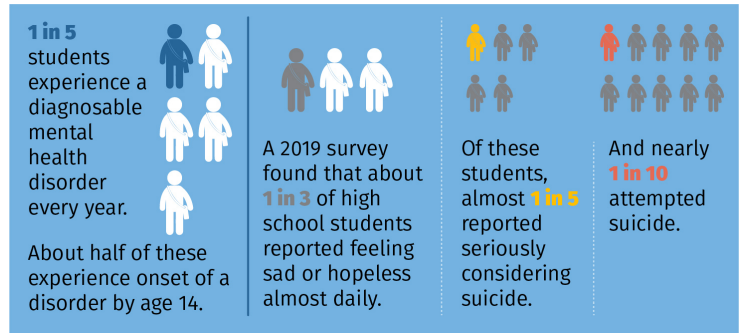


## CONNECTING SCHOOLS AND MENTAL HEALTH

### Why Mental Health Matters to Schools

Untreated mental health problems impair educational success and social and emotional well-being. Students with poor mental health experience higher rates of **absenteeism**, lower school **engagement**, and decreased academic **performance**. They also have more incidents of **disruptive** classroom behaviors and higher **dropout** rates.



**These untreated mental health problems in students also affect teachers.** When schools recognize and address student needs, teachers’ interactions with students improve. Teachers also experience less job-related anxiety and depression and decreased burnout and turnover.

### Improving Outcomes for Students

Delivering mental health services in schools is a good start. School-wide social and emotional learning can also improve student outcomes. Adding Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports helps reach students who need targeted strategies. But none of these models address all needs.

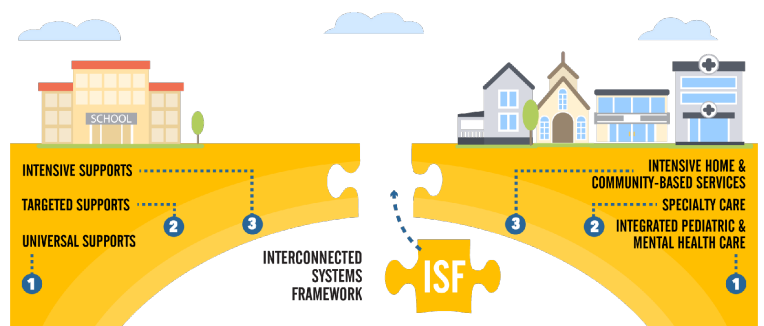
### Multi-Tiered System of Supports

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a data-driven, problem-solving, prevention-based framework for improving the academic and behavioral health outcomes of all students. MTSS emphasizes the three tiers of prevention: **universal prevention** for all students, **targeted prevention** for students who are at risk, and **intensive services** for a few students. The framework systematically aligns student supports, school leadership, school culture, and professional development.



### Interconnected Systems Framework

The missing piece is a **strong collaboration** — an “Interconnected System Framework” (ISF) — between the **education system** and **mental health system**. This framework creates a network of school-based, school-linked, and community-based social, emotional, and mental health supports and services for all students. The impact of ISF is measured by student outcomes rather than access to services. The core features of MTSS are essential to implementing ISF.



## OPPORTUNITIES IN OKLAHOMA

### Legislation to Support MTSS

Oklahoma legislation requiring cross system coordination and pre- or post-service education on suicide, mental health, and trauma does not provide enough support for the development of an MTSS framework to promote educational success by addressing the social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students. **The Reading Sufficiency Act and dyslexia legislation promote MTSS and can be used as the foundation for statewide adoption of MTSS for social, emotional, and mental health needs.**

The Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (OPNA) can help schools and communities select and evaluate their tiered prevention and intervention strategies. Participation in the OPNA varies by school. **If all school districts in the state participate in the OPNA, Oklahoma, its counties, and its school districts will have the high-quality data they need to aid decision-making.**

### State and Every Students Succeeds Act Planning

The OSDE Department of Student Supports completed the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Implementation Blueprint: PBIS State Systems Fidelity Inventory, resulting in a plan to implement and sustain PBIS/ISF statewide. **This plan, supported by OSDE and ODMHSAS leadership, provides the OSDE with the road map to re-envision its approach to statewide implementation.**

### The Use of Demonstration or Pilot Projects to Test and Refine the Model

Twelve rural or suburban districts and two urban districts are working on implementing MTSS. **If all MTSS initiatives are aligned under the statewide effort, they can serve as demonstrations or pilots for the statewide ISF implementation plan.**

### The Development of Sufficient Workforce Capacity

Oklahoma's current workforce lacks the skills needed to recognize mental health needs and manage challenging behaviors. And post-service training is not enough to address this need. **The OSDE and state policy makers should support, help shape, and build on the work of the Guiding Coalition to strengthen the capacity of the workforce to implement PBIS, MTSS, or ISF.**

### Alignment of State Efforts and Funding

The OSDE recently developed a 1-year and a 3–5-year action plan to coordinate their approach to implement and fund MTSS statewide. The action plan aligns the Oklahoma Tiered Interventions and Supports System (OTISS), Oklahoma's model for implementing tiered supports to address academic and behavioral challenges, with their ISF and school climate transformation initiatives, OK AWARE and OKTransform. This will begin to address the current patchwork approach to MTSS/ISF implementation and position the state to implement, evaluate, and sustain initiatives across Oklahoma. **The ISF statewide implementation plan addresses how to align its current initiatives and engage other initiatives in the state.** As part of this plan, the OSDE will consider which of its current multi-tiered initiatives is best suited to lead OSDE's MTSS/ISF initiatives and partnerships with other state initiatives and ODMHSAS.

Determining the cost of statewide MTSS is difficult. Successful states braid federal and state funding. The estimated per-school cost of schoolwide PBIS is \$12,400 dollars. **A cost benefit analysis estimates that every \$1 invested in school-wide PBIS yields an estimated savings of about \$105.**

### Training and Technical Assistance

**Oklahoma has a model for MTSS and a strong core of technical assistance capacity that, if supported by a sustainable funding source, could be expanded to meet the state's training and technical assistance needs.** As Oklahoma aligned MTSS implementation across the state, then state-level technical assistance capacity would also be aligned, providing a framework for developing state and regional capacity to collaborate with local experts in the field, school districts, and campuses.