

# Massachusetts Safe and Supportive School Commission:

## *Updates and Future Considerations for Our Schools*

***MA Administrators for Special Education (ASE) Conference :***  
June 5, 2017 at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester

Rachelle Engler Bennett (ESE),  
Associate Commissioner, Student and Family Support  
and Safe and Supportive Schools Commission Co-Chair

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY  
**EDUCATION**



*Creating and maintaining **safe and supportive schools** is an increasingly important focal point for communities across the Commonwealth, **beyond an essential focus on academic success.***

***Preparing all students for success** in school, the workplace, and civic life includes developing students' social emotional competencies and attending to their health and wellbeing.*

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY  
**EDUCATION**



**Session focus:**

- I.** Safe and Supportive Schools Commission
  
- II.** ESE's strategic priority work related to supporting social-emotional learning, health, and safety



# I. Safe and Supportive Schools Commission

- A) Safe and Supportive Schools (SaSS):  
Commission & Definition Established
- B) Commission Membership & Responsibilities
- C) Framework & Self-Assessment Tool  
and Action Plans
- D) Current Areas of Focus
- E) SaSS Grant Program



# I. Safe and Supportive Schools Commission

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# Safe and Supportive Schools Framework Law

- ★ Provisions of ***An Act Relative to Safe and Supportive Schools*** were adopted by the MA legislature as part of [An Act Relative to the Reduction of Gun Violence](#). Chapter 284 of the Acts of 2014 was signed into law by the Governor on August 13, 2014 (House Bill 4376) and became:

MA General Laws, Chapter 69, Section 1P:

## Safe and Supportive Schools Framework Law



- ★ Informed by the work of the 2008-2011 Behavioral Health and Public Schools Task Force (per the [Act Relative to Children's Mental Health: Chapter 321 of the Acts of 2008](#)).



# Safe and Supportive Schools Definition

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...Schools that foster a **safe, positive, healthy and inclusive whole-school learning environment** that:

- enables students to develop positive relationships with adults and peers, regulate their emotions and behavior, achieve academic and non-academic success in school and maintain physical and psychological health and well-being; and
- integrates services and aligns initiatives that promote students' behavioral health, including social and emotional learning, bullying prevention, trauma sensitivity, dropout prevention, truancy reduction, children's mental health, foster care and homeless youth education, inclusion of students with disabilities, positive behavioral approaches that reduce suspensions and expulsions and other similar initiatives.



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# Commission Membership

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- Commission members primarily represent educational roles and organizations

*(e.g., administrators, teachers, students, professional support personnel, collaboratives, school committees, recovery high schools, as well as a few advocacy groups)*



# Commission Responsibilities



- Responsibilities include making recommendations to the legislature and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

*(e.g., on topics such as improvements to the Framework/Tool; administrative capacity; professional development; access to services, family engagement; integration into school improvement planning, and more)*



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# Safe and Supportive Schools Framework

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- The law directs ESE to develop a **Safe and Supportive Schools Framework** that provides guidance to schools on the creation of safe and supportive schools that improve education outcomes for students. It can help communities organize, integrate and sustain school and district-wide efforts, and coordinate and align student support initiatives.
- The BESE (Board) shall develop procedures for updating, improving, or refining the framework and tool, in consultation with the Commission.
- Consistent and informed by with the one created by the Behavioral Health and Public Schools (BHPS) Task Force.

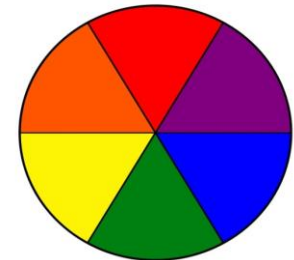


# Framework Organization

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The Framework addresses six key areas of school operations. Using school operations to develop an action plan allows schools to focus on making each aspect of the school safe and supportive. The framework is an integrative, whole-school process, rather than a fragmented program as schools can use operations organization to implement this framework within its existing planning process.

- **Leadership**
- **Professional development**
- **Access to resources and services**
- **Academic and non-academic strategies**
- **School/district policies, procedures, protocols**
- **Collaboration with families**



# Safe and Supportive Schools Self-Assessment Tool

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- *A **Self-Assessment Tool** for schools, aligned with the Framework that schools may use to:*
  - (i) **assess the school's capacity** to create and sustain safe and supportive school environments for all students;
  - (ii) **identify areas where additional school-based action, efforts, guidance and support are needed** to create and maintain safe and supportive school environments; and
  - (iii) **create action plans** to address the areas of need identified by the assessment.



# Action Plans

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- Developed by principal (or appointed team with broad representation of school/community), in consultation with the school council (c. 71, s.59C), and incorporated into the annual school improvement plan (c.69,s.1I), and posted online, or as otherwise approved by superintendent.
- Action Plan components:
  - i) strategies and initiatives for addressing needs identified through the tool
  - ii) implementation timeline
  - iii) outcome goals and indicators for evaluating effectiveness
  - iv) process and schedule for review (e.g., annually) and updating (e.g., within 3 yrs.)
- Locally determined priorities



# A Peek into the Framework/Tool

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# To View Framework or Tool

## <http://BHPS321.org> (TEST1 as Username/Password)

Behavioral Health and Public Schools Self-Assessment Tool for Schools

**Sign In**

Username

Password

Response Period  
NOTE: Current Period =  
Winter/Spring 2017

Winter/Spring 2017

Go

Change Password

Retrieve Password

To find out about upcoming webinars or other technical assistance sessions, please contact Rachelle Engler Bennett at [achievement@doe.mass.edu](mailto:achievement@doe.mass.edu) or [renglerbennett@doe.mass.edu](mailto:renglerbennett@doe.mass.edu).

This self-assessment tool for schools is designed to assess current activities and strategies that the staff and programs in your school engage in to create a supportive school environment. This tool is intended to assist with documenting current practices that support students' behavioral health at all intervention levels, ranging from the whole school community to individual students that require more intensive supports. It also examines the role of various school professionals and staff in providing these supports. This tool provides a general guideline for strategies to implement in the future. The state's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Public Schools (BHPS) drafted this tool and the Department will be periodically updating and revising it. It may be helpful to revisit your school's responses to this tool on a regular (e.g., quarterly, annual) basis to review progress and continually work towards full implementation on a range of practices that address and remove the barriers to learning.

You indicate the time period of submission on this home page (to the right), and you can submit new answers in a later response period as well and compare the two (or more) time periods. If you have questions on this or other aspects of the tool or framework, see "For More Info" below

[Instructions](#)

[Contact Information](#)

[Framework Document \(as web page\)](#)

[Framework Document \(as Word doc\)](#)

**Username/Password information:**

- For School Team Members: How to get usernames/passwords
- For others interested in looking at the tool: How to sign in to preview the



# Framework (Strategies and Action Steps within each Area)

http://bhps321.org/viewframework.asp

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back to Assessment Tool Home Page Introduction Guiding Principles Section I Section II Section III

Section IV Section V Section VI Truancy Prevention Attachment A: Definitions

View/Print full framework as web page View/Download full framework in Word

Page 5

## The Six Framework Sections in Detail

### SECTION I) LEADERSHIP

*This section addresses leadership by school and district administrators and other school personnel that can create systems and services within schools that promote supportive school environments. As a part of this, leadership can promote collaboration between community-based behavioral health providers and school staff to support positive outcomes for students within the scope of confidentiality laws. In some communities district administrators may be the catalyst for implementing these tasks, and in other communities, the leadership will start at the school level but will require district backing.*

#### STRATEGY A. District leadership

District leadership, in partnership with the school committee, can play an essential role in supporting behavioral health in schools by developing the vision, outcome measures, and a plan to implement the Framework in its district. It is also the role of leadership to support the collaboration between behavioral health providers and the schools in the district. Regular communication between the school committee, the superintendent, other district administrators, and school administrators regarding any district-wide and school-based plans is strongly encouraged to support the comprehensive implementation of this Framework.

#### ACTION STEPS

**[1.] District vision statement.** District administrators and school committees can develop and approve a written vision statement for implementing this Framework. This should be done with staff, student, family, and community input. A vision statement can address approaches that meet the Framework's three-part design to implement: 1) supportive school environments that promote the behavioral health of all students through whole-school supportive environments; 2) early interventions that provide collaborative approaches to identify and address behavioral health symptoms early; and 3) intensive services that coordinate intensive interventions for students with significant needs.

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6/4/2017



# Strategies within each Area

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icians employed by a school, district or community agency.

GO	Z. Additional Information	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □
Section III	<b>Access to Resources and Services</b>	
GO	A. The school's capacity to promote students' behavioral health through supportive school environments, early interventions, and intensive services is enhanced through a process of understanding current resources/services and making recommendations to fill any resource/service gaps.	■ ■
GO	B. Access to school and district behavioral health services promotes a supportive and positive learning environment in which all students can develop effective social and emotional skills.	■ ■ ■ ■
GO	C. The school/district establishes partnerships with community agencies to fill any gaps in school-based and district-based resources/services to promote students' behavioral health.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
GO	D. Confidential conferencing on individual students ensures that well-coordinated supports are available for the student and that common goals for success are established.	■ ■ ■ ■
GO	Z. Additional Information	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □
Section IV	<b>Academic and Non-Academic Supports</b>	
GO	A. The school has universal supports, strategies, and programs to create supportive school environments that promote overall well-being and positive educational outcomes for all students.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
GO	B. The school has early interventions that include supports, strategies, and programs available to targeted students who need additional supports in order to help them be successful in the school environment.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
GO	C. The school has intensive intervention services that include supports, strategies, and programs available to identified students who demonstrate significant needs and require additional supports in order to help them connect with the school community and be successful in the school environment.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
GO	Z. Additional Information	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □

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6/4/2017



# Action Steps within each Strategy and link to Framework for more details

http://bhps321.org/template1.asp

BHPS School Self-Assessm...

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Convert Select

Home Read Framework Document-Section V General Instructions Sign Out

## Behavioral Health and Public Schools Self-Assessment Tool for Schools

### V. School Policies, Procedures and Protocols:

#### Strategy D. Access policies.

Policies and protocols ensure student access to a full range of behavioral health services.

Go to next page

SAVE

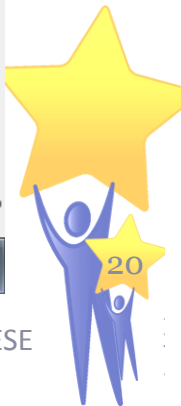
**01. Procedures are established that support and integrate students with behavioral health needs that exit or return to school from out-of-home placements.**

Current Implementation Level: We do this... (check one)	Action Plan: We plan to... (check one)	Guidance and Training
<input type="radio"/> 0=not implemented <input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>1=to some extent</b> <input type="radio"/> 2=to a moderate extent <input type="radio"/> 3=to a great extent <input type="radio"/> 4=in a fully implemented way <input type="radio"/> (no answer)	<input type="radio"/> 1=sustain current course of action <input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>2=modify or enhance current course of action</b> <input type="radio"/> (no answer)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We would like to seek guidance and training on this.

**02. School policies encourage student engagement through flexible scheduling of academic classes and extracurricular activities.**

Current Implementation Level: We do this... (check one)	Action Plan: We plan to... (check one)	Guidance and Training
<input type="radio"/> 0=not implemented <input type="radio"/> 1=to some extent <input type="radio"/> 2=to a moderate extent <input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>3=to a great extent</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>1=sustain current course of action</b> <input type="radio"/> 2=modify or enhance current course of action <input type="radio"/> (no answer)	<input type="checkbox"/> We would like to seek guidance and training on this.

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# Outcomes Data and General Questions

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communication, and enhance trust by maintaining confidentiality. This collaboration is essential to achieve positive educational outcomes and promote behavioral health.

GO	Z. Additional Information	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □
Section X	<b>Outcomes Data</b>	
GO	A. Attendance Rate	■ ■ ■
GO	B. Disciplinary Referrals	■ ■ ■
GO	C. In-school and out-of-school suspension rates	■ ■ ■
GO	D. School or district high school graduation rate	□ □ □
GO	E. Other Indicator #1	□ □ □
GO	F. Other Indicator #2	□ □ □
Section Y	<b>General Questions</b>	
GO	A. AREAS FOR INCREASED ATTENTION OR MODIFICATIONS	■ ■
GO	B. Below are questions in areas not covered by the framework sections above. Included here is the opportunity for schools to identify additional related areas that are important to address that are not described above.	■ ■ ■ ■ □

**Report Screens**

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# Available Reports

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Page Safety Tools

## Report Screens

REPORT #1 - List All

REPORT #2A: Averages by Strategy

REPORT #2B: Averages by Section

REPORT #3: List All Where Action Plan is To Modify/Enhance

REPORT #4: List All Where Guidance/Training is checked

VIEW REPORTS for another survey period

Spring 2017 UPDATE

11:52 PM 6/3/2017



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# Primary Commission Focus Areas in 2017

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- 1) *updating, refining & improving the framework/tool*
- 2) *integrating initiatives, including how the framework/tool can be part of the school improvement process and Planning for Success (PFS)*
- 3) *focus groups to inform legislative recommendations*





# Focus Groups on Family Engagement

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*Seven focus groups conducted by Harvard's Education Law Clinic and TLPI. Still a work in progress, but some **examples** of emerging themes include:*

- Parents desire more frequent, consistent and welcoming communication from teachers and schools regarding their children, including what and how they are learning, and what role family members can play in their child's education, and beyond exceptional circumstances, and how to contribute to decision making at school.
- Elementary schools communicate more frequently than middle or high.
- Increased support staff, and more consideration to the needs of working families could improve family engagement.
- Parent leaders are not representative of the school population, and two-way communication is particularly difficult for non-English speaking families.
- Using technology to communicate can be helpful, if families are supported to access the technology and it is available on the devices they typically use.



# Focus Groups on Family Engagement

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*(continued)*

- Participants believe that more and better connections to the local community and to each child's home environment would lead to better school relationships with students and families.
- Caregivers would like to see their cultures reflected in the diversity of staff at the school, as well as in school events and programming.
- Some caregivers perceive cultural stereotypes , experience significant language barriers in their attempts to communicate with their child's school, or perceive being treated differently because of their family's intergenerational reputation in very small communities.
- At IEP meetings, caregivers appreciate the presence of an outside provider.
- Many parents are very knowledgeable about their child's learning style and would like to be asked how their children learn best, and to be able to give input into their child's education.



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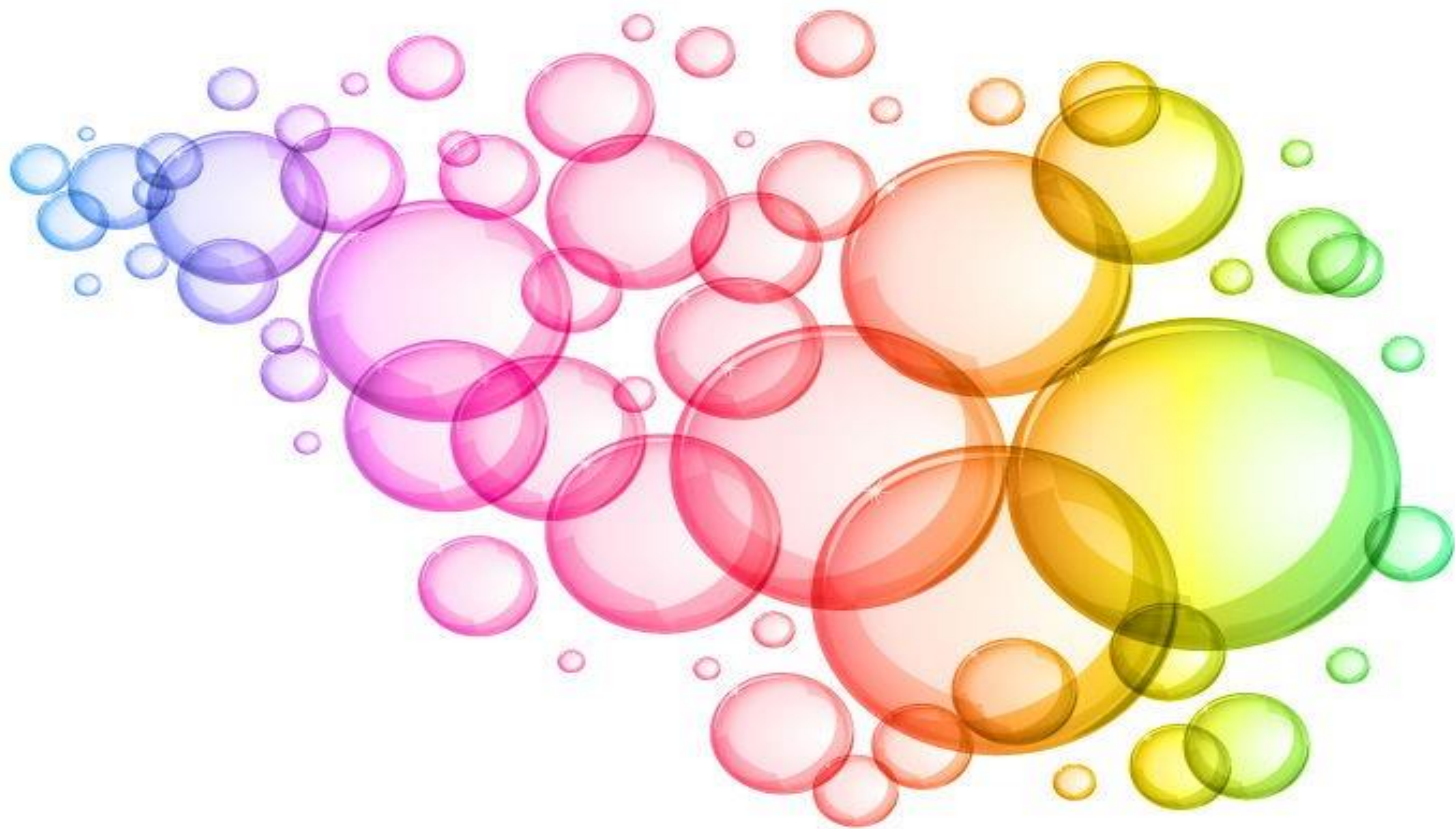


# Safe and Supportive Schools Grant Program

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- The FY17 [Safe and Supportive Schools Grant \(Competitive\)](#) offered districts up to \$10,000 per selected school (approx. 30 schools in 17 districts) to use the BHPS Framework/Tool to develop action plans that organize, integrate, and sustain school and district-wide efforts to create safe and supportive school environments and coordinate and align student support initiatives.
- Pending appropriation, ESE anticipates offering an FY18 grant funding opportunity as well for planning and implementation work. Details when available will be posted on the main ESE grants pages as well as the [SaSS Grant Page](#).





# II. ESE's Heart Strategy

*The goal of the Massachusetts public K–12 education system is to prepare all students for success after high school. Massachusetts has identified five core strategies to accelerate the pace of school improvement towards this goal.*

## Core Strategies:



**STRENGTHEN STANDARDS, CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT**



**PROMOTE EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT**



**SUPPORT SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING, HEALTH, AND SAFETY**



**TURN AROUND THE LOWEST PERFORMING DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS**



**ENHANCE RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND DATA USE**



# Four Areas of Focus



- ★ School Culture and Climate
- ★ Social and Emotional Learning Competencies
- ★ Health, Wellness, and Safety
- ★ Family Engagement



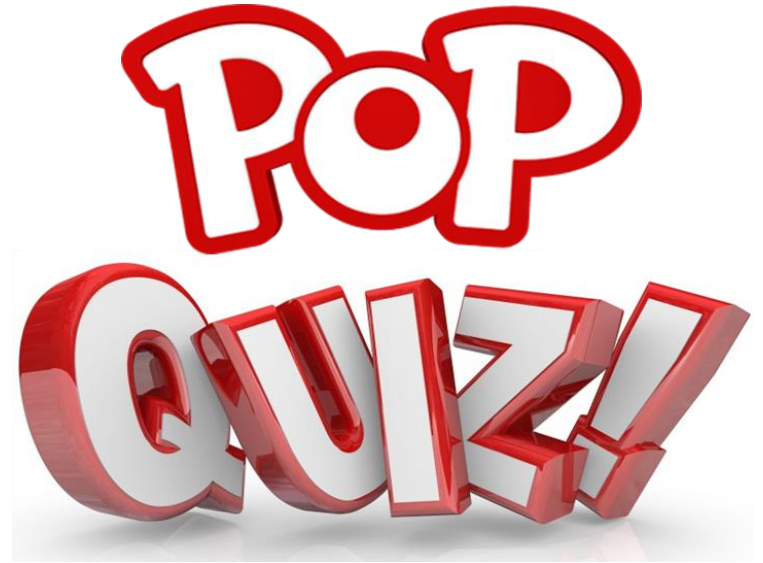
# Support social-emotional learning, health, and safety

It is our goal to promote systems and strategies that foster safe, positive, healthy, culturally competent, and inclusive learning environments that address students' varied needs and improve educational outcomes for all.





# Part I



## *Multiple Choice:*

Academic and social-emotional competencies are \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. In conflict with health and safety
- b. Mutually reinforcing
- c. Easily mastered by all



# Part II



## *Fill in the blanks:*

We have a goal to promote \_\_\_\_  
that foster \_\_\_\_  
learning environments that address \_\_\_\_  
in order to improve \_\_\_\_  
for \_\_\_\_.

## WORD CHOICES:

- a. all students
- b. educational outcomes
- c. students' varied needs
- d. safe, positive, healthy, culturally competent, and inclusive
- e. systems and strategies



# Initiative/Resource Examples

- ★ Building upon the state's **PK-K Standards in SEL/APL**, with Curriculum Frameworks **Guiding Principles**, and updating the **Guidelines for Implementing SEL Curricula K-12**
- ★ Supporting **Inclusive Practice** initiatives (e.g., Guidebook for Inclusive Practice/online courses)
- ★ Implementing the **Low-Income Education Access Project (LEAP)** to address the disproportionate identification and placement of low-income students found eligible to receive special education services.



# Initiative/Resource Examples

- ★ Improving outcomes for preschool students with IEPs with a focus on social-emotional development through an evidence-based, tiered intervention: **Preschool Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) using Pyramid strategies (Pyramid Model)** – part of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP): Early Childhood Special Education SEL Initiative
- ★ Facilitating a Professional Learning Network on **Rethinking Discipline**
- ★ Using student surveys for **health and climate data**



# Initiative/Resource Examples

- ★ Developing resources and supports through the **Systems of Student Success** office is to assist Level 3, 4 and 5 districts address students' barriers to learning.
- ★ Participating in a Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (**CASEL**) **Initiative** that helps us learn from work in other states and as well as consult with national experts in the field.
- ★ Engaging in **cross-unit and agency** efforts, to advance work in all focus areas, including family engagement.



# Initiative/Resource Examples

- ★ Key drivers in this work are the definition of **safe and supportive schools** in the Safe and Supportive Schools Framework Law, and the associated charge for the Department and the Safe and Supportive Schools Commission to create and update as needed a Framework and Self-Assessment Tool for schools and partners, based on the current Behavioral Health and Public Schools' versions.



# For all you do...



# Questions or Comments

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# For More Information

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- Safe and Supportive Schools Framework Law:  
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter69/Section1P>
- Safe and Supportive Schools Commission website:  
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/safety.html?section=commission>
- The BHPS Framework and Self-Assessment Tool:  
<http://BHPS321.org>
- Safe and Supportive Schools Competitive Grant Fund Code 335:  
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/safety.html?section=fc335>
- ESE Strategic Priorities:  
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/StrategicPlan-Summary.pdf>
- Rachelle Engler Bennett (ESE):  
[renglerbennett@doe.mass.edu](mailto:renglerbennett@doe.mass.edu) / 781-338-3205

