

SEL + MTSS:
HOW TO EMPOWER MIDDLE SCHOOLERS
TO NAVIGATE ROUGH WATERS



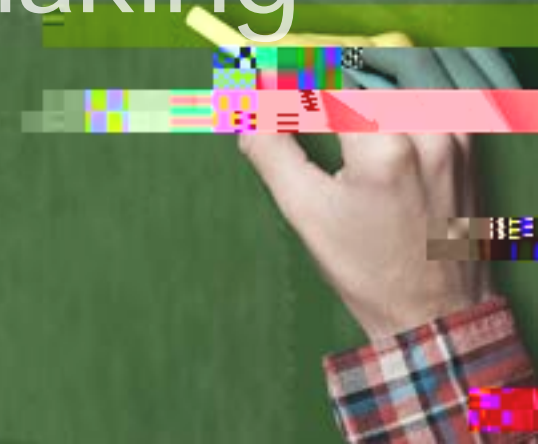
No question, middle school is a turbulent time for many students. Their rapid growth and hormonal fluctuations can profoundly affect their conceptions of self as well as their physical bodies. At the same time, they're expected to handle more responsibility and autonomy, along with facing heightened social pressures.

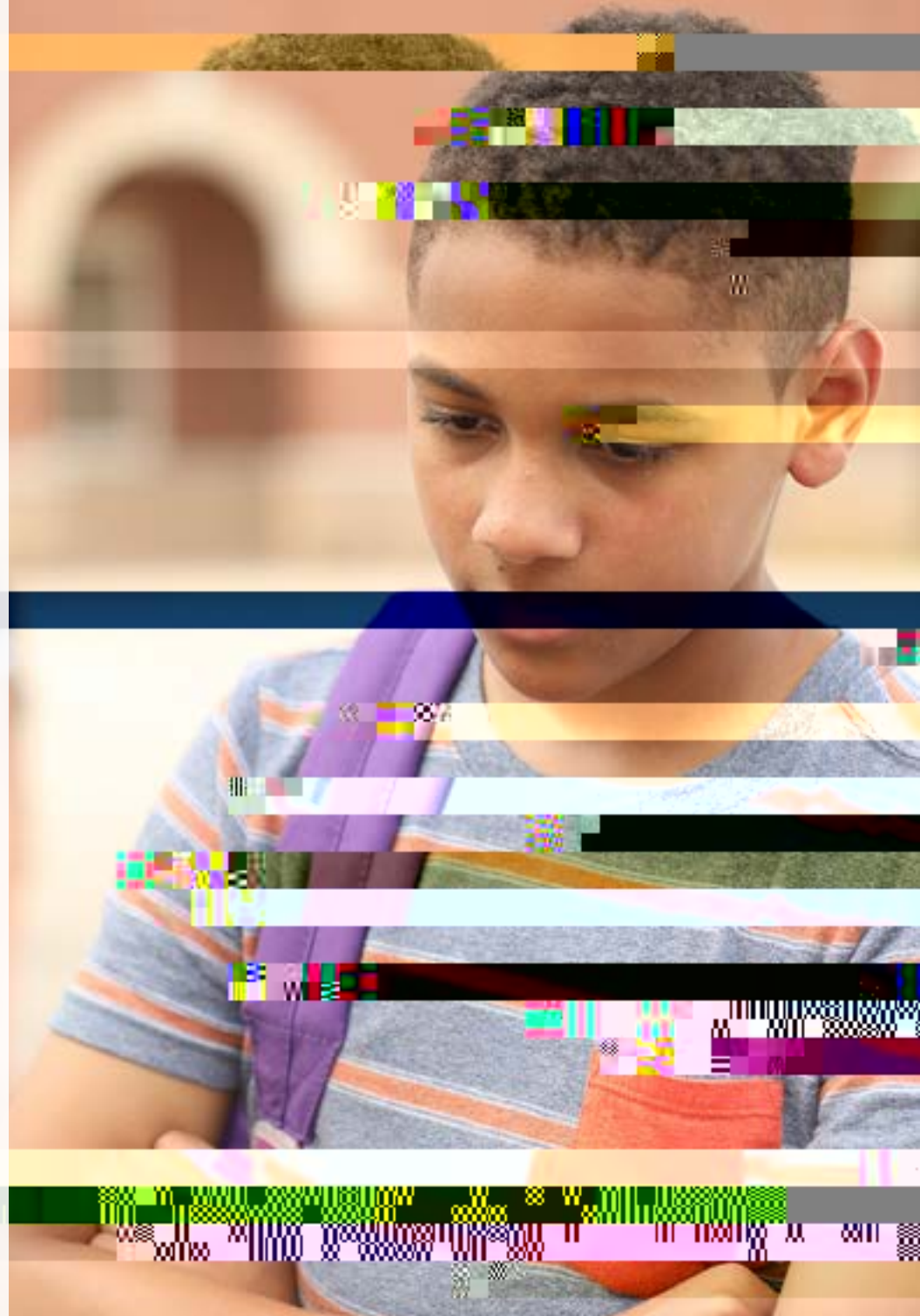
Social emotional learning (SEL) can be an anchor during this time of intense change, underscoring the fact that each individual student has value, strengths, challenges, choices, and a vital role to play in building a positive school community.

For many school districts, it can be highly effective to integrate SEL within an existing Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework. Keep reading to see how aligning SEL and MTSS goals can bring a bounty of benefits — including increased academic performance, a more positive school climate and a resilient SEL program that can help middle

Why SEL is Critical to Middle School Success

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible
decision-making





SEL — which research shows can reduce emotional distress and problematic behavior while boosting grades and test scores¹ — can provide critical guidance for navigating this challenging passage, both for students who meet academic and behavioral targets as well as those who need additional support.

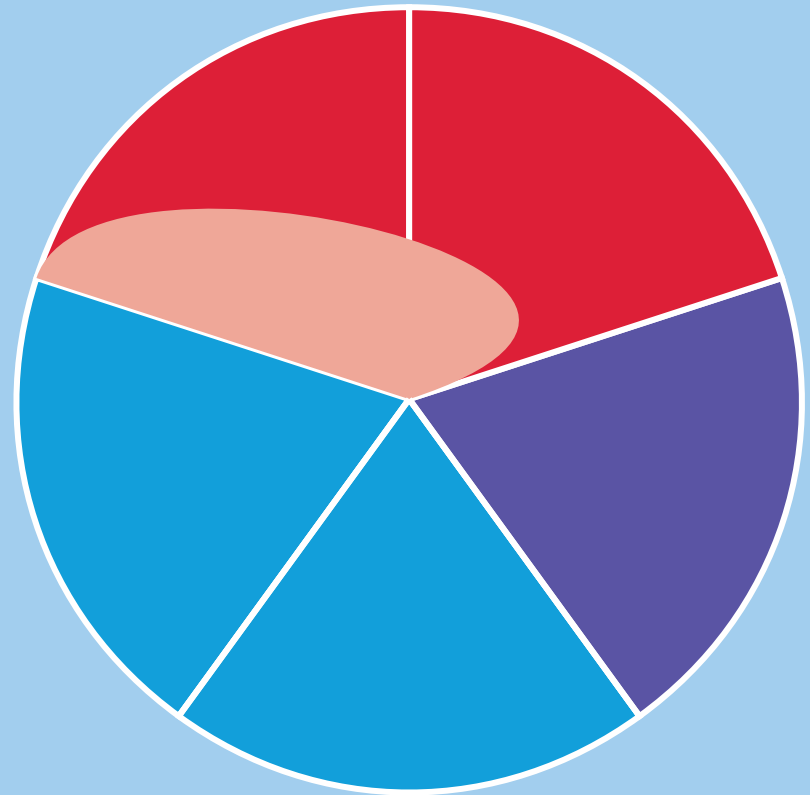
Engagement at school declines steadily each year after elementary school. While nearly three-quarters of 5th graders felt engaged, only 45% felt the same in 8th grade.²

¹ <https://hechingerreport.org/opinion-many-teachers-see-social-emotional-learning-as-the-missing-link-in-student-success/> Hechingerreport.org, "Opinion: Many teachers see social-emotional learning as the 'missing link' in student success," August 2019

² <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/211631/student-enthusiasm-falls-high-school-graduation-nears.aspx> www.news.gallup.com, "Student Enthusiasm Falls as High School Graduation Nears," June 2017

as defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL):

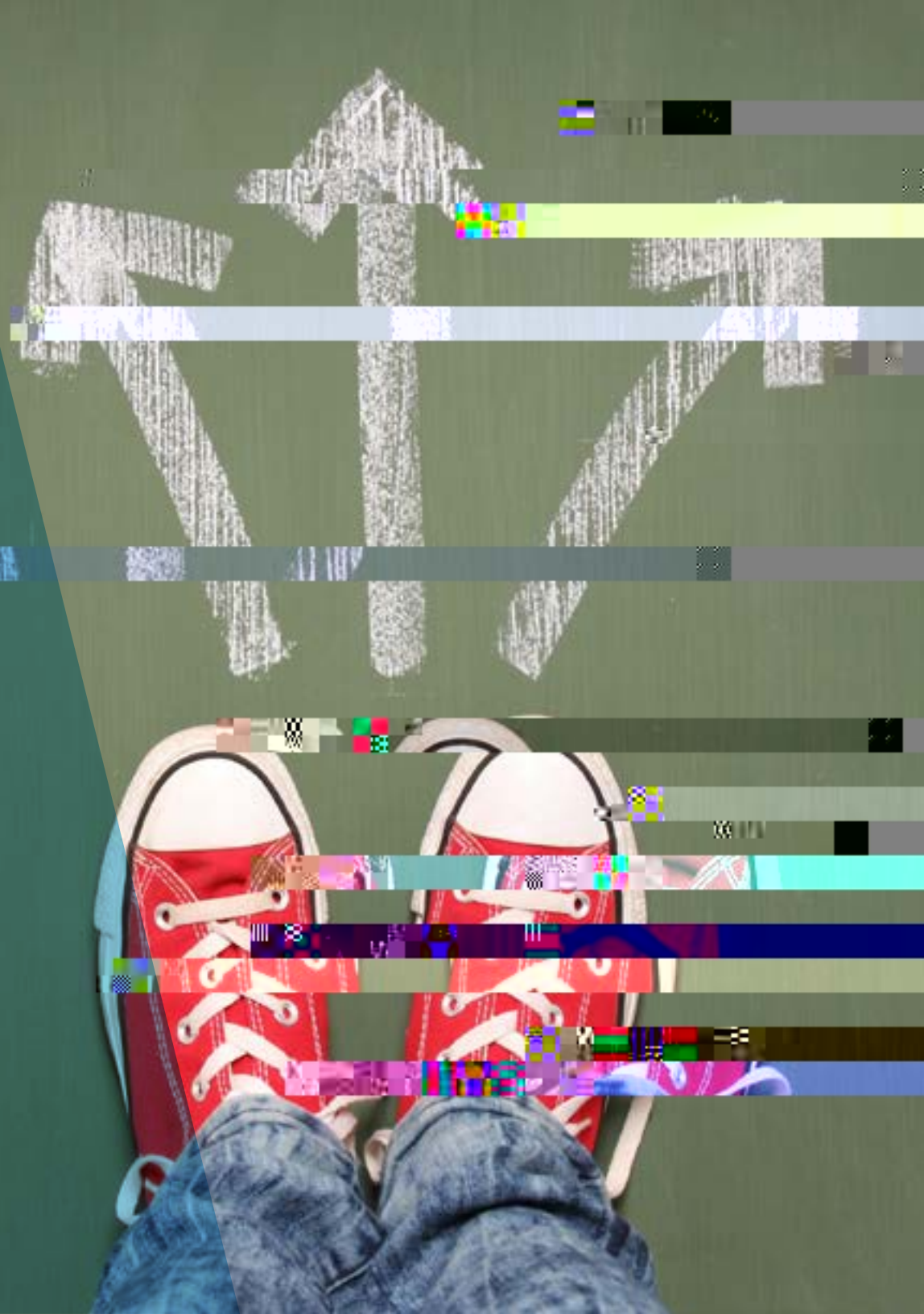
- Self-awareness
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CASEL's five core SEL competencies (outer ring) align with those of Mosaic™ by ACT® Social Emotional Learning (inner ring).

Chapter 2:

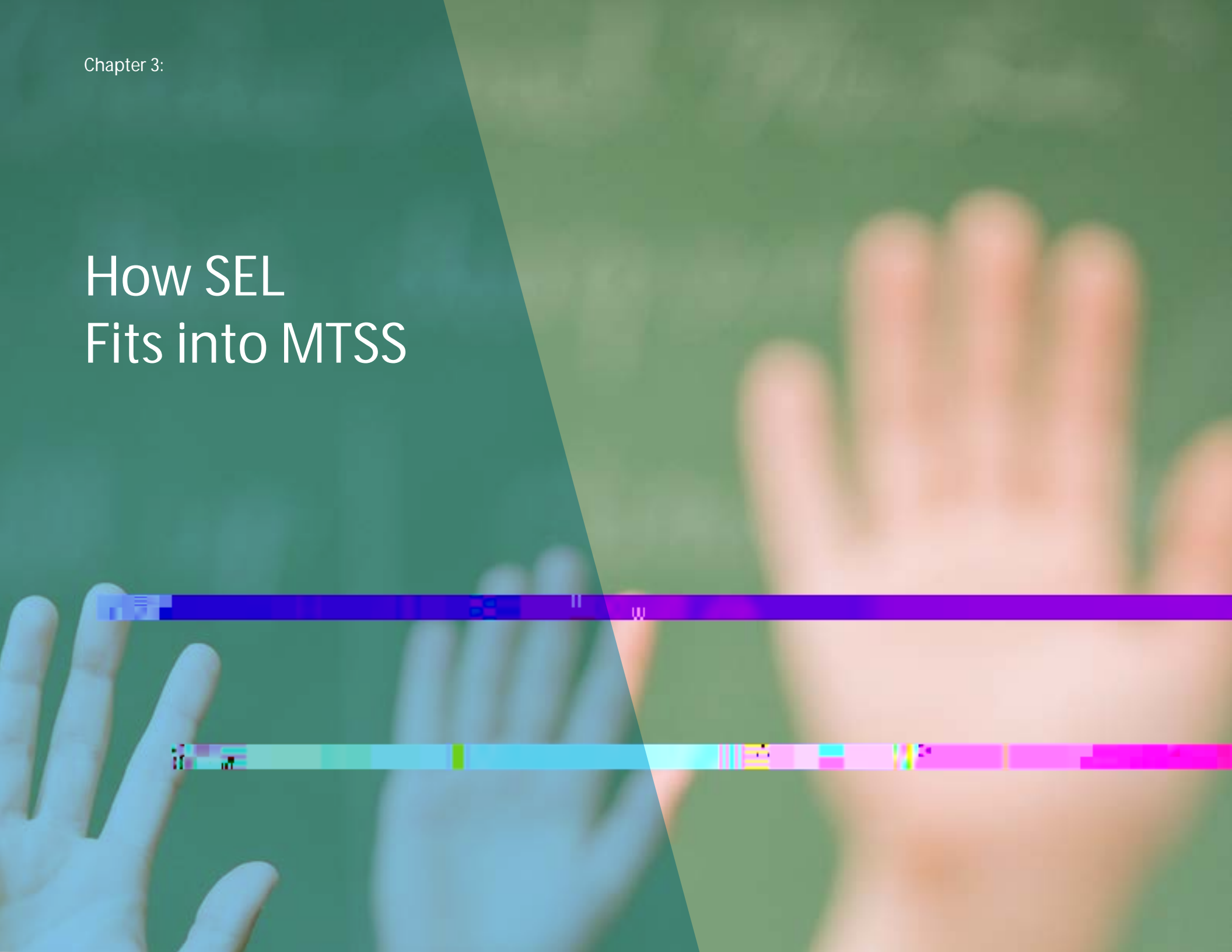
Select the Right Path for SEL Implementation



Selecting the right path for implementing SEL in your middle school or district can feel overwhelming, given the

Chapter 3:

How SEL Fits into MTSS



Chapter 3:

The three-tiered MTSS framework helps educators identify varying student academic and behavioral needs and match them with appropriate intervention and support strategies. A common misconception is that SEL programs are best utilized solely as Tier 2 or Tier 3 MTSS interventions.

In fact, to achieve the greatest impact on academic performance and school climate, it's most effective to embrace a whole-school focus on SEL that touches every middle school student in every classroom.³ SEL curricula can be implemented as a universal intervention in which all students engage in SEL activities, regardless of demonstrated needs. Many schools then find it beneficial to leverage smaller, more targeted Tier 2 and 3 SEL interventions to complement this universal Tier 1 initiative.

³ Humphrey, N. (2013). Social and emotional learning: A critical appraisal. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Chapter 4:

The Power of SEL + MTSS



While SEL implementation will vary by school and district, any universal SEL initiative should ensure that all members of a learning community — including students, teachers, administrators, staff and parents — share a common SEL language.

A universal SEL initiative rooted in MTSS Tier 1 interventions and reinforced at Tier 2 and 3 levels can prove highly effective, not only in establishing this language, but in driving positive change in middle school culture, long recognized as a challenging environment for many students.

There is no one-size-fits-all SEL solution or implementation path, but it can be valuable to take a close look at aligning SEL and MTSS goals. Successfully integrating SEL into your MTSS framework can empower students with critical SEL competencies and deliver a multitude of benefits including enhanced academic achievement, improved school climate, and a sustainable SEL approach.

SEL and MTSS benefits:

- 1 Enhanced academic achievement
- 2 Improved school climate
- 3 Sustainable SEL approach

About Mosaic™ by ACT® Social Emotional Learning

Mosaic by ACT Social Emotional Learning is a recognized leader in evidence-based student curriculum and educator professional development focused on building social and

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