

Belonging First:

**New Research on How Relationships
Support Attendance & Behavior**





Hello!

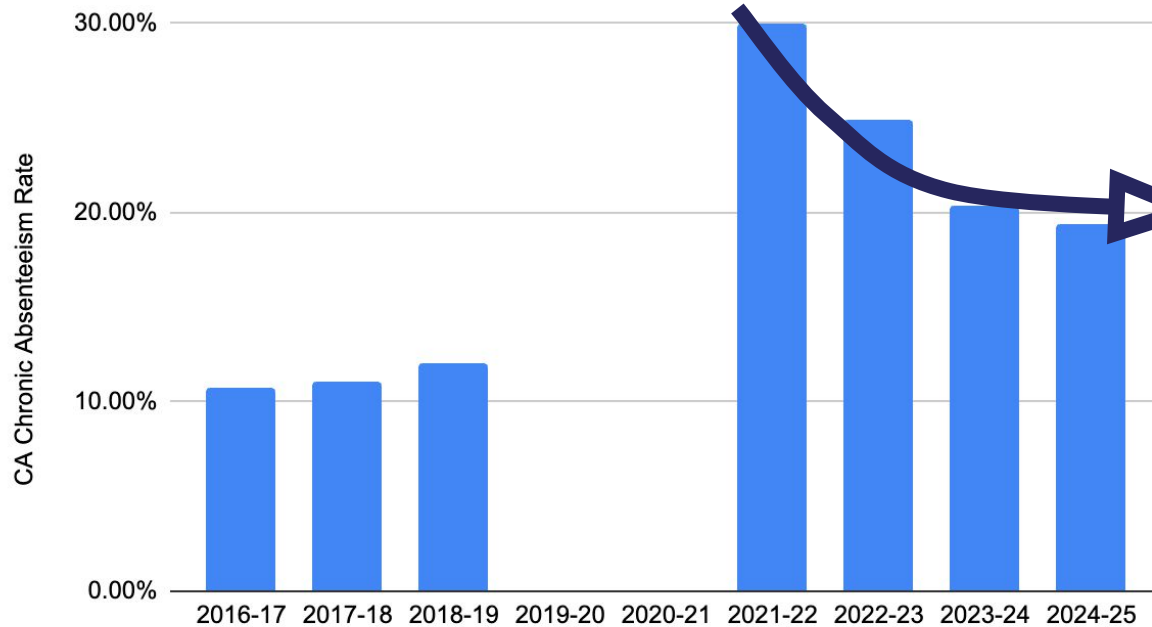
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Director, District & School Engagement

Sown To Grow

Attendance progress is reaching a plateau

CA Chronic Absenteeism Rate



Statewide, we have hit a plateau above pre-pandemic levels.

What worked pre pandemic & in the years immediately following isn't working to the same extent.

Behavior Challenges Are a Top Challenge

75% listed student behavior as their top challenge heading into the 2026-27 school year
(1,000 surveyed teachers & admin)

Teachers' Top-Ranked Sources of Job-Related Stress



Percent of respondents classified with low, moderate, and high levels of burnout by category.

Burnout Type	Low	Moderate	High	
Emotional Exhaustion	10.0%	25.8%	64.2%	90%
Depersonalization	33.3%	39.2%	22.5%	61.7%
Personal Accomplishment	11.7%	33.3%	55.0%	

For School Mental Health Professionals:

Suggests School Mental Health Professionals are carrying more than ever and it is taking a toll. Yet their care for students and sense of purpose in this work remains strong...for now.

Our Big Question:

How do we get to the root cause of these challenges and try strategies that will renew progress?

Understanding Root Causes: Absenteeism

Reason 1



Barriers

Examples:

- Illness
- Transportation
- Housing and food insecurity

Reason 2



Aversion

Examples:

- Academic or behavioral struggles
- Peer challenges

Reason 3



Disengagement

Examples:

- Bored
- Lack of meaningful relationships

Reason 4



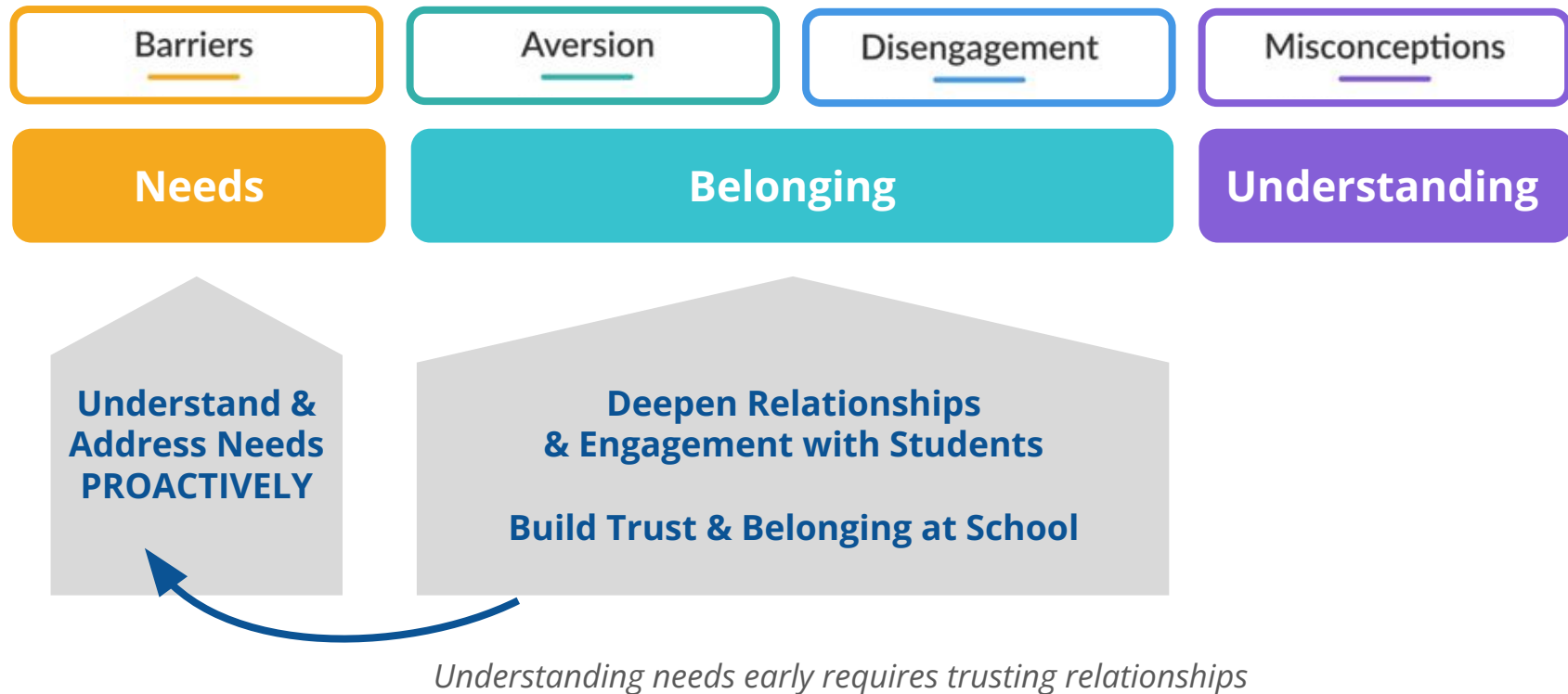
Misconceptions

Examples:

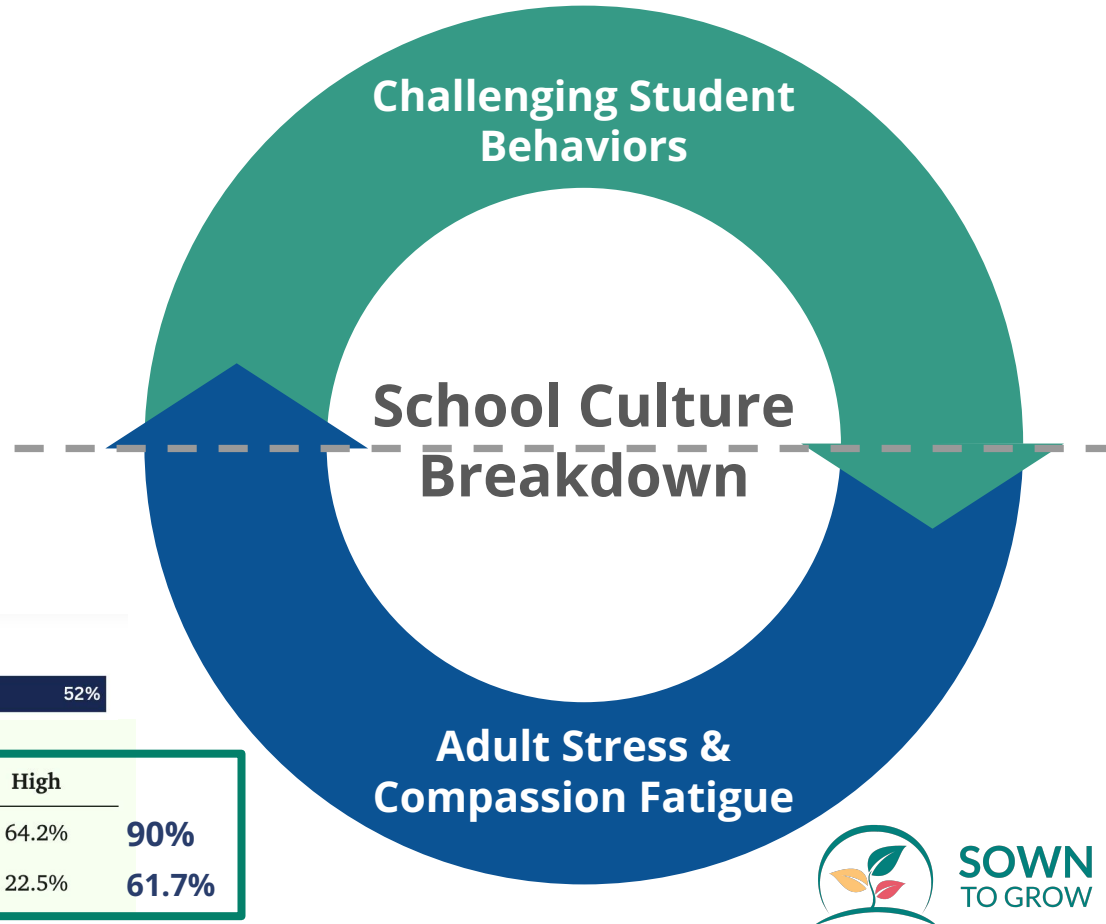
- Lose track of absences
- Thinking attendance doesn't matter in older grades

Adapted from Attendance Works

$\frac{2}{3}$ of the Challenge Rests on Trust & Belonging



Breaking the Cycle: Behavior



Teachers' Top-Ranked Sources of Job-Related Stress

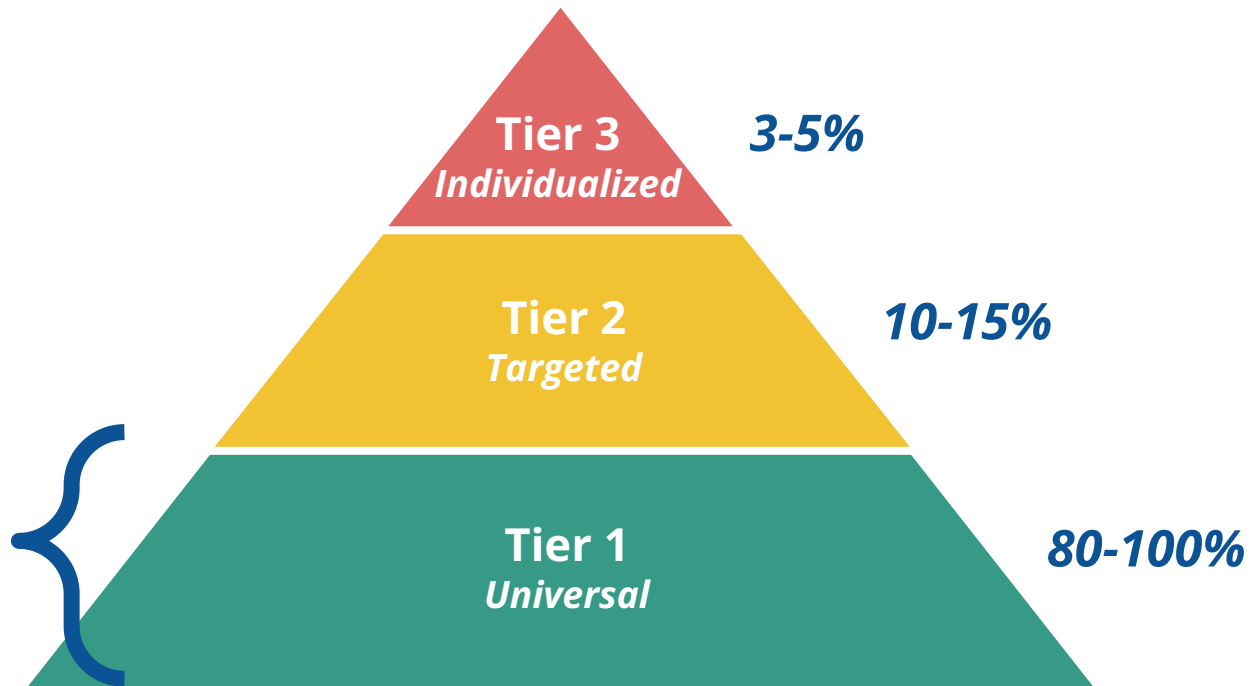
Managing student behavior

52%

Burnout Type	Low	Moderate	High	
Emotional Exhaustion	10.0%	25.8%	64.2%	90%
Depersonalization	33.3%	39.2%	22.5%	61.7%

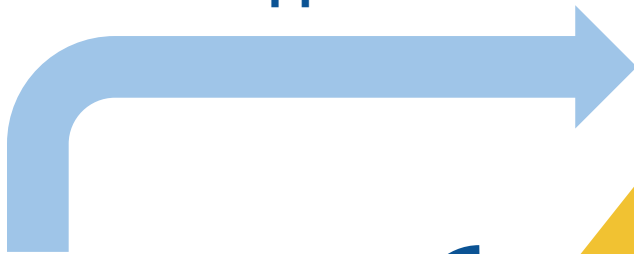
Building a Culture of Belonging & Trust

Culture:
Focus on Routines
& Relationships

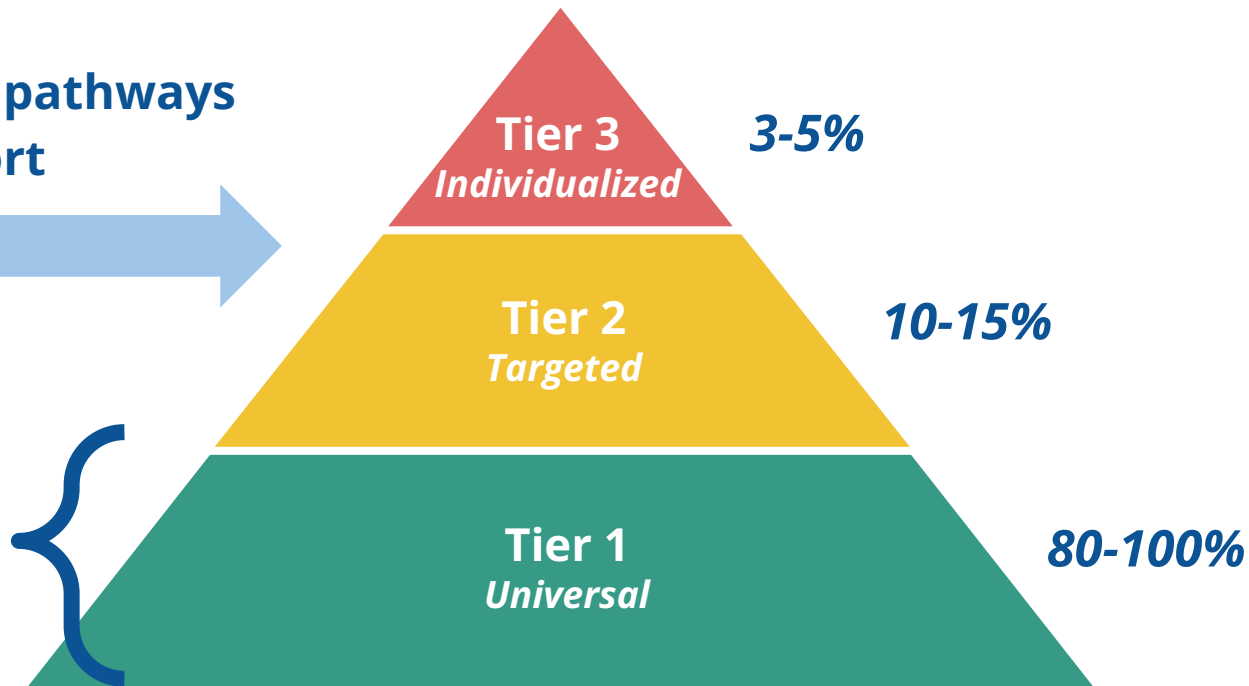


Building a Culture of Belonging & Trust

Ensure data-driven pathways
for proactive support



Culture:
Focus on Routines
& Relationships



Belonging Thought Starters



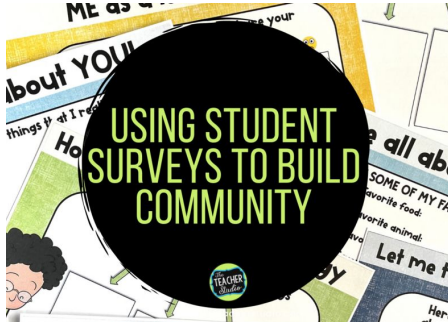
"Do You See Me?"
(NASSP Resource)



Looped Advisories
(AMLE Resource)



Threshold Greetings
(Scholarship Prep Resource)



First Day Survey
(The Teacher Studio Resource)

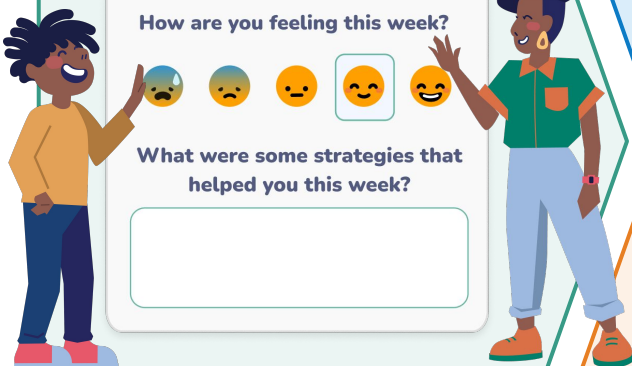


Relationship Plan
(Dr. Don Parker Resources)

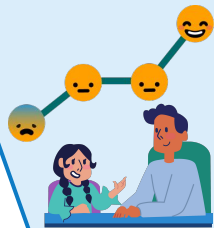


Building Systems for Belonging & Support

Weekly Student Check-In Relationship-Building Routine



Preventative Belonging Support



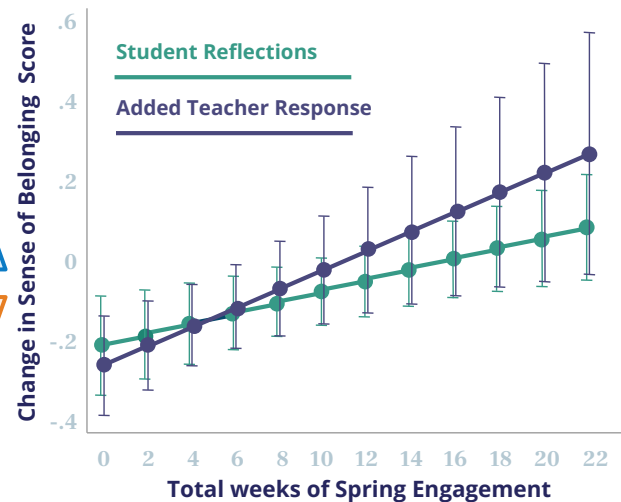
Check-in is proven to build belonging & connection to school

Proactive Needs Identification



Alerts for student needs & early warnings for truancy support

Improved Sense of Belonging



2-3x Impact on Attendance

Comparing chronic absenteeism reduction in schools between 2023-24 & 2024-25



Funded Schools **NOT**
using Sown To Grow

**-1.2
%pts**

2,097 schools



Schools using
Sown To Grow

**-2.5
%pts**

327 schools



Schools using Sown To
Grow with **Strong Practice**

**-3.2
%pts**

105 schools



**SOWN
TO GROW**

3x Impact on Exclusionary Discipline

Exclusionary discipline reduction in schools between 2022-23 & 2024-25



Funded Schools **NOT**
using Sown To Grow



Schools using Sown To
Grow with **Strong Practice**

**-.53
%pts**

2,066 schools

**-1.51
%pts**

54 schools

Spotlight on Expulsions

~91%

of strong practice STG schools had zero expulsions in 2024-25 (up from 74% in 2022-23), while peer CCSPP schools remained relatively flat (~83-84%)





Thank You!

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Get Slides & Enter Raffle →



Join our session with Scholarship Prep!

Staff First, Students Always

A Whole-School Approach to Routines, Relationships,
& Responsive Mental Health Support
Fri 8-9AM in Room: 33A