

A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE GUIDE

Building Systems of Belonging

An MTSS & SEL Handbook and Workbook

A practical guide for educators and leaders committed to the whole child.

Every student deserves to be
seen, supported, and celebrated.

BELONGING • CONNECTION • EQUITY

DR. BRENDA ORTIZ MCGRATH, Ed.D., MSW

Educational Leader | Founder, ILE Consulting

WELCOME

About the author



Dr. Brenda Ortiz McGrath, Ed.D., MSW, is the founder of ILE Consulting and an educational leader with more than two decades of experience in education, mental health, and social-emotional learning. A former high school principal, she champions student voice, equitable systems of support, and community collaboration.

Her work supports schools in building inclusive cultures that prioritize belonging, emotional safety, academic success, and shared accountability.

Acknowledgments

This handbook is dedicated to the educators, school leaders, counselors, social workers, and support staff whose daily commitment inspires transformation. Your belief in the power of connection is the foundation of meaningful change.

To the students whose voices have shaped my understanding of compassionate leadership: thank you. To my colleagues, mentors, community partners, and family, thank you for continuing to champion the holistic development of every child.

A NOTE TO THE READER

Every school community brings its own histories, languages, and ways of caring. This handbook is an invitation to listen closely, build on those strengths, and lead alongside the people most affected by our decisions.

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How to use this handbook

This guide brings together a practical framework and ready-to-use tools. Use it as a team: reflect on current practice, listen to students and families, choose a priority, and return to the tools as your work evolves.

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Start with strengths. Invite multiple perspectives, examine barriers in the system, and avoid assuming that a difference in language, culture, or behavior is a student deficit.

SUGGESTED TEAM PROCESS

Begin with the readiness assessment, invite student and family perspectives, then select one or two priorities. Use the planning pages to assign responsibility and schedule a review. Return to the tools as conditions and needs change.

TEAM NOTES

Vision & purpose

At ILE Consulting, we believe that transforming school systems starts with transforming mindsets. Every student deserves a school environment where academic potential and emotional well-being are equally nurtured.

Too often, students fall through the cracks not because they lack talent or will, but because systems intended to support them are fragmented, inconsistent, or inaccessible. This handbook offers a clear, compassionate, and actionable approach to MTSS and SEL that is sustainable, culturally responsive, and grounded in real school settings.

This work is about shifting how we lead, how we listen, and how we support the whole child together.

Reflect together

What strengths already exist in our students, families, and community?

What would belonging look and feel like in our school?

PUT BELONGING INTO PRACTICE

Ask students when they feel most connected at school and when they feel unseen. Offer more than one way to respond, including home languages, conversation, drawing, or anonymous feedback. Share what you heard and what will change.

The MTSS framework

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a schoolwide framework that addresses academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and mental health needs. Supports are layered and adjusted in response to student strengths, needs, and progress.

Tier 1 | Universal

High-quality instruction and schoolwide practices for all students, including explicit social-emotional skill building, clear expectations, culturally responsive instruction, and use of data to strengthen classroom practice.

Tier 2 | Targeted

Additional support for students who need more than universal supports, such as small-group instruction, mentoring, and regular progress monitoring. Tier 2 supplements rather than replaces Tier 1.

Tier 3 | Intensive

Individualized supports based on student needs, which may include individualized planning, counseling, and coordinated services with families and community partners.

Equity lens: Examine who receives support, who experiences barriers, and whether practices affirm students' identities, languages, and lived experiences.

A QUESTION FOR THE TEAM

Are students receiving additional support because of a skill or access need, or are our routines, materials, language practices, or expectations creating a barrier? Review patterns across groups and look beyond a single data point.

TEAM NOTES

FOUNDATION

SEL implementation overview

A tiered, team-based approach to embedding SEL schoolwide

Social-emotional learning supports belonging, relationships, and skills that help students engage and learn. It is most meaningful when it is woven into instruction, routines, relationships, and the broader school culture.

Core elements of the model

- Tier 1 integration: Embed SEL in core instruction, classroom routines, advisory, and morning meetings.
- Clear team roles: Establish a school-based team and shared ownership across educators and support staff.
- Practical tools: Use walkthroughs, reflection, and strategy banks to guide implementation.
- Adult capacity: Build trust, model skills, and provide consistent professional learning.
- Reflection and improvement: Learn from observations and student, staff, and family feedback; use assessments only when appropriate and permitted.

“Every adult has the power to create a culture of connection - and that is where transformation begins.”

— Dr. Brenda Ortiz McGrath

SEL IN A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM

A student may show respect, confidence, or participation differently across settings and cultures. Invite students to describe what helps them feel safe and included; do not treat one style of communication as the standard for everyone.

TEAM NOTES

Problem of Practice

Strengthening Tier 1 Social-Emotional Learning Practices Across Schools

Problem Statement

A school district may have a growing commitment to supporting the whole child, yet Tier 1 SEL practices are not consistently embedded across daily classroom instruction and schoolwide routines. In the absence of a common Tier 1 SEL framework, SEL implementation can vary across schools and classrooms, leaving students with uneven access to proactive practices that build belonging, emotional safety, self-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Why This Matters

When SEL is primarily reactive, support often reaches students after social-emotional or behavioral challenges have already escalated. A stronger Tier 1 model helps shift the system upstream by making belonging, relationships, predictable routines, student voice, and proactive supports part of every student's everyday classroom experience.

Current Gap

Area of Need	Description of the Gap
Shared Framework	There is not yet a consistent districtwide Tier 1 SEL framework that defines what adults should see, do, and reinforce across classrooms.
Adult Practice	Educators may use SEL strategies inconsistently or as isolated lessons rather than as embedded instructional and relational practices.
Leadership Feedback	Administrators may lack a common observation tool and shared language for providing SEL-aligned, actionable feedback.
Data Use	Schools need a practical way to monitor Tier 1 SEL implementation and use the information for coaching, professional learning, and continuous improvement.

Root Causes to Explore

- SEL expectations may not be clearly defined as observable Tier 1 classroom practices.
- Professional learning may not yet be paired with ongoing coaching, modeling, and feedback.
- School teams may have different understandings of SEL, school climate, student support, and Tier 1 prevention.
- Data systems may focus more on student outcomes than on adult implementation practices that shape student experience.

Primary Inquiry Question

How can a school district develop a cohesive and systemic approach to embedding Tier 1 SEL practices into daily instruction so that all students experience consistent belonging, connection, emotional safety, and proactive support?

Supporting Questions

- What Tier 1 SEL look-fors should be consistently visible across classrooms and school settings?
- What professional learning and coaching structures will help educators integrate SEL into daily instruction and classroom routines?
- How can school leaders use a walkthrough framework to provide feedback that is specific, actionable, supportive, and aligned to Tier 1 SEL practice?

- How can a prevention-focused SEL model reduce overreliance on reactive Tier 2 and Tier 3 responses over time?

Proposed Change Idea

The proposed change is to implement a structured SEL Tier 1 Walkthrough Framework that helps leaders observe classroom practices, identify evidence of belonging and proactive support, and provide non-evaluative feedback to educators. The framework creates a shared language for SEL implementation and gives schools practical data for professional learning and continuous improvement.

Measures of Progress

Measure Type	Examples
Implementation Measures	Completion of administrator training; number of walkthroughs conducted; calibration participation; use of feedback protocol.
Adult Practice Measures	Walkthrough evidence of belonging, relationships, routines/proactive supports, and SEL integration/student voice.
Feedback Quality Measures	Administrator feedback becomes more specific, evidence-based, actionable, supportive, and aligned to Tier 1 SEL look-fors.
Student Experience Measures	Student belonging or school climate indicators show positive movement during implementation, when available.

Scope and Boundaries

- This project focuses on Tier 1 classroom practices and leadership feedback systems.
- The walkthrough framework is a continuous improvement tool and should not be used for teacher evaluation.
- Student belonging data may be used as a secondary indicator; results should be interpreted carefully and not framed as causal unless the study design supports that claim.

Desired Outcomes

- A clearer districtwide definition of Tier 1 SEL practice.
- More consistent classroom implementation of belonging-centered and proactive SEL practices.
- A shared leadership tool for observing SEL and providing actionable feedback.
- Improved alignment between school climate work, social work/student support systems, and classroom practice.
- A stronger prevention-focused foundation that supports student well-being and academic engagement.

Equity Lens

This Problem of Practice centers on student access to belonging and proactive support. A districtwide Tier 1 SEL model should help ensure that all students—across schools, grade levels, classrooms, identities, and learning needs—experience consistent adult practices that communicate safety, respect, connection, and high expectations.

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SEL Districtwide Implementation Model

A coherent Tier 1 SEL system for belonging, connection, and proactive support

Purpose

This implementation model provides a districtwide structure for strengthening social-emotional learning (SEL) as a Tier 1 practice across schools. The model is designed to move SEL from isolated activities or reactive supports into a shared, proactive system embedded in daily classroom routines, adult practice, school culture, and continuous improvement.

Vision

Every student experiences a school environment where they are known, valued, emotionally safe, and connected. SEL is not treated as an add-on program; it is a daily practice reflected in relationships, routines, instruction, student voice, and supportive adult responses.

Theory of Action

If a district establishes clear SEL roles, builds shared adult capacity, uses a common Tier 1 walkthrough framework, and reviews implementation data regularly, then schools will strengthen the consistency of Tier 1 SEL practices and students will experience stronger belonging, connection, and proactive support.

Districtwide SEL Model: Core Components

Component	What It Means in Practice	Primary Owners
1. District SEL Leadership	Coordinate districtwide SEL priorities, align SEL with climate and student support work, and monitor implementation across schools.	District SEL lead/coordinator, cabinet, school leaders
2. School-Based SEL Leads	Identify one or more SEL leads in each school to champion implementation, support staff learning, and communicate school-level needs.	SEL leads, principals, school climate leaders
3. School SEL Teams (SELT)	Create or strengthen a school-based team that reviews SEL data, plans Tier 1 practices, shares strategies, and identifies support needs.	Teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators, family/community partners
4. Professional Learning & Coaching	Provide ongoing professional learning on belonging, emotional safety, restorative practices, routines, student voice, and trauma-informed approaches.	District SEL lead, SEL leads, instructional leaders
5. Curriculum & Classroom Integration	Embed SEL into daily academic instruction, classroom routines, collaborative learning, reflection, and relationship-building practices.	Teachers, coaches, SEL leads
6. Data & Continuous Improvement	Use walkthrough data, student belonging data, staff feedback, and school climate indicators to identify strengths and next steps.	District SEL team, SELT, principals

Tier 1 SEL Practice Areas

- Belonging and emotional safety: students are greeted, respected, and supported to participate.
- Relationships and student connection: adults know students, use warm interactions, and notice student needs.
- Predictable routines and proactive supports: expectations, transitions, reminders, and supports are clear before behavior escalates.
- SEL integration and student voice: students reflect, collaborate, make choices, problem-solve, and practice SEL skills during instruction.

Implementation Phases

Phase	Key Actions
Phase 1: Align	Confirm district SEL vision, define Tier 1 SEL look-fors, identify school SEL leads, and connect the work to existing climate/student support structures.

Phase 2: Build Capacity	Train leaders and SEL teams on the Tier 1 SEL walkthrough framework, feedback practices, and use of implementation data.
Phase 3: Implement	Conduct brief, non-evaluative walkthroughs focused on evidence of belonging, relationships, proactive supports, and student voice.
Phase 4: Learn from Data	Review trends across classrooms, teams, and schools; identify common strengths and priority areas for coaching or professional learning.
Phase 5: Refine and Sustain	Adjust supports, celebrate growth, scale effective practices, and embed SEL routines into school improvement cycles.

Data Sources

- SEL Tier 1 walkthrough rubric data, reviewed for patterns rather than teacher evaluation.
- Samples of administrator feedback for specificity, actionability, and alignment to SEL/Tier 1 practices.
- Student belonging or school climate survey data, when available.
- Staff reflections, SELT meeting notes, and professional learning feedback.
- Attendance, discipline, and referral trends as contextual indicators, not as stand-alone proof of impact.

Success Indicators

- Schools use a shared language for Tier 1 SEL practices.
- Administrators provide more specific, observable, and supportive feedback connected to SEL look-fors.
- Walkthrough data show greater consistency in belonging, relationships, proactive supports, and student voice.
- SEL teams use data to plan professional learning and coaching cycles.
- Student belonging indicators show positive movement during implementation.

Equity and Non-Evaluative Use

This model should be implemented as a continuous improvement structure, not a teacher evaluation system. The purpose is to help adults identify what students experience across classrooms and to strengthen conditions that support belonging, emotional safety, and access to learning for all students.

Recommended Next Step

Pilot the SEL Tier 1 Walkthrough Framework in a small number of schools or grade spans, calibrate leaders on look-fors and feedback language, and use early data to refine the districtwide implementation plan.

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SEL District-wide Implementation Model: ReImagined

Vision: Developing a model for social-emotional learning (SEL) within the school sector that includes SEL leads in every school and SELT (Social-Emotional Learning Team) members under a cultural climate umbrella can greatly enhance the overall well-being and growth of students.

Objective: Establishing a Supportive Culture:

- Create a positive and inclusive school culture that fosters SEL and prioritizes student well-being.
- Develop a shared vision and mission statement for SEL across all schools.
- Ensure that all stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, students, and parents, actively support and promote SEL.

District-wide Framework/Model:

1. District-wide SEL Coordinator:

- Appoint a dedicated SEL coordinator(s) who will oversee the implementation of the district-wide SEL model.
- The SEL coordinator will collaborate with school leaders, teachers, and community partners to ensure consistent implementation and continuous improvement.
- Provide ongoing support and guidance to schools and staff in implementing SEL practices effectively.

2. Leadership and Commitment:

- Establish a district-wide SEL leadership team consisting of district administrators, principals, teachers, and community stakeholders.
- Develop a shared vision and mission statement for SEL that aligns with the district's goals and values.
- Ensure that district leaders actively support and prioritize SEL initiatives.

3. SEL Leads:

- Appoint dedicated SEL leads in each school who will serve as champions for SEL.
- Provide training and resources to SEL leads to enhance their knowledge and skills in promoting SEL.
- Collaborate with SEL leads to develop and implement SEL initiatives and programs tailored to each school's needs.
 - Social-Emotional Learning Team (SELT):
 - Form a SELT in each school, consisting of teachers, counselors, administrators, and other relevant staff members.
 - The SELT should meet regularly to discuss and plan SEL initiatives, share best practices, and address student needs.
 - Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for SELT members to enhance their understanding and implementation of SEL strategies.

4. Capacity Building - Professional Development and Training:

- Provide comprehensive professional development opportunities for all district staff to enhance their understanding and implementation of SEL practices.
- Offer ongoing training on topics such as trauma-informed practices, restorative justice, mindfulness, and effective communication.
- Collaborate with external experts and organizations to provide specialized training and resources.

5. Curriculum Integration:

- Integrate SEL into the school curriculum across all grade levels and subjects.
- Provide teachers with training and resources to effectively incorporate SEL into their lessons.
- Collaborate with SEL leads and SELT members to develop age-appropriate SEL activities and lesson plans.

6. Data Collection and Assessment:

- Implement a system for collecting data on students' social-emotional competencies, school climate, and behavior.
- Use evidence-based SEL assessments to measure students' growth and identify areas for improvement.
- Analyze data to inform decision-making and tailor interventions to meet the specific needs of students and schools.

7. Continuous Improvement and Evaluation:

- Regularly assess the impact and effectiveness of district-wide SEL initiatives.
- Collect feedback from students, parents, and staff to identify strengths, challenges, and areas for growth.
- Use evaluation findings to make data-driven decisions and refine the district-wide SEL model.

8. Assessment and Evaluation:

- Establish a system for assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of SEL initiatives.
- Use a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures to track student progress in SEL competencies.
- Regularly review and refine SEL programs based on evaluation results and feedback from students, teachers, and parents.

Tools at a glance

Use these planning and reflection pages with school or district teams. Adapt each tool to local policies and the strengths of your community.

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Use the pages your team needs. Student-specific pages contain sensitive information; store and share them according to your school or district procedures.

TEAM NOTES

TOOL 01

SEL team roles & responsibilities

Identify members, clarify responsibilities, and share ownership.

Role	Name	Responsibilities / notes
SEL lead		
Administrator		
School counselor		
School social worker		
Classroom teacher		
Family liaison		
Community partner		
Student representative		

Meeting schedule and communication plan:

SHARED OWNERSHIP

Invite members to name what they bring, the decisions they can make, and what support they need. When students or families participate, plan access, interpretation, and a clear way to report back.

Districtwide SEL Tier 1 Walkthrough Rubric

A brief, non-evaluative tool for observing classroom belonging, relationships, proactive supports, and student voice.

Purpose: Use during 10–15 minute walkthroughs to collect brief evidence of Tier 1 SEL practices and provide supportive feedback.

Important: This tool is for continuous improvement and calibration. It is not intended for teacher evaluation.

Rating Scale

0 — Not observed	1 — Emerging	2 — Developing	3 — Consistently evident
Not seen during this brief visit.	Practice is present but limited, unclear, or inconsistent.	Practice is visible and helpful, though not yet consistent for all students.	Practice is clearly embedded in routines, interactions, and classroom culture.

Walkthrough Domains

Domain	Look-Fors	Evidence Prompt	Rating
1. Belonging & Emotional Safety	Students are acknowledged by name or presence. Adult tone is calm, respectful, and affirming. Students appear comfortable participating, asking questions, and making mistakes. Classroom visuals, language, and routines communicate that students are welcome and included.	Who appears included? Who may still be on the margins? What evidence suggests students feel safe to engage?	0 1 2 3
2. Relationships & Student Connection	Adult interactions show warmth, responsiveness, and knowledge of students. Adult notices student needs, uses positive narration, checks in, and responds in ways that preserve dignity. Students appear known, respected, and connected to adults and peers.	What relationship-building moves are visible? How does the adult respond when a student needs support?	0 1 2 3
3. Predictable Routines & Proactive Supports	Expectations are clear, and routines are predictable. Transitions are organized. Adult uses reminders, visuals, proximity, choices, pre-correction, and positive reinforcement before behavior escalates. Support is preventive rather than mostly reactive.	What routines are helping students succeed? What proactive support could reduce confusion or escalation?	0 1 2 3
4. SEL Integration & Student Voice	Students have opportunities to reflect, collaborate, make choices, share ideas, or practice SEL skills such as self-awareness, empathy, problem-solving, perseverance, or responsible decision-making. Student voice is visible in learning and classroom culture.	Where do students have voice, choice, collaboration, or reflection? How is SEL embedded into instruction rather than added on?	0 1 2 3

Brief Evidence Notes

Strength observed: I noticed...	Opportunity / next step: Consider...

Overall Tier 1 SEL Implementation

Overall Rating	1 — Emerging	2 — Developing	3 — Strong
Circle one: 1 2 3	SEL practices are limited, inconsistent, or mostly reactive.	Some SEL-aligned practices are present, but implementation varies.	SEL practices are consistently embedded into routines, relationships, instruction, and culture.

Administrator Feedback Quality Check

Check before sending feedback	Response
Feedback is based on observable evidence.	Yes / No
Feedback connects to one Tier 1 SEL practice.	Yes / No
Feedback includes one realistic next step.	Yes / No
Feedback is specific, supportive, and non-evaluative.	Yes / No
Feedback names impact on student belonging, connection, or engagement.	Yes / No

Use patterns across walkthroughs to identify schoolwide strengths, calibration needs, and next steps for Tier 1 SEL implementation.

TOOL 03

Readiness self-assessment

Rate each statement: 1 = Not yet | 2 = Somewhat | 3 = Mostly | 4 = Fully in place

Readiness indicator	Circle rating
Leadership communicates a clear SEL vision.	1 2 3 4
SEL is included in the school improvement plan.	1 2 3 4
A designated SEL lead or team is in place.	1 2 3 4
Staff are open to SEL integration.	1 2 3 4
Time is allocated for planning and learning.	1 2 3 4
Staff have received training on SEL strategies.	1 2 3 4
MTSS structures include SEL across tiers.	1 2 3 4
Data informs monitoring and improvement.	1 2 3 4
School culture supports collaboration and reflection.	1 2 3 4
Families are informed about SEL efforts.	1 2 3 4
Community partnerships support the work.	1 2 3 4
Two-way communication with families is in place.	1 2 3 4

Score: ____ / 48. 36–48: strong | 24–35: moderate | 12–23: early

Use the score to guide conversation, not as a validated measure. Discuss evidence and differences in perspective.

Which area needs attention first, and who should join the conversation?

MAKE MEANING TOGETHER

Compare ratings across roles and discuss the evidence behind them. A lower score identifies a starting point for support, not a judgment of staff or students. Identify one actionable next step and a date to revisit it.

Individual support plan

For a student receiving individualized support. Follow local privacy and records procedures.

Student: _____ Date: _____

Team members and student / family perspectives:

Student strengths, interests, and goals:

Priority goals (academic, behavioral, and/or SEL):

Strategies and supports; person responsible:

Progress monitoring: measure, frequency, and person responsible:

Review date: _____

PLAN WITH THE STUDENT AND FAMILY

Ask what has worked before, what the student wants adults to understand, and how the family prefers to communicate. Provide interpretation when needed and explain the plan in clear, accessible language.

TEAM NOTES

Tiered SEL strategies bank

Select strategies with students and families, considering age, culture, language, context, and evidence.

Tier 1 | Universal

- Build relationships and teach clear expectations.
- Provide movement breaks and opportunities to draw or journal.
- Teach social skills and recognize positive behavior.
- Use calm, respectful responses and avoid power struggles.

Tier 2 | Targeted

- Check-in/check-out, mentoring, or small-group coping skills.
- Social stories, self-monitoring, calming strategies, or peer mediation when appropriate.
- Develop an individualized agreement with the student and monitor progress.

Tier 3 | Intensive

- Individualized behavior support planning informed by an assessment when appropriate.
- Counseling referral, coordinated wraparound services, mentoring, or restorative support.
- Review the fit and impact of each intervention with the student and family.

Adapted from the original handbook's strategies list; see PBIS World in the references for additional ideas. Select practices according to local policy and professional guidance.

CHOOSING A STRATEGY

Begin with strengths and a clear purpose. Ask the student and family whether the strategy fits, identify who will deliver it and how often, and agree on a review date. A strategy should support dignity, access, and connection.

TEAM NOTES

TOOL 06

Action planning template

Select a priority and make the next steps clear, measurable, and shared.

Priority 1

Action step and intended result:

Lead: _____ Timeline: _____ Review date: _____

Priority 2

Action step and intended result:

Lead: _____ Timeline: _____ Review date: _____

Priority 3

Action step and intended result:

Lead: _____ Timeline: _____ Review date: _____

PROGRESS CHECK

At the review date, ask: What did we do? What changed? Whose experience improved? What barriers remain? Use the answers to adjust the plan and communicate the next steps.

TEAM NOTES

Team reflection questions

Use these prompts for a team meeting or individual reflection.

How is SEL currently embedded in our school or district culture?

What data or examples illustrate the impact of our SEL and MTSS efforts?

What challenges have we faced, and how have we responded?

Who is championing the work, and how are we supporting them?

Where are the gaps in systems, communication, or capacity?

What is our collective next step to deepen and sustain the work?

CENTER VOICES THAT ARE OFTEN MISSED

Invite a range of perspectives, including multilingual families, students with disabilities, and students who may not usually speak in meetings. Offer accessible ways to participate and report back on what the team learned.

SEL integration checklist

Check what is in place and identify what still needs attention.

Planning & vision

- ☐ Define a shared SEL vision aligned with MTSS and equity.
- ☐ Engage students, families, staff, and community partners.
- ☐ Identify strengths, disparities, and measurable goals.

Professional learning

- ☐ Provide ongoing learning in SEL and culturally responsive practice.
- ☐ Support integration into academic instruction and examine bias.

Implementation

- ☐ Embed SEL in daily routines and use appropriate, affirming materials.
- ☐ Use walkthroughs and peer feedback to strengthen practice.

Continuous improvement

- ☐ Review feedback and relevant data; adjust implementation.
- ☐ Celebrate progress and establish structures for sustainability.

EQUITY CHECK

For each item, ask: Who helped shape this practice? Who can access it? Who benefits? Whose experience tells us we need to make a change? Use the answers to guide your next steps.

TEAM NOTES

Reflection & next steps

Priority 1: What do we want to strengthen and why?

Priority 2: What do we want to strengthen and why?

Who needs to be involved, including students and families?

Next steps, responsible people, and timeline:

How will we know whether our actions are making a difference?

COMMIT TO FOLLOW-THROUGH

Choose a date to return to this page. Share the plan in accessible languages and formats, and invite students and families to tell the team whether the actions are improving their experience.

TOOL 10

Tier 2 referral form

For targeted academic, behavioral, attendance, or social-emotional support. Use according to local privacy procedures.

Student: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Referring staff: _____

Area of concern: ☐ Academic ☐ Behavior ☐ Social/emotional ☐ Attendance

Student strengths and interests:

Specific concern and context; strategies already tried:

Student and family perspective; communication or language needs:

Support requested and next steps:

Team review date: _____ Contact / follow-up: _____

STRENGTHS BEFORE ASSUMPTIONS

Describe observable patterns and the supports already offered. Consider the role of language access, classroom environment, relationships, and opportunity to learn. A referral is the beginning of a team conversation.

RESOURCES

References & further learning

Use these sources alongside the tools and context of your own community.

CASEL | The CASEL Framework

SEL competencies, learning settings, and systemic implementation.

<https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>

Center on MTSS | Essential Components

A foundation for tiered supports, progress monitoring, and data-based decisions.

<https://mtss4success.org/essential-components>

Center on PBIS | Cultural Responsiveness Field Guide

Resources for integrating cultural responsiveness into schoolwide systems.

<https://www.pbis.org/resource/pbis-cultural-responsiveness-field-guide-resources-for-trainers-and-coaches>

Institute of Education Sciences | Multilingual Students

Culturally sustaining teaching practices that build on language and identity.

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/infographics/pdf/REL_PA_Culturally_Sustaining_Teaching_Practices_for_Multilingual_Students.pdf

CASEL | SEL with Families and Caregivers

Ideas for family partnership in SEL implementation.

<https://casel.org/systemic-implementation/sel-with-families-caregivers/>

Center on MTSS | Integrated MTSS Fidelity Rubric

An optional implementation resource for elementary school teams.

<https://mtss4success.org/resource/integrated-mtss-rubric>

PBIS World | Strategies and Interventions

Practical strategy ideas; consider fit, evidence, and local guidance.

<https://www.pbisworld.com/>