



Breaking the Silos between our Public Health and School Systems: How to Build a Single, Cohesive Continuum of Support with the Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF)



**Brian Meyer & Katie Pohlman**  
– Midwest PBIS Network

**Nicole Johnson** – North Chicago D187

**Maggie Cueller** – Josselyn Center

## Call to Action

The "business as usual" approach of **siloed services, fragmented partnerships, and reactive, referral-based interventions** is failing to meet the persistent needs of Illinois youth.

This session calls for a shift away from even co-location of services, and toward a robust, multi-tiered public health model. The **Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF)** provides a research-validated process to unifying schools and community agencies into a single, cohesive continuum of support.

**A** State level agencies explore the need and steps to work differently together

**B** Regional Leadership teams form to explore ISF among community providers and school systems

**C** Local Agency (School District or Community Provider) develop an ISF with their partner agency

## Connect: Who is in the room today?

- Who identifies with the community health sector? education sector?
- Do we have any state/regional leaders in the room (i.e., state agency, Regional Office of Education)?
- Who are our agency/district/school leaders in the room (i.e., agency director, clinical director, superintendent, director of MTSS, etc)?
- Who are are more direct services providers (i.e., community mental health clinicians, school-based clinicians, teachers)?

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## Breaking Down the Issue



Green, J. G., & Splett, J. W. (2026). *Promising practices for school organization of mental health supports* (Brief No. 38). EdResearch for Action; Annenberg Institute at Brown University; Results for America. <https://edresearchforaction.org/research-briefs/promising-practices-for-school-organization-of-mental-health-supports/>

- **Youth depression, anxiety, and suicide on the rise**
  - 40% of high school students reported experiencing persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness
  - Suicide is third leading cause of death among 15-19 year olds
  - COVID-19 caused sharp rise in mental health needs
- **Impacting school and life outcomes**
  - Less likely to graduate on time, lower academic achievement, persistent absenteeism, higher suspension and expulsion rate
- **Youth not receiving mental health services, especially in underserved communities**
  - Attend only 1-2 sessions; not adequate for effectiveness
  - Racial/ethnic, socio-economic, and geographic disparities
- **Schools are primary sources for mental health care**
  - **Yet only 56%** of school leaders believe their schools can effectively provide mental health services to all students in need

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## Let's Chat:

### Current Status for Accessing Mental Health Supports

How do youth currently access mental health support in **your community**?

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## Let's Chat:

### Current Status for Accessing Mental Health Supports

How do youth currently access mental health support in **your community**?

What are barriers with these current approaches to accessing mental health support?

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# Evidence-Based and Promising Practices



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- **Locate mental health services within schools**
  - Increases access and service use
  - Racial and ethnic disparities shrink or disappear
  - Lower rates for mental health episodes and conditions for a **few**
- **Effective collaboration between school and community mental health providers**
  - Interconnected Systems Framework - leads to more students receiving services, fewer disciplinary incidents, and improved student engagement **schoolwide**
    - Clear referral processes
    - Coordinated care across sectors
- **Providing a continuum of preventative supports and services**
  - Providing early intervention services more important than having more providers
- **Universal mental health screening**
  - With clear systems for reviewing and connecting students to appropriate support
- **Educators are critical to effective school-based mental health**
  - No co-location, but **co-designing and delivering** – interventions delivered by school staff are most effective

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# Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

*Collaboration is needed....*



Non-medical factors that affect health outcomes.

Addressing SDOH can enhance health and lead to better outcomes.

## 5 Social Determinants of Health

Image from Center for Disease Control and Prevention

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## Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF)

School and Community Agencies use *data together* to assess the needs of young people, and *together as an integrated team* select, vertically align, install, and monitor *three tiers of evidence-based practices* that match the specific needs in their community

Rev 5/1/26



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School and Community Agencies use *data together* to assess the needs of young people, and *together as an integrated team* select, vertically align, install, and monitor *three tiers of evidence-based practices* that match the specific needs in their community **and promote systems change for SDOH.**

Rev 5/1/26



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School and Community Agencies use **data together** to assess the needs of young people, and **together as an integrated team** select, vertically align, install, and monitor **three tiers of evidence-based practices** that match the specific needs in their community **and promote systems change for SDOH.**

*This means moving away from  
co-located model...*



*to a fully integrated system*



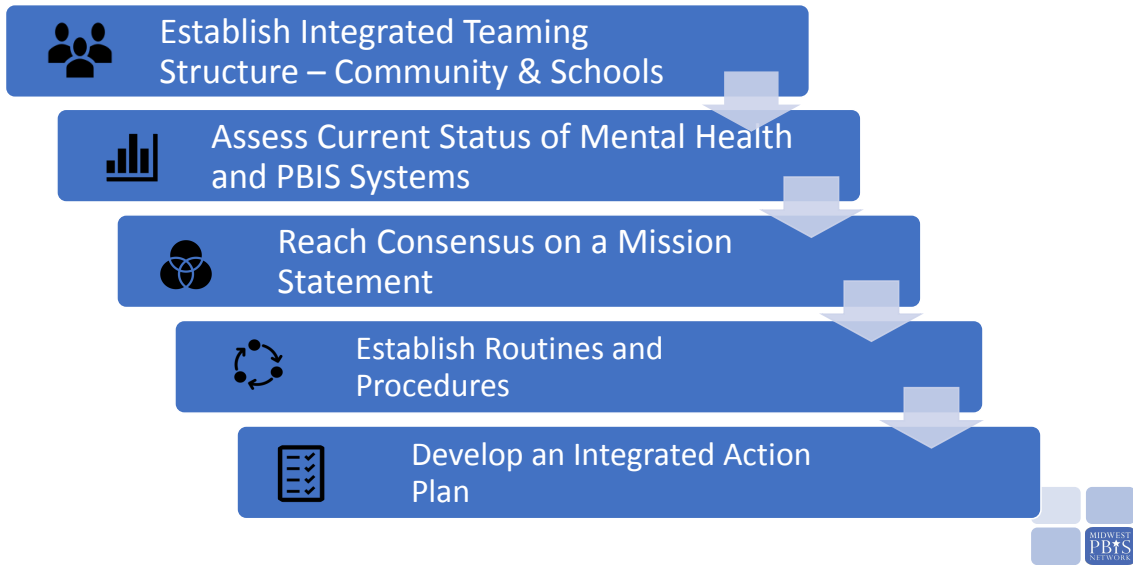
Rev 5/1/26

## ISF Origins

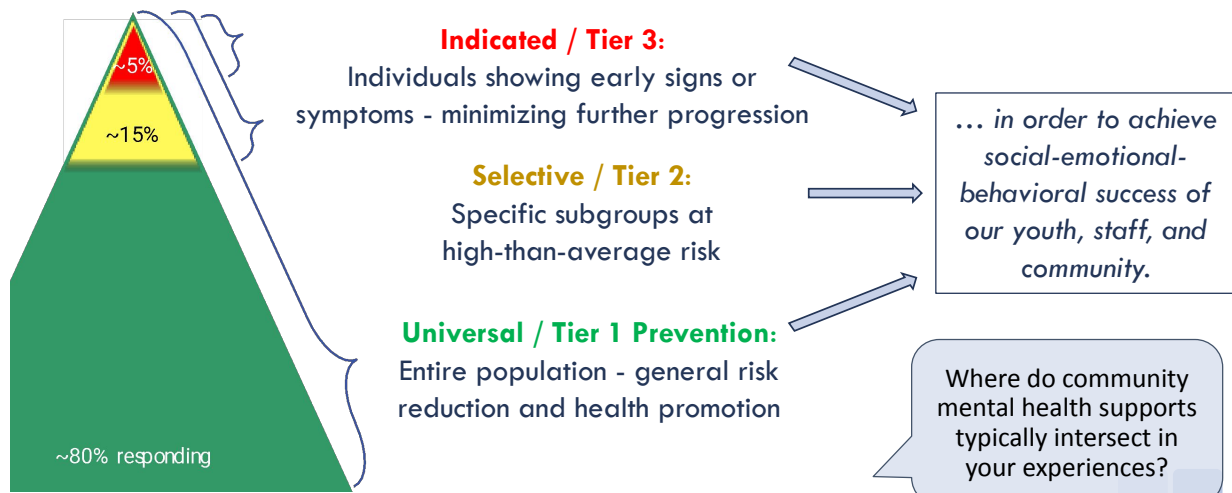
- **2008:** Publication of the **ISF White Paper**, co-originated by leaders from PBIS and School Mental Health.
- **2012–2013:** Release of the **ISF Monograph**, the first comprehensive blueprint for integrating these two systems.
- **2015–2016:** Ongoing **Learning Community** and targeted webinar series
- **2016:** **Randomized Control Trial (RCT)**
- **2019:** Release of **Monograph Volume 2**
- **2022:** **RCT Results** are published
- **2023–2026:** Expanded demonstrations and research



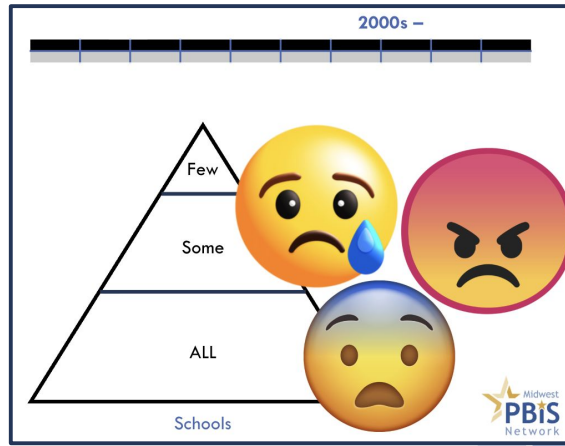
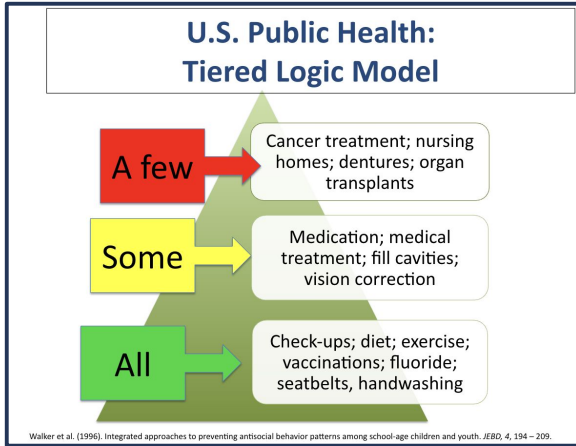
## Installation Steps (the How)



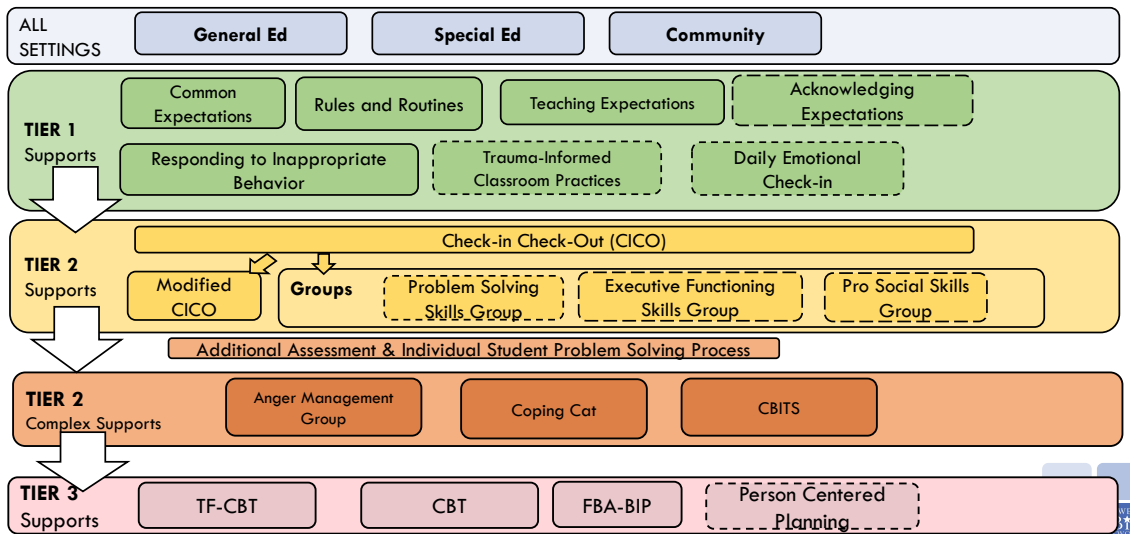
## Multi-Tiered System of Support was Derived from Public Health



# MTSS Applied



## Sample - Continuum of School & Community Delivered Interventions



# ISF Enhances MTSS Core Features

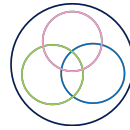


1. Team based leadership and coordination
2. Evaluation of implementation fidelity
3. Three-Tiered Continuum of evidence-based practices
4. Continuous data-based progress monitoring and decision-making
5. Comprehensive universal screening (for systemic and early access)
6. Ongoing professional development including coaching with local content expertise

Midwest PBIS Network 10-19-21. Adapted from: McIntosh, K. & Goodman, S. (2016). Integrated Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: Blending RTI and PBIS. New York: Guilford Press.

## Systems

1. *Expand membership* of team-based leadership and coordination
6. Professional development, coaching, and content expertise for *both school and community*



## Data

2. Evaluation of fidelity *for all interventions*
4. Progress monitoring *for all interventions*
5. Universal screening *for both internalizing and externalizing behaviors*

## Practices

3. *Single* three-tiered continuum of culturally relevant evidence-based interventions



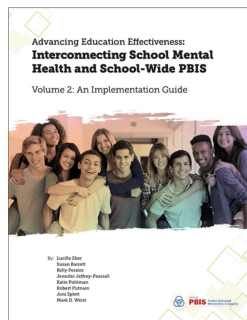
# ISF Volume 2: An Implementation Guide

<https://www.pbis.org/mental-health-social-emotional-well-being>

## How to Address Mental Health in Schools

Education and mental health leaders understand the need to establish one system of social-emotional learning. Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF) is a way to blend PBIS with mental health supports and community leaders to fund and modify policies and procedures to help every system work. Integrated district structures – become part of multi-tiered school teams to address the social-emotional needs of students. The ISF expands the PBIS framework as a way to assist teams and enhance their efforts.

### The ISF Implementation Guide




ADVANCING EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS: INTERCONNECTING SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH AND SCHOOL-WIDE PBIS VOLUME 2: AN IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

- Title Page, Acknowledgments
- Preface: Mark Weist, Prof of Psychology
- Chapter 1: Introduction: Social-Emotional Learning and Mental Health
- Chapter 2: Defining Interconnected Systems Framework and Key Messages
- Chapter 3: Exploration and Adoption
- Chapter 4: Installing and Initial Implementation of ISF at the Building Level
- Companion Resource: District-Level Coaching Resources
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- Chapter 6: Implementation, Sustainability and Recommendations to the Field
- Commentary: Sharon Hoagwood, School of Medicine, Division Director, Center for School Mental Health

## Chapters

- **Chapter 1:** Context and Structure for Volume
- **Chapter 2:** Defining ISF: Origins, Critical Features, and Key Messages
- **Chapter 3:** Exploration and Adoption
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# North Chicago School District #187 & Josselyn Center Partnership

Interconnected Systems for Student  
Mental Health & Wellness

## Introductions & Demographics

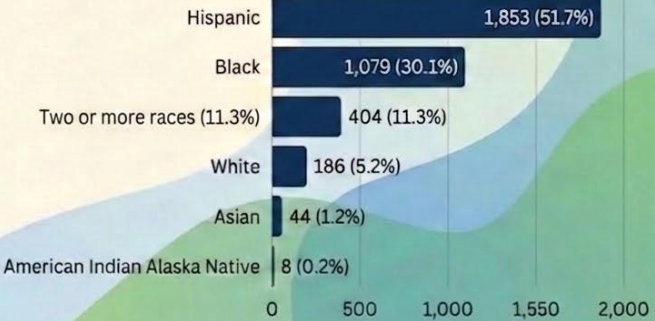
### Introductions

- 
 Nicole Johnson, Director of Student Achievement, North Chicago School District #187
- 
 Maggie Nash, Director of The Josselyn Center

### District #187 Data

**Student Population: 3,586**

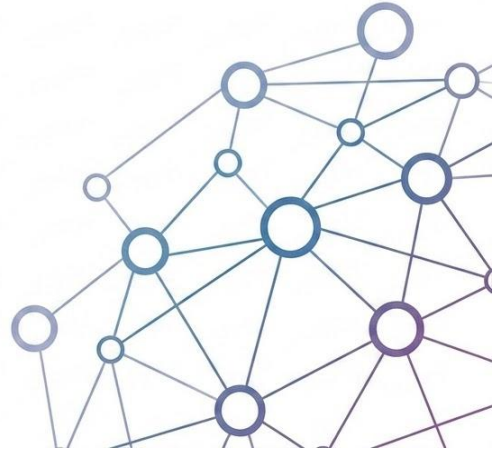
### Demographics



Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
Hispanic	1,853	51.7%
Black	1,079	30.1%
Two or more races	404	11.3%
White	186	5.2%
Asian	44	1.2%
American Indian Alaska Native	8	0.2%

## What Was the Need to Interconnect?

- Increasing mental health needs
- Limited access
- Gaps in services
- Reactive system
- Trauma Informed Care



## What Resources Got You Started?



Grant funding



Leadership  
commitment






Data-sharing  
agreements MOU






MTSS Systems  
Framework

# Systems Changes

## Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)






-  Tier 1 SEL
-  Tier 2 groups
-  Tier 3 intensive support

## Implementation Drivers







-  Evidence-based practices
-  Alignment with MTSS/PBIS
-  Training and coaching

# Data Outcomes and Impact

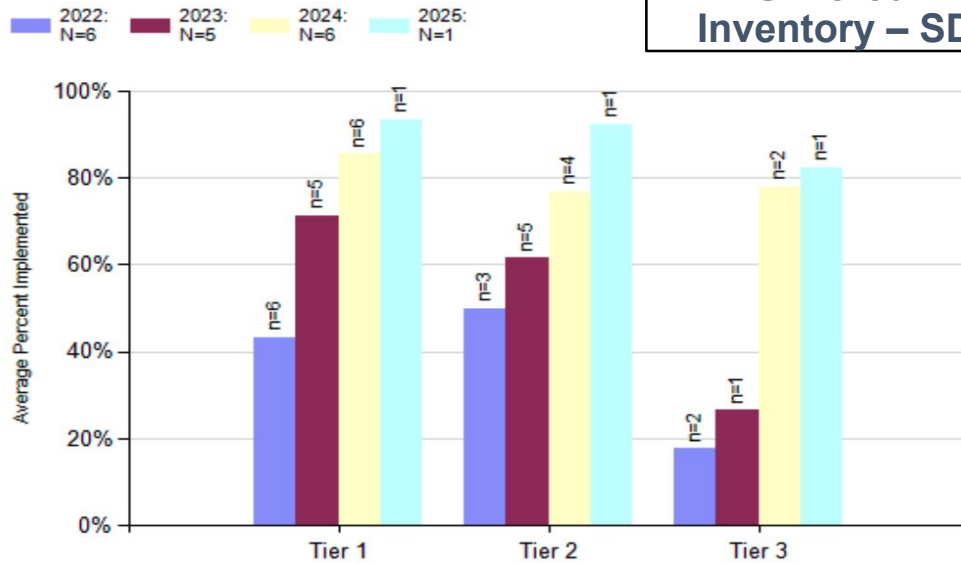
## System & Process Outcomes

-  Shared systems
-  Data review cycles
-  Progress tracking
-  Consistency/ Fidelity Checks
-  Increased access

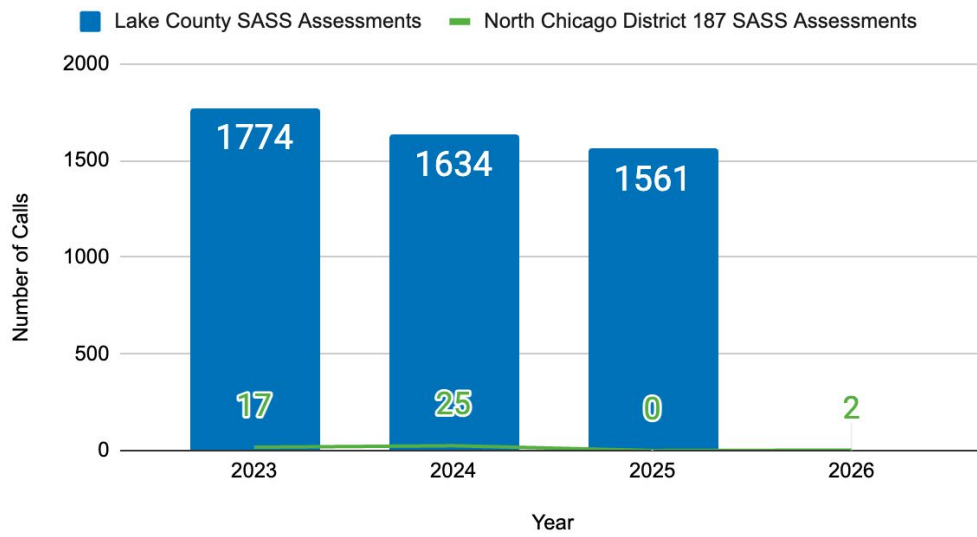
## Student & Staff Impact

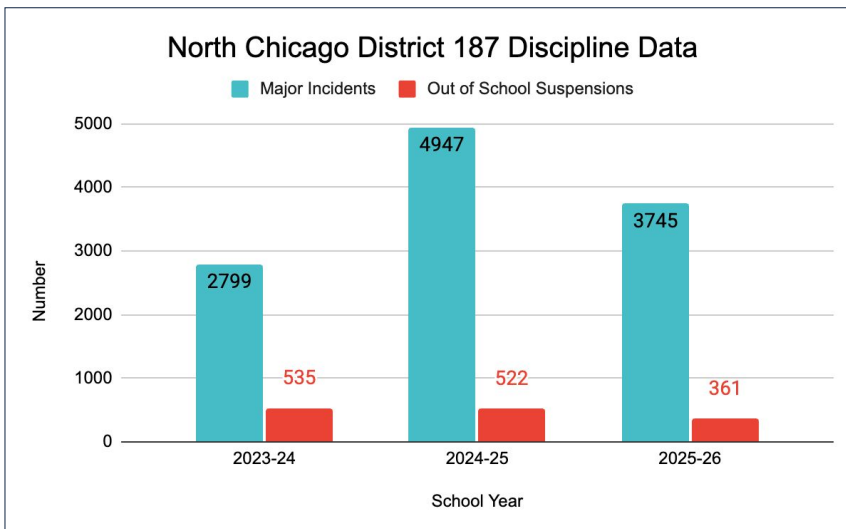
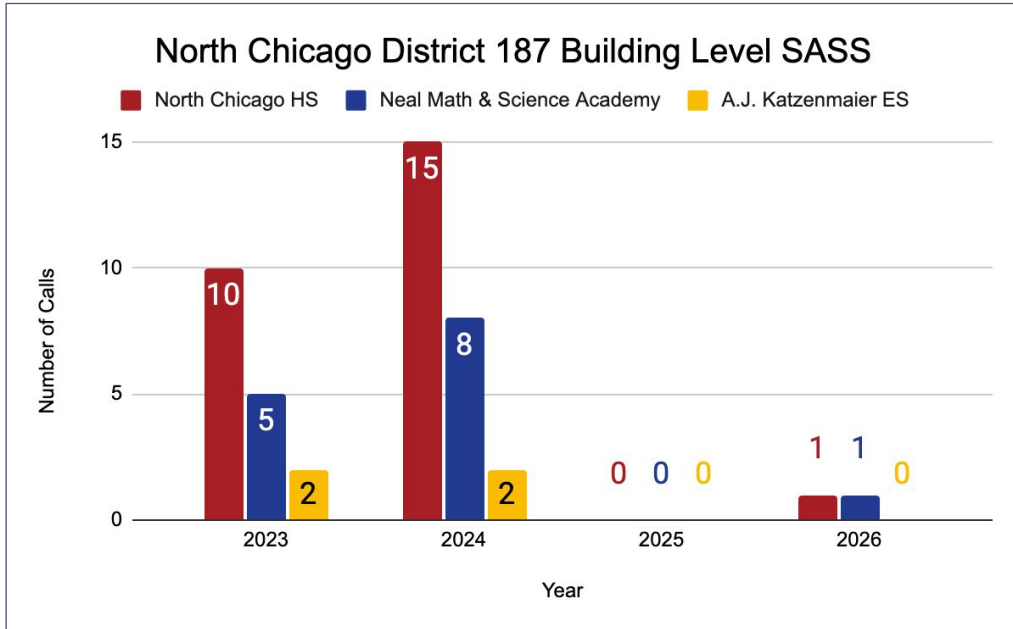
-  Improved students behavior
-  Supports for teacher and students at Tier 1
-  Trainings
-  Trauma Informed Care
-  Universal screening
-  Early intervention

## Framework Fidelity PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory – SD 187



## Total SASS Crisis Assessments





**Reductions from SY24-25 to SY25-26**

- 1,202 major referrals
- 161 out of school suspensions

That is at least **1,100 hours\*** of gained instruction time for students!

\*Estimating 15 minutes of lost instruction per major incident and 5 hour instructional day for OSS

# Josselyn/NCD187 ISF Partnership Information

Since January 2025

Mental health for all.

## Integrated School Based Model

Example of WHAT our ISF model looks like



### Embedded

*not added on*

- **Aligned with school goals**
  - Conduct pre-launch admin interviews
- **Embedded within MTSS system**
  - Provide tier 2/3 interventions
  - ~20-30 student caseload
- **Utilize school's daily operations**
  - Redirect teachers to use MTSS system
  - Follow crisis protocols for student on caseload

### Collaborative approach

*with NOT for*

- **Partner with admin, teachers and student services**
  - Support in tier 1 initiatives
  - Consult and model trauma-informed/mentally health systems, restorative justice practices
  - Co-lead professional developments
- **Participate in MTSS/problem solving teams**
  - Attend weekly MTSS meetings
  - Share data and contribute to student support planning

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# Consistent and Collaborative Systems

Example of HOW our ISF model works



**Consistency**  
*shared practices*

- **Use common SEL/trauma informed language across settings**
  - Align with school tier 1 curriculum
  - Share Josselyn curriculum/language
  - Collaborate with admin on behavior language and reframing
- **Reinforce school expectations and systems**
  - Re-direct to use school referral, crisis and tier 1 systems
  - **Goal:** Increase student time in class

**Flexible and responsive support**  
*remove stress from school teams*

- **Tiered supports (tier 1, 2, 3) based on student needs**
  - Utilize school's universal screener
  - Match supports with need
  - Collaborate with other providers
  - Make tier changes through MTSS process
- **Adjust services as needs evolve**
  - Address tier 1 first if gaps are limiting tier 2/3 supports
  - Adjust based on student needs
  - Reduce caseload size when crisis is high

**Mental health for all.**



# Tiered and Responsive Supports

	Looks like	Outcome
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent school team check-ins</li> <li>• Participating in MTSS and student support meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative relationship</li> <li>• Consistency/continuity and “power with”</li> </ul>
<b>Data Informed Decision Making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracking and sharing student goals, behaviors and engagements</li> <li>• Adjusting interventions based on progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Josselyn data reports (6-8 weeks)</li> <li>• Students receiving individualized and intentional interventions</li> </ul>
<b>Individualized Supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear goals aligned to student needs</li> <li>• Coordination between clinical and school teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamline successful interventions</li> <li>• No “gaps” between all helping adults</li> </ul>
<b>Family Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage caregivers</li> <li>• Bridge support across school, home and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another avenue of support for families</li> <li>• Breakdown barriers to therapy and mental health stigma</li> </ul>

Align --- Document --- Share --- Adjust--- Follow up

**Mental health for all.**



## Impact of Services

**Quarter 2 Report:**  
Current time and caseload data since September

**Total Students served: 57**

**NCD187 Data**

<b>Tier 1:</b> Supporting universal/school-wide interventions/SEL needs in the classroom	5 Classrooms
<b>Tier 2:</b> Group sessions, caregiver coaching	39 Students
<b>Tier 3:</b> Individual sessions	18 Students

**Hours Spent by Tier**

**NCD187 Schools**

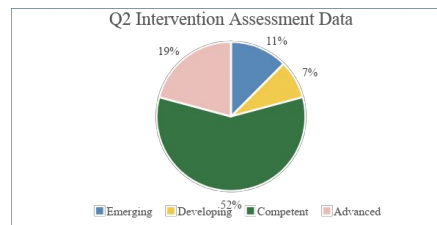
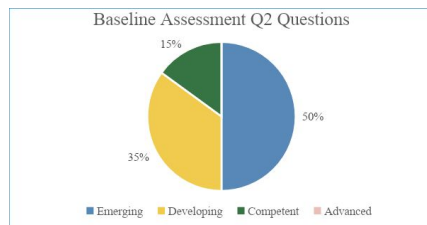
School	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Crisis	Workshops	Other (Lunch Bunch)
<i>Evelyn Alexander</i>	105.5	105.75	91.45	138	3	10.5
<i>Forrestal</i>	88.6	39	69.5	15.25	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>194.1</b>	<b>144.75</b>	<b>160.95</b>	<b>153.25</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10.5</b>

### Key Insights:

- **Time reflects student need, not program design**  
~60% of hours in Tier 2/3 + crisis → responsive MTSS
- **Crisis support is significant**  
150+ hours highlights need for embedded clinical staff
- **Balanced prevention + intervention**  
Early Tier 1 investment + ongoing Tier 2/3 → reduced strain, increased student readiness



## Impact of Services- Q2 Example

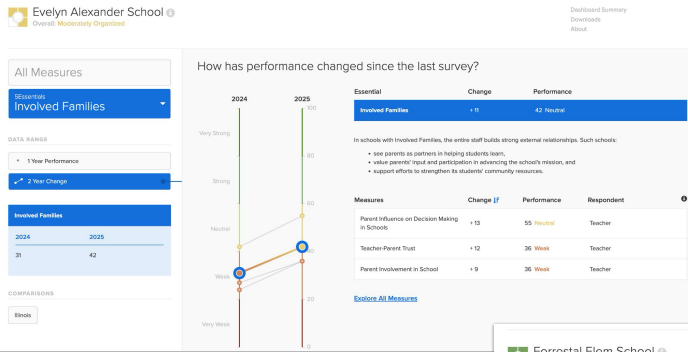


- **↓ Fewer students at lower skill levels**
- **↑ Growth into higher competency levels**

### Validated impact:

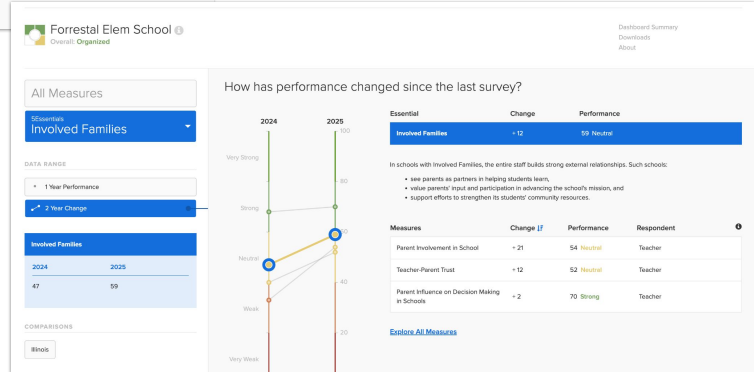
Tier 2/3 SEL supports accelerate regulation, coping, and readiness to learn





**Illinois 5 Essentials** gathers data from *staff, students, and families* on how they perceive the school environment.

Schools with ISF logic are seeing an average of **11.5% increase in perception of Involved Families.**



## Josselyn Services

*Josselyn offers many services ranging from therapy to community programs.*

### Service Offerings:

1. Psychotherapy
2. Psychiatry
3. Youth Services
  - Teen intensive outpatient program (IOP)
  - Therapeutic summer day camp (Camp Neeka)
  - Nuestro Center
  - School supports (SEL consultants)
4. Community programs
  - The Living Room (ER crisis alternative- 18+)
  - Drop-In center (18+)
  - Supported Employment Services
  - Mental Health First Aid Training



**Mental health for all.**



# *What is ISF-SHINE?*

**A Department of Education: EIR (Education Innovation and Research)  
Mid-Phase Research Study**

This product was developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #S411B240005. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Sonji Jones-Manson.

## **Lake County Regional Office of Education Partnering with National Experts**



## **FUNDING: Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Proposal Program**

- Highly competitive research
- Purpose: 1) validate solutions to persistent educational challenges, and 2) support the expansion of effective solutions to serve substantially larger number of students.
- Three levels of research:
  - “Early-phase”
  - “Mid-phase”– **ISF-SHINE expands on other research**
  - “Expansion” grants
- ISF-SHINE was proposed and written by Midwest PBIS Network and WestEd on behalf of Lake Co ROE



## **What is ISF-SHINE?**

- Refine and scale a previous implementation mode of the ISF by making the **professional learning more efficient and replicable.**
- Professional learning will include a combination of a **web-based learning platform** along with **live coaching** and ongoing support.
- A randomized control trial supporting **62 elementary schools**, across two cohorts.  
*Cohort 1 = 20 schools. Cohort 2 = 42 schools*



# Evaluation Questions

*What will schools learn from this work?  
How will you help contribute to the greater good?*

- To what extent will **overall student outcomes** (i.e., wellbeing, discipline, perceptions of school climate, academic achievement) improve?
- Will students **screened indicating “high needs” have similar outcomes** (i.e., wellbeing, discipline, perceptions of school climate, academic achievement)?
- Are **students experiencing SEB needs more likely to receive appropriate intervention**?
- Will **staff perception** of school safety and climate, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and burn out improve?
- How will a professional learning platform with high dose of coaching improve schools **implementation for PBIS and ISF**?



## Questions?

**Brian Meyer & Katie Pohlman**  
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# Resources

**Brian Meyer & Katie Pohlman**  
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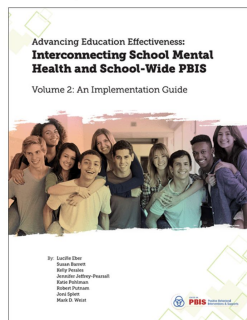
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- Commentary: Sharon Hooper, Division Director, Center for School Improvement

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# ISF DCLT Installation Guide

**Purpose:** This guide is intended to be used by facilitators and coaches to support District/Community Leadership Teams to install structures/systems needed to support an Interconnected System Framework (ISF). The goal is for teams to examine current system using installation activities and generate actions to move toward a more efficient and effective service delivery model.

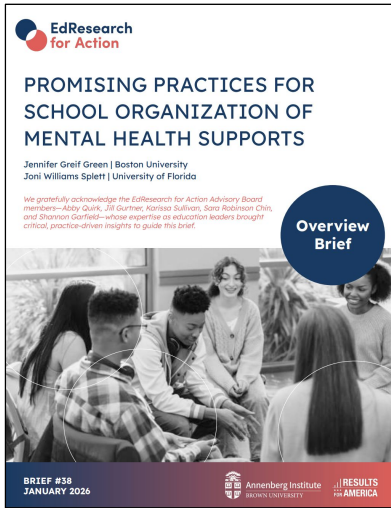
Step 1: Establish a District/Community Executive Leadership Team			
Features	Installation Activities	Action Needed:	By Who? By When?
<b>Representative DCLT team identified.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide authority and problem solving needed to overcome organizational barriers and implement the efficiencies needed to functionally interconnect education, behavioral and mental health supports.</li> <li>• Present concerning data and needs to those with authority and propose a way of working.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess current teaming structures. Identify need for new team or expansion of existing team</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review current partnerships and service agreements with community partners and/or in area. Executive level leadership from each organization are part of the team.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish team operating procedures (e.g. time for team to meet at least quarterly, roles for team, process for forming agenda, etc.)</li> </ul>		
<b>Guiding Questions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which voices with social-emotional-behavioral health expertise within school system could benefit this team?</li> <li>• Which voices of mental health, juvenile justice, core service agency partners could benefit this team?</li> <li>• In what ways are we ensuring that multiple stakeholders' voices (i.e.: staff, MH agencies, parents/families, students, etc.) will stay at the table through the development of systems and overall implementation?</li> </ul>			

# ISF School Installation Guide

**Purpose:** This guide is intended to be used by facilitators and coaches to support District/Community Leadership Teams to install structures/systems needed to support an Interconnected System Framework (ISF). The goal is for teams to examine current system using installation activities and generate actions to move toward a more efficient and effective service delivery model at the building level.

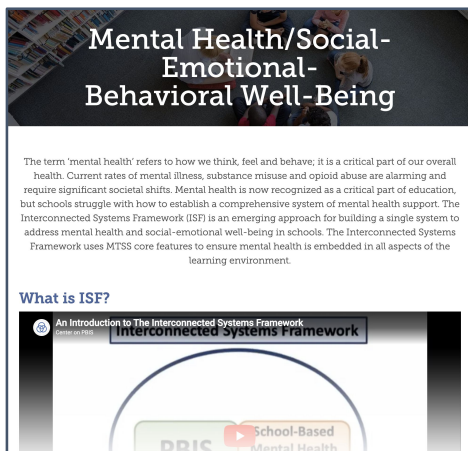
Step 1: Establish a single set of teams			
Tasks	Installation Activities	Action Needed	By who? By when?
<b>1a. Identify need for merging teams with similar goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use <a href="#">Aligning Teaming Structures: Working Smarter Not Harder</a> worksheet to identify all teams and details</li> <li>• Review data on <a href="#">Working Smarter matrix</a> and use guiding questions below to develop an action plan for eliminating or modifying teams as needed</li> </ul>		
<b>Guiding Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What teams exist at your school?</li> <li>• What are their roles and responsibilities?</li> <li>• Who are the staff who serve on the teams?</li> <li>• How often does the team meet?</li> <li>• Does the team use data?</li> <li>• Does the team respond to student needs in a timely fashion?</li> <li>• Do we have teams with similar goals? Are there teams with goals that do not align to current mission?</li> <li>• Do we use same or different set of rules and processes?</li> <li>• Is the team effective? What data is used for decision making and monitoring outcomes?</li> <li>• How would our teams work more effectively if we had one set of teams to address social-emotional-behavioral and academic needs of our students?</li> <li>• Is there any duplication or overlap?</li> <li>• What communication loops and /or progress monitoring exists among all of these support personnel?</li> </ul>			

# Resources

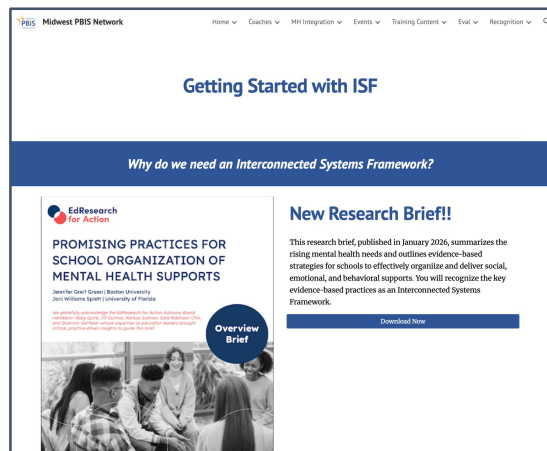


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# Websites



<https://www.pbis.org/mental-health-social-emotional-well-being>



<https://www.midwestpbis.org/mh-integration/getting-started-with-isf>

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Katie  
Pohlman

[katie.pohlman@midwestpbis.org](mailto:katie.pohlman@midwestpbis.org)  
[brian.meyer@midwestpbis.org](mailto:brian.meyer@midwestpbis.org)  
[NJohnson@d187.org](mailto:NJohnson@d187.org)  
[mcueller@josselyn.org](mailto:mcueller@josselyn.org)



Brian  
Meyer



Nicole  
Johnson



Maggie  
Cueller

