

Building Preventive Schoolwide Systems of Support for All Students

Weston Public Schools, May 2019

Strategic Goals 2018-2021

1. **Strengthen educational practices** in order to promote intellectual stretch, engaged learning, equitable access, and excellence for every student, every day.
2. **Foster students' well-being** in order to develop their emotional resiliency and intellectual curiosity.
3. **Champion a school community committed to cultural competency, trust, and mutual respect** in order to prepare students to be citizens of the world.

2015-18 Bullying Data

Year		HS	MS	FS	WS	CS	Total
2015-16							
	# of reported bullying/retaliation allegations	17	4	0	0	0	21
	# of substantiated incidents involving bullying/retaliation	5	3	0	0	0	8
	# of students disciplined for engaging in bullying/retaliation	5	2	0	0	0	7
2016-17							
	# of reported bullying/retaliation allegations	7	0	0	0	0	7
	# of substantiated incidents involving bullying/retaliation	2	0	0	0	0	2
	# of students disciplined for engaging in bullying/retaliation	2	0	0	0	0	2
2017-18							
	# of reported bullying/retaliation allegations	5	1	0	1	0	7
	# of substantiated incidents involving bullying/retaliation	0	1	0	0	0	1
	# of students disciplined for engaging in bullying/retaliation	0	8	0	0	0	8

Actions Taken

- ▶ Training teachers and administrators in the law
- ▶ Developing more specific ways for students and families to report bullying
- ▶ Revisiting and emphasizing school and district-wide procedures and practices for responding, ensuring safety, investigating, reporting, and tracking
- ▶ Providing professional development for teachers so they can better develop students' prosocial skills

What is bullying?

Bullying is defined as follows:

The repeated actions or threats of action directed toward a person by one or more people who have or are perceived to have more power or status than their target in order to cause fear, distress or harm. Bullying can be physical, verbal, psychological or any combination of these three.

Here's a definition to use for younger, elementary age children:

When a person or a group behaves in ways—on purpose and over and over—that make someone feel hurt, afraid or embarrassed.

Anti-Defamation League, "What Bullying Is and Is Not."

<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk/what-bullying-is-and-is-not>

Why Students Bully

Lagging Cognitive Skills

- **Difficulty considering the likely outcomes or consequences of their actions**
- **Difficulty considering a range of solutions to a problem**
- **Difficulty “using their words” to solve problems**

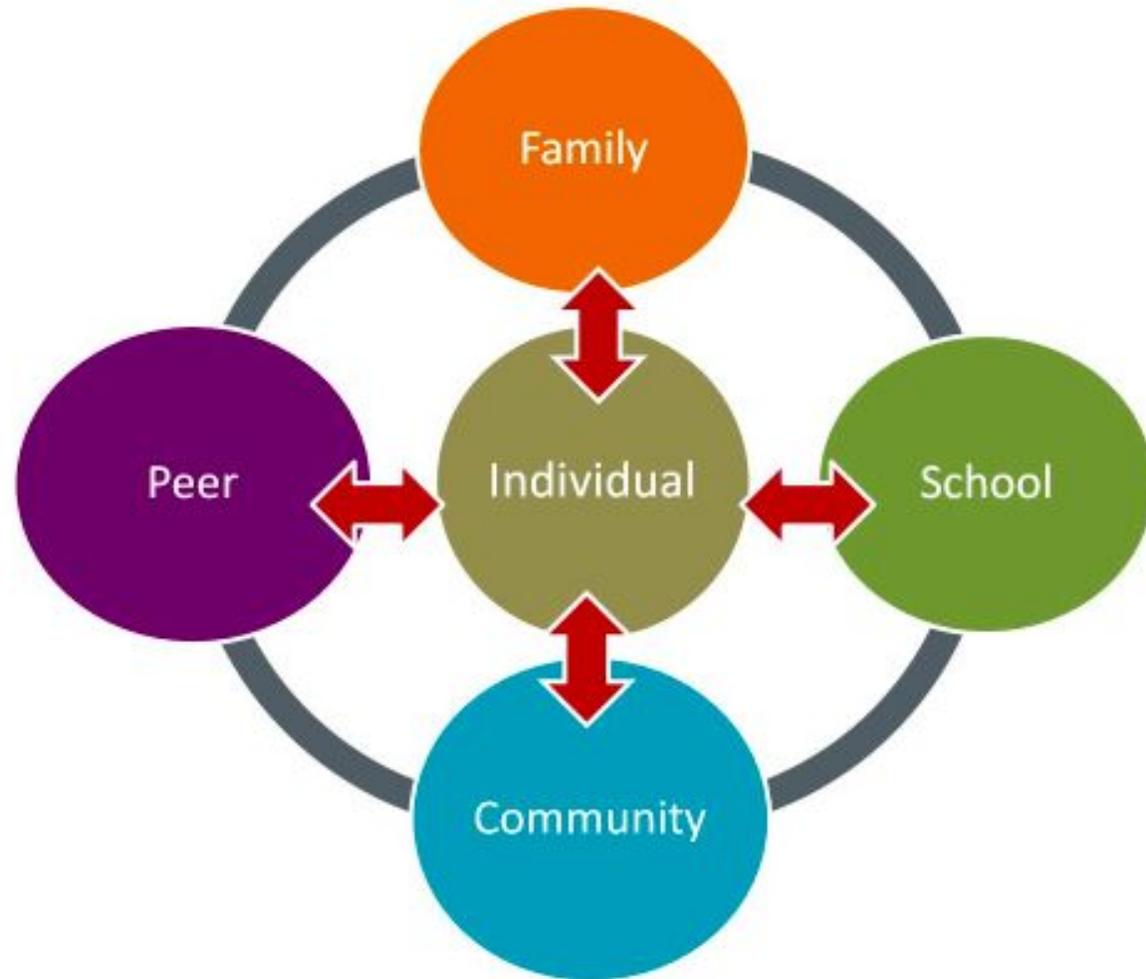
Lagging Social and Emotional Skills

- **Interpret social information in an inflexible, inaccurate manner**
- **Difficulty starting conversations, entering groups, connecting with people**
- **Difficulty seeking attention in appropriate ways**
- **Difficulty understanding how their behavior is affecting other people**
- **Difficulty empathizing with others and appreciating another person’s perspective or point-of-view.**

75% of Bullying Incidents Come From Bias

- ▶ There is a strong correlation between bias and bullying
- ▶ Targets of bullies are often from a group marginalized because of a certain characteristic (such as **race, immigration status, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, gender expression/identity or size**) about which others hold prejudiced assumptions
- ▶ Because identity-based bullying targets who the student is, it is especially harmful both for the target and for bystanders who share the same identity
- ▶ It is important to emphasize to students that bullying happens because of an aggressor's bias, not because of the target's identity

Risk Factors for Bullying



Three CHALLENGES:

1. **Unwanted Aggression:**

- ▶ Are the behaviors aggressive with intent to harm?
- ▶ Does the target want the behaviors to stop?

2. **Repeated Behavior:**

- ▶ Are there multiple incidents or a pattern of behavior?
- ▶ Is there strong concern that more incidents of aggression will follow?

3. **Power Imbalance:**

- ▶ Physical characteristics (age, size, strength)
- ▶ Popularity
- ▶ Member of majority/minority group
- ▶ Socioeconomic status
- ▶ Access to money, resources, or information
- ▶ Being outnumbered
- ▶ Presence of weapons



Weston's Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation

Step 1: Reporting Potential Bullying or Retaliation

Step 2: Ensuring Safety

Step 3: Investigation

Step 4: Determination

Step 5: Notification

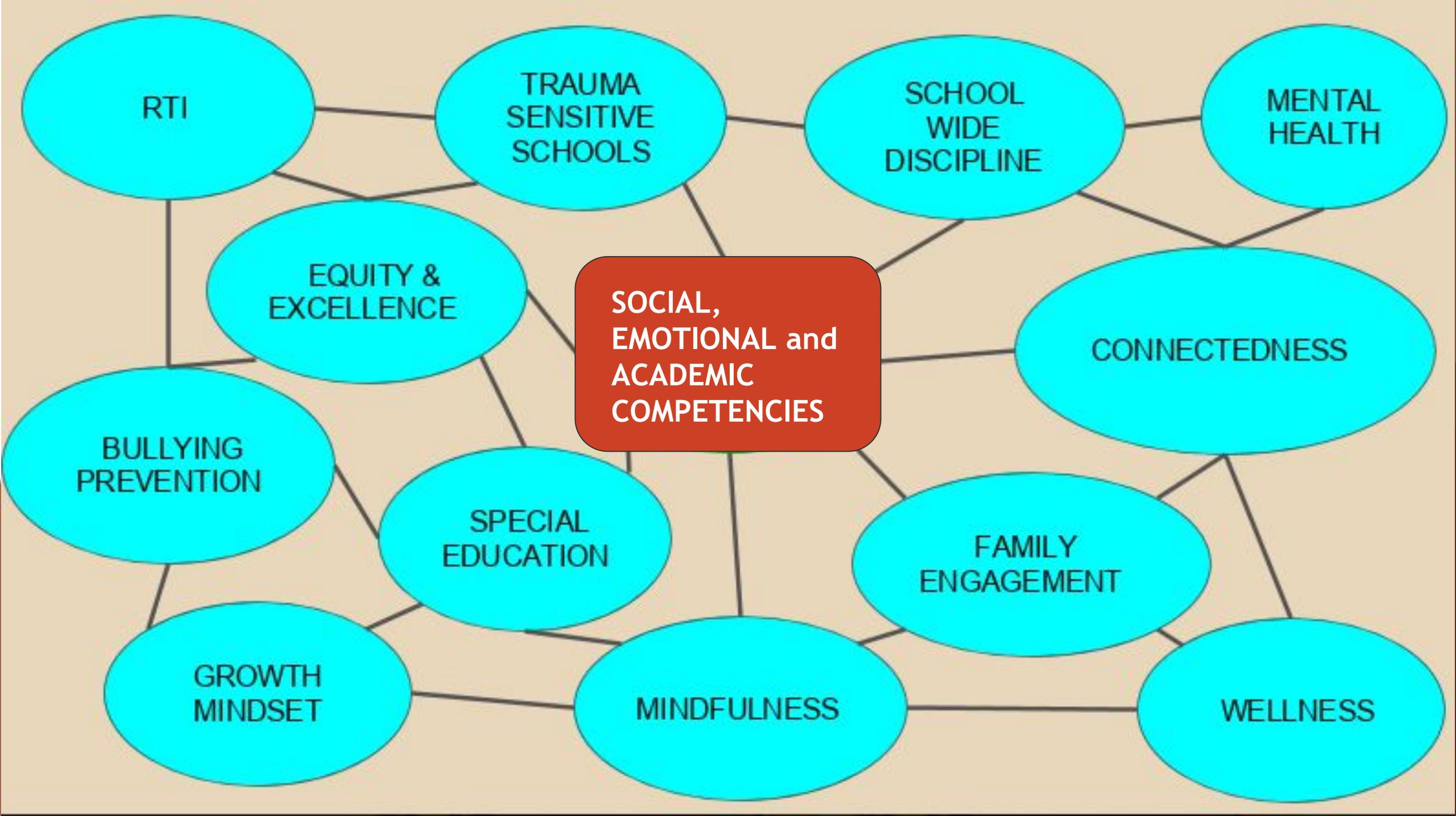


PREVENTION is the Best Tool Against Bullying

- Creating **inclusive learning environments** that support all students
- Maintain a space that celebrates difference and is **inhospitable to bias**
- **Everyone has a role to play** in creating an safe and supportive climate, and the culture must exist from the home to the classroom.
- Building social, emotional and cultural competency for administrators, teachers, cafeteria staff, bus drivers, assistants, substitute teachers, parents/guardians and students



Intrinsically, schools are social places and **learning is a social process**. Students do not learn alone, but rather in collaboration with their teachers, in the company of their peers, and with the support of their families. **Emotions can facilitate or hamper their learning and their ultimate success**. Researchers have found that prosocial behavior in the classroom is linked with positive intellectual outcomes.



Teams using Data to Inform SYSTEMATIC Practices

Teams:

- ▶ Social and Emotional Learning Team, Challenge Success, Safety Team, Administrative Council, School based and grade level team

Data:

- ▶ Surveys, discipline referrals, attendance, incident reports, etc.

Practices (and Professional Development):

- ▶ Challenge Success
- ▶ Responsive Classroom
- ▶ Anti-bias and Culturally Responsive Teaching
- ▶ Bullyproof/Second Step
- ▶ Health and Wellness, Guidance Seminars
- ▶ Morning Meetings/Advisory
- ▶ Collaborative Problem Solving
- ▶ Trauma Informed Schools
- ▶ Social Thinking
- ▶ Reporting, Investigating, Follow up
- ▶ Family engagement and communication

Three Focus Areas

1. School culture and climate - Relationships
2. Development of social, emotional and cultural competencies
3. Ongoing professional development in prevention, reporting, intervention and responsiveness

Questions?