12 teacher responses. This district employed 426 full time teachers during the school year this survey was utilized. Across the district, 153 teachers (35.9%) responded to the 19-question survey to determine which SEB practices and mental health resources these general education teachers were currently using. The teacher and grade breakdown from this sample are outlined in Table 2.

**TABLE 2** —Teacher Sample Breakdowns

Total Teacher Sample Size	Number of Teachers Per Grade Band	Grand Bands
n = 153	n = 10	PreK
	n = 40	K-4
	n = 40	5-6
	n = 11	7-8
	n = 51	9-12

Note: One teacher did not disclose their grade band.

### Analysis of Survey and General Education Teacher Responses Tier 1 SEB Supports

This survey highlights PBIS and SEB practices that are already being used in the district, and serves as a needs assessment in helping us to understand how to best support teachers in the district moving forward. The following section analyzes those findings, and breaks them down by identified areas of strength and identified areas for future support. Each of these sections is further broken down by the three C's framework, and helps us to assess which of these areas may need the most support moving forward based on response rates from the teachers.

### Identified Areas of Strength

Through this survey, we found many strong PBIS and SEB practices centering around consistency,

connection, and compassion that are already taking place in the district for both instruction and implementation (see Table 3). For example, when looking at the area of consistency, over 90% of teachers responded “strongly agree” or “agree” to the following questions: “I explicitly teach classroom structures and expectations, using concrete examples” (n=142; 92.81%), “I work to create safe, predictable routines in my classroom” (n= 150; 98.04%), and “I have clear classroom expectations for activities in my classroom” (n=149; 97.38%). This indicates that of the four questions centered around consistency, teachers felt they were already implementing many of these strategies; this further indicates a strength in this area for educators in this district.

**TABLE 3** — Identified Areas of Strength

Three C's Framework	Corresponding Survey Question	Response Percentages
Consistency	I explicitly teach classroom structures and expectations, using concrete examples	Agree: n= 62 (40.52%) Strongly Agree: n= 80 (52.29%)
	I work to create safe, predictable routines in my classroom	Agree: n=31 (20.26%) Strongly Agree: n= 119 (77.78%)
	I have clear classroom expectations for activities in my classroom	Agree: n= 42 (27.45%) Strongly Agree: n= 107 (69.93%)



Connection	I work to make meaningful and positive connections with my students	Agree: n=28 (18.30%) Strongly Agree: n=123 (80.39%)
Compassion	I encourage student ownership over their work, and their behavior	Agree: n=40 (26.14%) Strongly Agree: n=111 (72.55%)
	I validate my students' emotions	Agree: n=72 (47.01%) Strongly Agree: n=75 (49.02%)

When examining the three questions in the area of connection, over 95% of teachers also responded “strongly agree” or “agree” to the following question: “I work to make meaningful and positive connections with my students” (n=151; 98.69%). Lastly, when examining the area of compassion, there were nine questions that aligned with strategies teachers may be using in practice. In this area, over 90% of teachers responded “strongly agree” or “agree” to only two of the nine questions: “I encourage student ownership over their work, and their behavior (n=151; 98.69%),” and “I validate my students’ emotions” (n=147; 96.03%). This indicates that while some of these specific practices are strengths for these teachers, the listed strategies in the area of connection and compassion may be identified as an area for future support moving forward.

Overall, many of these practices, such as creating clear routines and expectations, as well as explicitly teaching them, align with both PBIS and SEB goals.

The same is true for explicitly teaching SEB skills and working to create and foster meaningful relationships with students throughout the school year. Each of these statements above that teachers either strongly agreed with or agreed with are examples of work they are already implementing within their PBIS and SEL frameworks that also support students social, emotional and behavioral needs—though some educators may not realize this overlap.

#### Identified Areas for Support

In addition to highlighting areas of strength and the incredible work the general education teachers were already using in their classrooms, we used the survey questionnaire as a starting point to identify possible professional development opportunity needs. In order to determine areas for future support, we focused on the questions that received over 10% (n=16) of responses in the neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and/or strongly disagree categories (see Table 4).

**TABLE 4** —Identified Areas of Need

Three C's Framework	Corresponding Survey Question	Response Percentages
Consistency	I have asked for student input in creating the classroom expectations and structures.	Neither agree nor disagree: n= 26 (16.99%) Disagree: n= 12 (7.8%) Strongly Disagree: n= 1 (0.65%)
Connection	I ask for student voice and input in my classroom in regards to academic content and materials.	Neither agree nor disagree: n= 42 (27.45%) Disagree: n=9 (5.88%) Strongly Disagree: n= 3 (1.96%)

## Compassion

I explicitly teach prosocial skills and social, emotional, and behavioral skills to students, in addition to academics.

Neither agree nor disagree: n= 12 (7.84%)  
Disagree: n= 5 (3.27%)  
Strongly Disagree: n= 3 (1.96%)

I have a toolbox of strategies and practices that I can integrate into my classroom in order to support my students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs.

Neither agree nor disagree: n= 16 (10.46%)  
Disagree: n= 1 (0.65%)  
Strongly Disagree: n= 1 (0.65%)

I collect data on my students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs.

Neither agree nor disagree: n= 43 (28.10%)  
Disagree: n= 21 (13.70%)  
Strongly Disagree: n= 6 (3.90%)

I am flexible in my choice of social-emotional strategies/practices, and adjust my teaching based on student data.

Neither agree nor disagree: n= 32 (20.92%)  
Disagree: n= 2 (1.30%)  
Strongly Disagree: n= 2 (1.30%)

I can predict when challenging behavior occurs in my classroom.

Neither agree nor disagree: n= 26 (16.99%)  
Disagree: n= 5 (3.27%)  
Strongly Disagree: n= 2 (1.30%)

I know how to respond to student behavior because I understand what they are communicating.

Neither agree nor disagree: n= 18 (11.76%)  
Disagree: n= 3 (1.96%)  
Strongly Disagree: n= 1 (0.65%)

I am aware of the mental health resources for students in our district.

Neither agree nor disagree: n= 33 (21.57%)  
Disagree: n= 24 (15.69%)  
Strongly Disagree: n= 3 (1.96%)

I have utilized the mental health resources for students in our district.

Neither agree nor disagree: n= 45 (29.41%)  
Disagree: n= 20 (13.07%)  
Strongly Disagree: n= 5 (3.27%)

These questions identified gaps across all three of the C's: consistency, connection, and compassion though many of these areas fell within the outlined area of "compassion;" this area again focuses on not only understanding how students are feeling, but also considers how we are responding as educators in order to empower students to use adaptive coping strategies rather than maladaptive behaviors (Harlachar & Whitcomb, 2022). This includes taking data on student behaviors, understanding patterns and meanings of student behaviors, and being aware of mental health resources and other resources students may be able to use within a district. Each of these areas alone can be difficult to do, and especially so without explicit and continued support for educators themselves.

When examining the area of compassion further, we found that the three questions with the highest numbers of respondents using "neither agreed nor disagreed," "disagreed," or "strongly disagreed" all fell within this category. 39.22% (n=60) of the respondents "neither agreed nor disagreed" (n=33), "disagreed" (n=24), or "strongly disagreed" (n=3) with the statement, "I am aware of mental health resources for students in our district." Similarly, 45.75% (n=70) of respondents answered with the same three responses (neither agreed nor disagreed, n=45; disagreed, n= 20; strongly disagreed, n=5) for the claim: "I have utilized the mental health resources for students in our district." This indicates that teachers are not necessarily aware of, nor are they utilizing mental health supports in their districts—which may mean they also do not know where to send students when they do have concerns about their mental health and well-being.

Also notable in the area of compassion, about 45.7% (n=70) of the teachers responded (neither agree nor disagree, n= 43; disagree, n= 21; strongly disagree, n=6) to the following claim: "I collect data on my students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs." In order to make informed decisions that reflect the current needs of students, it is important to collect and review data on our students in order to best support their SEB needs (Center on PBIS, 2021). Such data may include universal mental health screening tools, discipline data, or data related to student social-emotional skill attainment and use. The current findings may indicate that respondents might not know which measures or systems would be best to collect data for their students and school

or may not know how to use said measurement systems. This is another area for future support for teachers.

The final two open-ended questions of the survey asked teachers to both list the current SEB practices they were using, and to list the mental health resources they were familiar with in the district. Teachers were using a large range of practices such as: check-ins, use of school-wide PBIS systems/practices, various types of breaks (e.g., brain breaks, movement breaks, earned breaks), positive reinforcement, safe spaces or calming corners, and relationship-building with students—among many others.


The data from these responses, though anecdotal, show us that while it's clear some teachers are using various evidence-based SEB practices, and some were able to outline a few available mental health resources, there was no real consistency across teachers in the district in either of these areas. In fact, 45.1% (n =69) of the results to the open-ended question that asked teachers to identify SEB practices they were using in their classrooms was left blank or indicated the teacher was unsure. Further, 50.1% (n=78) of the teacher responses to the open-ended question that asked teachers to identify which mental health resources they know of for students in their district were either blank or indicated the teacher was unsure. It should be noted that both of these questions were not mandatory for teachers to respond to in order to submit the survey (none of the questions were mandatory for submission). However, this lack of response, in addition to the many varied open-ended responses from the teachers who did answer these questions, points to a need for a more systematic approach to support students SEB and mental health needs across each of the grade levels; it also suggests that many teachers are not aware of the mental health resources for students in their district and could use further support in learning about as well as accessing those supports.

### **MEETING WITH OUR DISTRICT PARTNERS**

After collecting these responses and synthesizing the data, we met with the school district again to review the collected responses. Through this conversation, we examined areas in which their teachers were implementing practices well already, as well as identified areas for future support.







We discussed that a lot of these practices were happening without an overarching systemic approach, and thus, a lot of the responses varied and resources seemed to be viewed as siloed. The district was surprised by the areas of need, and after asking a few questions, we determined that by helping support teachers in onboarding (i.e., when they begin working in the district) we may be able to create a more cohesive system of support for students in these areas.

In this meeting, the district shared that they were already working on creating a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) protocol manual to outline various protocols for their teachers; this protocol manual will be distributed to all teachers, especially incoming teachers to their district during orientation. Their hope is that the creation of this manual from the district partners will aid in creating a more streamlined system across all of their incoming teachers, and that this document can serve as a “homebase” for all of the various protocols (across tiers and more) for educators to continue to reference. Additionally, having this protocol manual, as well as more support during the onboarding process, will help teachers recognize that a lot of the practices and supports they are already using overlap with other initiatives. This document could also potentially help to identify a pathway of supports for students’ mental health and some of the district resources that are available—both areas which were identified as areas for future support. As such, this document could help to show that none of this work across PBIS, SEB and mental health supports should be viewed as siloed, and rather, is all working in conjunction to support students and staff.

Following this meeting, we offered the following three supports as potential next steps on our end to help illuminate to teachers that SEB/mental health supports are not separate endeavors from the work that is already in place through PBIS in the district. We offered to: work to embed more specific mental health/SEB resources that currently exist within the district for general education teachers within the MTSS protocol document; to assist in creating a webinar for onboarding new teachers with best practices for supporting Tier 1 students’ SEB/mental health needs; and/or to assist in designing a deck of slides for principals/administrators to use before the roll out of new curriculums that coming fall to

create a frame for using common language (defining mental health/SEB) in addition to supporting general education teachers.

The team determined that the first option would align best with the work they had already been doing. As such, we planned to start to work to embed specific mental health/SEB resources that currently exist within the district for teachers within the MTSS protocol document on our end. We determined this as a starting point as the district team had already built this comprehensive and cohesive document, and had a strong working draft. Though we were ultimately unable to help the district move forward with clarifying SEB language and evidence-based SEL practices within their district protocol due to a logistical barrier of being unable to access each grade bands specific SEL curriculums, we were able to support the district over the next year in selecting and piloting an SEB universal screening tool. District Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and school adjustment counselors worked together to support teachers in a pilot of the Social, Academic, & Emotional Risk Screener (SAEBRS; Kilgus et al., 2013). This tool asked teachers to complete a screener for each of their students in order to identify how often that student was displaying specific social behaviors, academic behaviors, and emotional behaviors across the past month (SAEBRS; Kilgus et al., 2013). Fourth grade classrooms in two schools used this measurement tool. This marked the beginning of a district-wide focus on using SEB data to understand the needs of students and better plan tiered support practices that were in line with the district protocol.

## **REFLECTION AND CHALLENGES**

This survey was a good starting point in helping to identify practices that teachers are currently using, as well as areas of need. The survey itself helped us to glean important information, though the open-ended questions had a high “unanswered” or “unsure” rate; this trend of nonresponse for open-ended questions is consistent with existing literature (Millar & Dillman, 2012). Moving forward, we would change the survey slightly in order to make both of these questions mandatory before submitting. Further, we might add an additional open-ended question for any comments, questions, or concerns teachers had, as well as an open-ended question asking them directly what they felt would be an area for future support (i.e., what kind of professional

development/supports would they like to see from the district moving forward?). This district was very willing to disseminate the survey, and was receptive and enthusiastic about the following conservation based on our findings. In future studies, we may want to set up continuous meetings (perhaps on a monthly basis) in order to support the district in next steps (such as professional developments, onboarding, etc.) that are aligned with teacher responses.

This case study and survey helped us to sample teacher input from those in this district, and in doing so, allowed us to hear directly from teachers their needs in the district. Further, it helped us to understand a broader picture of these practices as they were taking place across the different grades in this district. This allowed us to start to home in on future supports that would be helpful to as many teachers as possible based directly on the collective voices of this sample. This survey design was helpful in assessing how SEB/mental health supports fall into the PBIS practices already in place, and further, how that aligns with the three C's framework; however, moving forward, we may want to include additional questions in the areas of consistency and connection. Compassion aligned most closely with the goals of assessing SEB/mental health supports for students, and as such, had the most questions that aligned with this construct. By adding questions under the areas of consistency and connection, we may be able to assess an even broader understanding of the use of each of these three C's, and specific PBIS practices within these areas, if the three C's were all equally represented.

While this study design was helpful as a starting place in hearing from teachers in the district about their needs, the measure was not validated. For this case study, it helped us to understand both areas of strength, as well as identified areas of support, for the district. However, it would be helpful to work towards validation of this measure to ensure it is measuring and assessing each piece of this framework adequately. Though we reviewed this measure with one of the authors of the text we used as a framework, this does not mean the measure is necessarily measuring exactly what we are hoping for. Because of this limitation, the collected data and interpretation serve as a starting point, and should be used in conjunction with other data points from the district to be interpreted fully.

## CONSIDERATIONS

Moving forward, by using a survey such as this one as a needs-assessment within our districts, we can learn a lot about areas for future support directly from our teachers. Further, this can also help us to celebrate a lot of the practices that our teachers already have in place in classrooms by highlighting areas of strength within our districts as well. Creating a comprehensive document for educators outlining district protocols across a variety of areas, just like our partner district created, would be a helpful starting point as a system-wide support for educators; further, these documents could be strengthened by including evidence-based practices (EBPs) embedded for each grade band, as well as work to highlight specific mental health/SEB resources that currently exist for teachers in their districts.

Additionally, there is a need for supporting onboarding teachers as well as current teachers. As teachers start in districts that are implementing a PBIS framework (as well as SEL practices and SEB practices), it's important to assist them in learning about the systems that are in place and how they overlap with one another. Having a professional development or training on these approaches and what they look like in practice would be beneficial for all teachers, and especially new teachers. This onboarding and/or professional development opportunity could also include a frame for using common language (in defining mental health, SEB, SEL, and PBIS/MTSS) in order to support teachers in recognizing not only what each of these supports may look like for students, but also what they look like for educators and the district. Further, this frame for common language can also help educators to see how these systems work together—not apart.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, explicitly asking educators for their voice, feedback, and input in where they would like support moving forward from the district is an important step in finding meaningful and valuable supports specific to each districts' needs. While this survey helped us to collect information and discern areas of need, explicitly asking educators where they would like support moving forward would allow us to target specific interventions for teacher support that align with their areas of greatest need based on their lived experiences. ●





## CONCLUSION

This analytic reflection outlines the use of a Likert scale questionnaire survey to examine which SEB practices and mental health supports general educators are currently using in a Northeastern school district. This survey also served as a needs assessment to determine action steps to support identified areas of need for these teachers. By taking the time to assess where teachers currently are in their daily practice of SEB supports, we can determine not only these identified areas of need, but also find areas of celebration to highlight the strong practices teachers are already using. Collecting this kind of data to use in guiding decision making and future professional development opportunities will ultimately help support teachers in the areas they need most, and in turn, help support our students too.

While the incorporation of SEB supports may be considered an ambitious vision of what teachers are ultimately responsible for in the classroom by some, this reflection starts to show that a lot of this work overlaps (SEB, mental health supports, PBIS/MTSS and SEL) and can be integrated within a lot of the work we are already doing in our classes. Rather than seeing SEB and mental health goals as separate from cognitive and academic goals, creating practices that integrate all of our students' goals—emotional, social, intellectual and behavioral—will support student growth and skill building across all facets of our students' lives. ●



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