

2023 NeMTSS SUMMIT

TRANSFORMATIONS Through Coherence

Breakout Session Summaries

All times listed are Central Daylight Time.

In an effort to save paper, hard copies of the summit schedule and session summaries will not be available at the event. You may print materials (as needed) in advance or view them online: nemtss.unl.edu/2023-summit/.



HYBRID SESSION



IN-PERSON SESSION

THURSDAY, OCT. 12

10:15-11:15 a.m. | Breakout Session A



Silver 1

Lending a Hand in SEL for Early Learning

Cheryl Couch, Director of Masters of Education, York University

Topics: Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, SEBL, Layered Continuum of Supports

Today, children are confused and conflicted by the world we live in. Participants in this session will have an opportunity to explore critical issues, engage with social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies and learn ways to improve classroom management skills. Discover strategies that can be applied immediately to offer children stability, meet SEL needs, and provide a safe place of well-being in the classroom as we engage with real-life scenarios and answer SEL questions.



Silver 2

Building Championship Teams

Megan Dufek, MTSS & PEaK Coordinator, ESU 8; Mindy Pritchett McBride, Boyd County Public Schools; and Kristen Evans, Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools

Topics: Teaming Structures, Communication and Collaboration

The strength of MTSS comes from effectively engaging a variety of voices and perspectives to identify and support student needs. To do that, teams need to establish and protect time to meet throughout the school year. By practicing data-based decision-making at each level, teams can target areas of growth and capitalize on areas of strength to best support students and staff. This session will address the who, what, frequency, and focus of each team at the district, school, collaborative and student support team level. Participants will leave with resources and a better understanding of how shared leadership can help their district build a sustainable teaming structure.



Silver 3

Universal Design for Learning – Optimizing Teaching and Learning in the Classroom

Medea Henke, Learning Specialist, Norris Public Schools; and Jane Hansmeyer, Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher, Norris High School

Topics: Secondary Education, SEBL, Layered Continuum of Supports

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) focuses on improving and optimizing teaching and learning for all by setting clear, rigorous goals; anticipating barriers; and proactively designing to minimize those barriers for all students. UDL identifies what is learned and how it is learned, without adding more to a teacher's plate. This session will help secondary teachers learn UDL strategies to use in their classrooms.



Silver 7

Implementing MTSS in High School Classrooms

Hank Bohanon, Professor, School of Education, Loyola University of Chicago

Topics: Secondary Education, CIP, Data-Based Decision-Making

Some educators may feel school-wide strategies, such as MTSS, are only effective in elementary school settings. This misperception is a barrier to effectively implementing MTSS in secondary schools. This session will provide participants with a rationale for how school-wide supports can help them work more efficiently, improve collaboration with their colleagues and offer an engaging instructional environment. The presenter also will connect MTSS with school improvement and strategies associated with effective secondary schools. Discover specific approaches school staff can use to create a positive, supportive and engaging learning environment for all students. After this session, participants will be able to identify specific components of MTSS related to school improvement and effective secondary schools; use data to identify strategies to improve instructional and behavioral support for all students; and embed MTSS strategies into related MTSS and school improvement efforts in secondary settings, including classroom settings.



Silver 8

School Spotlight: Strategic Considerations for MTSS Implementation in a K-12 System

Ainsworth Community Schools

Topics: MTSS Journey, Interventions, Data-Based Decision-Making, Layered Continuum of Supports

Implementation of a school-wide tiered intervention system should be a strategic, collaborative and comprehensive process, especially in a small district with limited time, expertise and resources. Follow the targeted, multi-year MTSS implementation process used by Ainsworth Community Schools, where they have built capacity, created a collaborative K-12 system, developed scheduling considerations and a culture of data-based decision-making to support students in meeting math, reading and social-emotional/PBIS learning objectives. The presenters will review considerations regarding comprehensive policies, prioritization for implementation, interventions and curriculum selection to support coordinated K-12 processes.



Silver 9

School Spotlight: HOPE (Having Only Positive Expectations): Closing the Achievement Gap and Opening Opportunities

Nelson Mandela Elementary School

Topics: Data-Based Decision-Making, MTSS Journey, SEBL

Nelson Mandela Elementary School has achieved remarkable success with its student body, where 97% of students are on free and reduced lunch plans and more than 88% of students are proficient in math and reading by the end of fourth grade. This success can be attributed to effective implementation of several strategies: parent engagement, vocabulary development, enrichment activities, restorative practices, data-driven academic decision-making, no suspensions or expulsions, and daily SEL and mindfulness activities. In this session, participants will leave with examples of how to raise achievement and lower time out of class due to behavior, including mindfulness practices and tips for how to execute an effective class meeting with SEL goals and objectives. The presenters will share their school's unique schedule that promotes vocabulary development, community engagement and parental involvement.



Gold 1

Data, Data Everywhere: The Power of Collaborative Partnerships and Visualizations

ESU 3 Panel: Dr. Scott Blum, Assistant Administrator; Bill Pulte, Chief Information Office; McKayla LaBorde, Executive Director of Student Services; and Dr. Cecilia Wilken, Educational Consultant

Topics: Data-Based Decision-Making, CIP

Feeling surrounded by data? Every system has its own unique needs and contexts and brings with it a new set of data, as well as new challenges for how to incorporate it into improvement processes, change processes and decision-making. This session will look at how two school districts partnered with ESU 3 and used their unique needs and contexts, current data and free online tools to enhance their data systems. By using Google Looker, formerly Google Data Studio, this partnership has been able to generate continuously updated data visualizations that are used by principals and CIP/MTSS teams. In addition to the partnerships created by the districts and ESU 3, participants will see how departments within ESU 3 have collaborated to build this product and continuously evaluate it for enhancements.



Gold 7

Creating a Culture of Learning and Trust through Restorative Practices

LaRaesha Kugel, MTSS Facilitator and Instructional Coach, ESU 9

Topics: SEBL, Layered Continuum of Supports

Restorative practices allow participants to feel safe and valued in their community. When restorative practices are implemented in the classroom, the impacts can be tremendous. LaRaesha Kugel has implemented these practices firsthand as a classroom teacher and will walk through what restorative practices are, why they are important, and how to use them in classrooms and buildings to foster healthy relationships and positive communication.



Platinum 6

MTSS and Twice-Exceptionality: Identifying and Supporting Students Who Are High-Ability Learners and Have a Disability

Sheyanne Smith, High Ability Learning Specialist, Nebraska Department of Education

Topics: HAL, Data-Based Decision-Making, Layered Continuum of Supports

A student with twice-exceptionality, known as 2E, is defined as being a high-ability learner (HAL) who meets state or federal qualification for a disability. In Nebraska, only 2% of students in special education are also identified as HALs. 2E students are often hard to identify because of the masking effect — where their high ability may mask a disability or their disability may mask high ability. The NeMTSS Framework is designed to build capacity, use data to make decisions and provide early intervention. Using the lens of twice-exceptionality through MTSS, we can begin to identify and provide appropriate supports for this unique student population.



Platinum 7

Working the Wisdom Within Your Building

Heather Robbins, NeMTSS Systems Consultant; and Scott Eckman, State Personnel Development Grant Coordinator, Nebraska Department of Education

Topics: Infrastructure and Shared Leadership, Communication and Collaboration

The behavioral expertise we need can often be found within our own building. Every school in Nebraska has expert educators within their walls. Each school has staff members with amazing abilities: transitioning between activities in class, communicating with parents, developing engagement strategies, creating efficient classroom design, implementing successful reinforcement systems and more. Despite these strengths within our building, we often seek expertise from outside sources. As we strengthen our system and align activities to promote student success, we can “work the wisdom within” and showcase the exceptional behavioral knowledge, skills and abilities of our educators through brief professional learning activities. Participants will leave this session with multiple 10-15 minute activities to conduct during staff meetings, PLCs, team meetings, or other times that will allow staff members to share their strengths and expertise.

1:15-2:15 p.m. | Breakout Session B



Silver 1

Science of Reading: Tying It All Together

Cheryl Couch, Director of Masters of Education, York University

Topics: Literacy, K12 Education, Early Childhood Education, Layered Continuum of Supports

This session will provide an introduction to the science of reading for pre-K through grade 12 learners. Participants will explore the six essential elements of reading instruction — phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and writing — and look at effective instructional practices that support literacy development across ages. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of the science of reading, including the essential elements of reading instruction, instructional strategies used with the approach and how the brain responds to reading.



Silver 2

How Family and Community Engagement Supports NeMTSS

Brian Welch, Afterschool, Family and Community Engagement Specialist; and Mariella Resendiz Alvarez, Director of School Mental Health; Nebraska Department of Education

Topics: Communication and Collaboration

The newly published Nebraska School, Family, and Community Engagement Framework naturally supports MTSS in Nebraska. In this session, participants will discuss the six focus areas of the framework and how they can directly tie into NeMTSS to support the learning, earning and living of all students. The six focus areas of the framework are: Active Family Engagement, Safe and Welcoming Schools, Student Attendance, Community Partnerships and Support Services, Business and Industry Partnerships, Before-school, Afterschool and Summer Programs. Each focus area includes research, resources, practices, and examples schools can use to engage families and community partners.



Silver 3

Partnerships for Inclusion

Blair Hartman, Transition Coordinator/Central Region Transition Facilitator; Sydney Kobza, Assistant Administrator of Career and Technical Education; Nebraska Department of Education; and Kris Kampovitz, NeMTSS Regional Support Lead, Region 4

Topics: Communication and Collaboration, Transition Education, Layered Continuum of Supports

Join this session to learn how NeMTSS and the Nebraska Department of Education are working together to promote strategies of inclusion to best meet the needs of all students, particularly strategies that support transition education and career and technical education (CTE). Transition education, provided through the Office of Special Education and Career and Technical Education and public schools throughout Nebraska, aims to support students in reaching their post-secondary education goals. Presenters will highlight the successful CTE Without Limits project, and share resources, including the Project Discovery kits and Achieve Life Skills binders.



Silver 7

Keeping Silos But Baking Better Bread: Integrating MTSS Efforts to Transform Practices

Hank Bohanon, Professor, School of Education, Loyola University of Chicago

Topics: CIP, MTSS Journey

Multi-tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) can be challenging to implement under most conditions. Applying MTSS becomes even more difficult when schools implement multiple initiatives simultaneously (e.g., behavior, academics). Rather than tear down siloed approaches, schools can focus on a recipe (i.e., school improvement plans) that pulls divergent resources into one coherent approach. This presentation is designed to help school communities think through steps for integrating and aligning their support efforts in schools, and to help teams focus their approach to school improvement. Special attention will be paid to aligning practices to mission and vision, and connecting professional roles to improvement efforts, with an end goal of a single unified multi-tiered system of support, rather than multiple disconnected tiered support systems. As a result of this session, participants will be able to identify their strengths and needs related to MTSS implementation and school improvement, gain strategies for integrating MTSS and school improvement and develop strategies for systematically implementing interventions in their settings.



Silver 8

School Spotlight: Data, CICO and the System...Oh My!

Norris Intermediate School

Topics: Data-Based Decision-Making, PBIS, MTSS Journey, Layered Continuum of Supports

Norris Intermediate has created a system to identify students who need just a little bit more, track student progress within a few seconds, determine whether students need to layer up or layer down, and best of all, has teacher AND student buy in. The Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) program has been Norris Intermediate's saving grace and has benefitted more than 100 students. How did Norris Intermediate achieve this and what does its system look like? Join this hour of fun and learning that will showcase the school's Google spreadsheet, continuum of supports, daily data sheet and overall MTSS journey. Participants will leave with a better understanding of the CICO program through real-life examples of how the school operates each day.







Silver 9

Student Behavior: Approaches That Won't Fuel the Fire

Dani Potter, Special Education Coordinator; and Lori Broady, Teaching and Learning Specialist; ESU 4

Topics: Data-Based Decision-Making, SEBL, Trauma-Informed Care

While the term "ACEs" — Adverse Childhood Experiences — may be familiar to professionals in special education and psychology, the challenges that accompany student's high ACE scores often fall on general education teachers, administrators and support staff. Unfortunately, not everyone has the tools needed to effectively support students grappling with social, emotional or behavioral issues that stem from trauma. This session will examine the importance of considering ACE scores for students who struggle and will provide insight into how those students can best be supported in all environments.

 Gold 1	<p>EUREKA! Discovering Your Data Treasure Trove in Teaching Strategies GOLD Amy Colwell, NeMTSS Early Childhood Facilitator, Region 1; Michele Rayburn, Director of Student Services, ESU 6; Heidi Farmer, NeMTSS Regional Support Lead, Region 1; and Kristina Norwood, NeMTSS Early Childhood Implementation Facilitator, Region 2</p> <p><i>Topics: Data-Based Decision-Making, Early Childhood Education</i></p> <p>Prevention is better than intervention. Teaching Strategies GOLD data offers a wealth of information about developmental progress in early childhood. This session will share tips for demystifying GOLD data and how to use it to inform planning and goal setting and to support transitions from preschool to kindergarten.</p>
 Gold 7	<p>Psychological Safety for Highly-Effective Teams is the Key to Success Sara Skretta, Senior Director of Accreditation, Placement and Licensure, University of Nebraska–Lincoln</p> <p><i>Topics: SEBL, Trauma-Informed Care</i></p> <p>Psychological safety is a key element of successful teams and a critical driver of high-quality decision-making. A strong team provides a positive, cohesive place where diverse ideas can be respectfully shared but also challenged. As educators deal with post-pandemic workplace environments, student challenges and a divisive political climate, it can be difficult to build a true sense of community, collaboration and connectedness within a team. This session will highlight five strategies to promote psychological safety that can be implemented right now. Participants will leave with a better understanding of what psychological safety in the workplace is and its importance to the success of highly-effective teams and practical strategies to establish psychological safety in teams and promote personal growth and development.</p>
 Platinum 6	<p>School Spotlight: Building a System of Support for Mental Health Papillion La Vista Community Schools</p> <p><i>Topics: SEBL, Mental Health, Layered Continuum of Supports</i></p> <p>The session will focus on how Papillion La Vista Community Schools (PLCS) engaged in a self-assessment, prioritized goals and created action steps to address mental health supports needed by students. Join this session to learn how PLCS leadership created an effective system of support, alongside counselors, school psychologists, behavior coaches and social workers.</p>
 Platinum 7	<p>School Spotlight: Grandview Elementary: A PBIS Success Story! Alliance Public Schools</p> <p><i>Topics: PBIS, MTSS Journey</i></p> <p>Participants will be motivated by this presentation that will focus on the successful implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at Grandview Elementary. Participants will gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of PBIS and see an accurate representation of a Nebraska based, real-world application of PBIS practices to support students’ mental health and behavioral, academic, social and emotional needs</p>

2:30-3:30 p.m. | Breakout Session C



Silver 1

The Science of Reading is More Than a Curriculum — It Is a System!

Brent Conway, Assistant Superintendent, Pentucket Regional Schools, Massachusetts

Topics: Literacy, Layered Continuum of Supports

While many districts seek solutions to their lagging literacy outcomes for students with curriculum adoptions or science of reading training — the real solution is in the systems that ensure those two components are effective and efficient. The systems component of a multi-tiered literacy program based on the science of reading uses assessments, data analysis, schedules and personnel management to reach all students. In this session, participants will learn how the systems pull all the components together for a powerful literacy program with continuous annual student growth and targeted “catch up” growth for those who have gaps.



Silver 2

Creating Partnerships to Address Mental Health, SEBL and Systems Development

Jen Pollock, School Mental Health Services Program Coordinator, ESU 3

Topics: SEBL, Communication and Collaboration

In this session, participants will learn about ESU 3’s implementation of systems of care tenants within an MTSS framework. In this work, principles of Systems of Care are brought to the schools, with an emphasis on integrated systems, youth and family partnerships, cultural and linguistic responsiveness and recognizing schools as hubs of the community. We achieve this by embedding licensed mental health professionals within the schools/districts and coordinating system development and enhancement through ESU 3. Integration within the MTSS framework includes establishing a single point of access, promoting early identification of mental health signs and symptoms, fostering parent peer mentorship and strengthening infrastructure. Through these efforts, educators can implement and explore innovative practices to improve access to high-quality mental health services.



Silver 3

MTSS and IEP Teams: Wearing the Get Along Shirt

Michalla Schartz, Southeast Region Transition Facilitator, ESU 6; and Heidi Farmer, NeMTSS Regional Support Lead, Region 1

Topics: Secondary Education, Transition Services

Effective communication and collaboration between MTSS and special education directly impacts the learning, earning and living for youth with disabilities in Nebraska. Collaboration between MTSS and special education partners can improve post-school outcomes for employment, education and independent living for transition-age youth. This session will explain how building fundamental transition experiences and connected relationships between students, families and IEP teams can increase the likelihood that students will become meaningfully engaged in their communities and reach their post-secondary goals. Regional transition specialists will share post-school outcome data and why teams accomplish more when there are learning community collaborations connected to supporting the social, emotional, behavioral and academic needs of each student. Learner outcomes include shared information on transition requirements and procedures, and understanding the benefits of strong partnerships among MTSS and special education/transition specialists.



Silver 7

School Spotlight: Small School Journey from Struggles to Success

Sterling Public Schools

Topics: Data-Based Decision-Making, K12 Education, NeMTSS Journey

At Sterling Public Schools, which educates all students in one building, the MTSS team has found success using consistent coordination meetings, along with EduClimber and data-informed decision rules, to determine students’ needs. This session will look at the MTSS implementation process Sterling has used over multiple years for pre-K through grade 12 students, including successes and struggles along the way.



Silver 8

A Tiered Approach to Addressing Chronic Absenteeism

Brooke Gebers, NeMTSS Regional Support Lead, Region 3; and Shirley Vargas, Administrator, Office of Coordinated School and District Support, Nebraska Department of Education

Topics: Data-Based Decision-Making, Communication and Collaboration, Layered Continuum of Supports

Chronic absenteeism is a growing concern in schools across the country. Many educators are grappling with how to address and prevent this challenge using a systemic approach. In this session, participants will recognize the role the NeMTSS essential elements play in identification, prevention and intervention of chronic absenteeism. There will be opportunities to analyze data, draw connections between chronic absenteeism and Tier 1 Core instruction, and recognize the importance of family and community engagement.



Silver 9

Tools for Fostering Educators' Compassion Resilience

Jessie Coffey, Director, Whole Child Program, Nebraska Department of Education

Topics: SEBL

Compassion resilience is the ability to maintain physical, emotional and mental well-being while responding compassionately to others. This session will examine educators' capacity to serve students and communities based on personal experiences, organizational supports and societal context. Resources will highlight trauma-informed perspectives that add value in understanding where each individual is starting on their path to compassion resilience. This trauma-informed lens also deepens our understanding of supports that can fuel the energy of a diverse staff and student base with limited resources. Participants will leave with tools to support compassion resilience in their buildings.



Gold 1

CTE Without Limits: NeMTSS

Sydney Kobza, Assistant Administrator, Office of Career and Technical Education, Nebraska Department of Education

Topics: Career and Technical Education, Secondary Education, Layered Continuum of Supports

The Nebraska Department of Education's Offices of Career and Technical Education (CTE), Vocational Rehabilitation and Special Education are working together to coordinate and provide support to all students focused on the vision that "each learner skillfully navigates their own career journey." This collaboration includes offering integrated pre-K-20W advisement systems, providing transparent and accessible cross-state data on CTE options and outcomes, and investing in resources to support integrated advisement systems. The Nebraska CTE team is working to align with the NeMTSS Framework and support CTE educators across the state with best practices. Join this session to learn about the CTE Without Limits project and ways the Nebraska CTE team is aligning to the work.





Gold 7

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Services


Lindsey Ondrak, Outreach and Training Specialist, Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children

Topics: Early Childhood Education, SEBL, Trauma-Informed Care, Layered Continuum of Supports

The first few years of life form the foundation of mental health — and are the optimum time for intervention. This session, led by a trauma-informed mental health therapist, will focus on identifying symptoms of traumatic stress in early childhood. Participants will learn about evidence-based treatments, Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), and how these interventions can benefit children's overall mental health and development. When children are identified as needing more intensified services, these clinical interventions can support their overall success and help them reach their goals.

 Platinum 6	<p>Digital Wise Parenting to Create Digital Fitness in Schools and Homes Jay Martin, School Safety and Security Director, Nebraska Department of Education</p> <p><i>Topics: Technology in Education, Communication and Collaboration</i></p> <p>When devices are a big part of children’s lives, what should adults be aware of to ensure responsible digital usage? The core of many social, emotional and behavioral issues seen in schools originates from digital platforms, apps and media. Exposure to digital nuances has a profound impact on all of us, affecting our behavior, mental state and emotional well-being. Developing digital wisdom will make adults more mindful of best practices to assist students with digital citizenship, literacy, privacy and navigation within the virtual world, allowing them to be safer and more secure in the real world. Digital parent academies are needed in communities to keep adults informed of the latest digital influences and best practices to use with their children. Discussion will highlight platform pressures, synthetic media, emotional exploitation, digital fitness and more.</p>
 Platinum 7	<p>School Spotlight: Intervention and Enrichment Systems – When, How and What We Do Superior Public Schools</p> <p><i>Topics: Data-Based Decision-Making, Layered Continuum of Supports, Interventions</i></p> <p>Superior Elementary has provided interventions to students through systematic and structured approaches for more than 20 years. Now, it is simply what they do – but it hasn’t always been that way. Growing pains, scheduling changes, staffing adjustments, new research and improved practices have all contributed to its evolution over the years. Today, Superior provides both intervention and enrichment (I&E) learning opportunities for reading and math. This presentation will provide educators and administrators with ideas and examples they can implement in their schools. Participants will learn when to provide these supports within a daily schedule, how those decisions are made based on MAP, Acadience and classroom performance data, and what students do during I&E, WIN and small group times. Who is responsible for providing these supports? All of us! Discover how administrators, classroom teachers, special education teachers, paras and other specialists work together to implement intervention and enrichment systems for all students who are performing below, on and above grade level.</p>

3:45-4:45 p.m. | Breakout Session D

 Silver 1	<p>Coherence in Elementary Literacy Mary Jo McElhose, NeMTSS Systems Consultant; Becky Michael, ELA Content Specialist, and Olivia Alberts, Reading Content Specialist; Nebraska Department of Education</p> <p><i>Topics: Elementary Education, Science of Reading</i></p> <p>In this session, presenters will explore the importance of consistent instructional routines in early literacy that align with Nebraska’s Standards for English Language Arts, the High-Quality Instructional Materials initiative, essential elements of NeMTSS, and the Science of Reading teaching practices. Participants will learn about and work with a new guidance document developed through a collaborative effort between NeMTSS and NDE. This document describes multiple ways to support early literacy learning in classrooms, schools and districts, including evidence-based, foundational skills and comprehension.</p>
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Silver 7

Kink the Firehose: Maximizing NeMTSS Through Systems Leadership

Tessa Fraass, NeMTSS Regional Support Lead, Region 5; Ryan Ricenbaw, Director of Statewide Teacher and Principal Support, Nebraska Department of Education; and Julie Downing, Professional Learning Coordinator, ESU 13; Educator Effectiveness Specialist, Nebraska Department of Education

Topics: Communication and Collaboration, Infrastructure and Shared Leadership

School leaders often find themselves overwhelmed by the complex nature of the school system as a whole. This complexity can become unmanageable without proper support and a deep understanding of the organization as an interconnected system. Embracing a systems approach to leadership is not only key to maximizing one's own leadership capacity, but is also vital for enhancing the overall effectiveness of NeMTSS. Join us in this session to cultivate a systems perspective, recognizing that shared leadership across all educator roles is essential for intentional and successful collaboration. This comprehensive approach helps to align purpose, clarify roles and foster a collective commitment to achieving common goals.



Gold 1

Building Intentional and Meaningful Relationships Through Mentoring

Christopher McCroy, Associate Director of Training & Program Development; and Dr. DérNecia Phillips, Educational Consultant; Mentor Nebraska

Topics: Communication and Collaboration

Imagine a world where every young person had someone in their lives who appreciated them, honored their identity, and cared for their success. This session will explore ways in which educators, administrators, and school program staff can create that world through quality mentoring and the intentional creation of mentor-rich environments. Mentoring relationships nurture understanding and ignite self-discovery, inspiring young people to pursue their passions and thrive during and after school. Participants in this session will gain an understanding of how creating these intentional and meaningful relationships can amplify equity and empower students by providing them with greater self-confidence and an expanded sense of future possibilities.



Gold 7

Walk the Talk: Connecting SEBL to Well-Being

NeMTSS SEBL Specialists: Emily Arkfeld, Region 2; Chandra Essex, Region 4; Sara Gentry, Region 5; Jill Guenther, Region 3 and Mackenzie Riedel, Region 1

Topics: SEBL, Communication and Collaboration

Join the NeMTSS Social, Emotional and Behavioral Learning (SEBL) specialists in this breakout session focused on SEBL skill building for students and staff. Learn about different ways to incorporate SEBL and mental well-being into your school climate through some hands-on, interactive activities that you can begin using immediately.

FRIDAY, OCT. 13

10:45 -11:45 a.m. | Breakout Session E



Silver 1

Learn How to Develop Nurturing, Collaborative Learning Spaces

Aly Martinez-Wilkinson, Professional Learning Lead; and Trudy Clark, Director of Office of Assessment; Nebraska Department of Education

Topics: SEBL, Communication and Collaboration

What is the key to developing a nurturing, collaborative learning space? It is important to encourage students to actively participate in fostering a learning community where trust and respect are paramount. In this session, educators will explore ways to build thriving learning environments and practice the skills that are foundational to learner success, well-being and self-efficacy. Participants will gain knowledge to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation (InTASC Standard 3: Learning Environments).



Silver 2

Transform Your MTSS with the Help of Your School Psychologist!

Brian McKeivitt, Professor of Psychology, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Topics: SEBL, Data-Based Decision-Making, K12 Education, Layered Continuum of Supports

School psychologists are often relegated to the role of tester for special education. Yet, school psychologists' training and expertise go well beyond that. This presentation will help participants understand the varied contributions a school psychologist can make to a school's MTSS efforts in both academic and behavioral supports and at all levels. First, participants will learn about a model of school psychology practice that puts MTSS at the forefront. Next, examples of services school psychologists can provide relevant to the four essential elements of the NeMTSS framework will be shared. Finally, potential barriers to school psychologists' involvement with MTSS will be discussed, along with ways to overcome those barriers. Including a school psychologist on the MTSS team can invigorate a school's efforts to educate all students effectively, benefiting both teachers and administrators.



Silver 3

School Spotlight: The Kintsugi Coherence Experience

Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools

Topics: MTSS Journey, Layered Continuum of Supports, Data-Based Decision-Making

After overcoming disjointed PBIS, MTSS and SEBL action plans and fragmented teaming structures, Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools is now committed to piecing these efforts back together to form a piece of art, just like the centuries-old practice of Kintsugi. Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending areas of breakage with lacquer dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver or platinum. Through this repair process, a broken piece of pottery is pieced back together making something just as beautiful, if not more beautiful, than before. Presenters will share their MTSS journey: where it began, where it went, how they pieced efforts back together and where we are now.



Silver 7

School Spotlight: Using Branching Minds to Refine MTSS Processes and Make Data-Driven Decisions

Garden County Schools

Topics: Data-Based Decision-Making, Layered Continuum of Supports

When Garden County Schools began its MTSS journey at the primary level, it soon became apparent that it needed a landing zone for data. Branching Minds is an online software that provides a comprehensive solution for schools, bringing together all the components of MTSS across academics, behavior and SEL, while guiding teachers and administrators through best practices to ensure implementation fidelity and streamline the work. Join this session to hear about the ups and downs of traversing MTSS with Branching Minds in a rural district.



Silver 8

Creating Safe Schools with Psychological First Aid for Schools and MTSS

Sally Carlson, Independent Contractor; and Kim Jacobson, Independent Contractor; School Safety, NDE

Topics: SEBL, Interventions, Layered Continuum of Supports

Psychological First Aid for Schools (PFA-S) is an evidence-informed intervention model and part of the National Emergency Management Cycle and Nebraska School Safety Model: Prevention, Preparedness, Response, Recovery. PFA-S is a component of a school district's Emergency Operation Plan (EOP), which assists students, staff and families during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency. After this session, participants will learn how PFA-S builds safe and supportive learning environments through school safety best practices in a multi-tiered support system; understand PFA-S's role in a school district's EOP and its significance in proactive crisis response and recovery; and discover available resources through Nebraska Department of Education School Safety Taskforce.



Silver 9

School Spotlight: Transformation Through Policy: A Board of Education Tale

Wakefield Public Schools

Topics: MTSS Journey, Teaming, CIP, Communication and Collaboration

In April 2023, the Wakefield Community Schools Board of Education recognized the NeMTSS Framework as its continuous improvement framework by adopting it into formal school policy. In this session, presenters will share unique perspectives from school board members as they learned about the framework and the approach they used to write the framework into school policy. Learn what the policy looks like, how teaming structures were remodeled, and the school's expectations and aspirations moving forward. Wakefield Public Schools believes its continuous improvement process is strengthened and sustained through engagement, collaboration and partnership with the BOE. The presentation will connect to other Nebraska educators considering or currently implementing the NeMTSS Framework who aspire to engage their BOE in the continuous school improvement process. Presenters will communicate the message to not overlook the BOE as a key player in the continuous improvement process – as its influence, community connections and governance responsibilities are instrumental in providing a quality and accessible education for all students. The BOE is a part of the team!



Gold 1

MTSS and Improved Post-School Outcomes: What We Do Now Matters Later

Michalla Schartz, Southeast Region Transition Facilitator; Amy Slama, Northeast Region Transition Facilitator; and Blair Hartman, Central Region Transition Facilitator

Topics: Secondary Education, Transition Education, SEBL, Communication and Collaboration

Effective communication and collaboration between MTSS and Special Education for Transition Age Youth can help improve post-school outcomes. This directly impacts the learning, earning and living for our youth with disabilities. Collaboration between MTSS and special education partners can improve outcomes for employment, education and independent living. This session will explain how building those fundamental transition experiences and connected relationships between students, families and IEP teams can increase the likelihood that students will become meaningfully engaged in their communities and reach their post secondary goals. Regional transition specialists will share post-school outcome data and why teams will accomplish more when there are learning community collaborations connected to supporting the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of each student. Learner outcomes include shared information on transition requirements/procedures and understanding the benefit for communicating between MTSS and special education/transition specialists.



Gold 7

Nebraska WORDS: Preliminary Findings and Reflections from Year 1

Michael Hebert, Associate Professor, School of Education, University of California, Irvine

Topics: Literacy, Layered Continuum of Supports, Evidence-Based Practices

This session will explore research designed to enhance literacy outcomes in rural Nebraska schools. Presenters include researchers leading the Nebraska Workshop on Reading Development Strategies (WORDS) study, as well as participating teachers. Nebraska WORDS represents an ongoing, multi-year collaboration between researchers and rural school districts to enhance literacy skills for K-3 students. The project involves two years of structured professional development focused on the science of reading, which is supplemented with individualized coaching sessions for teachers throughout the school year. Students on individualized reading improvement plans are invited to participate in after-school tutoring. Discover what the team learned after the first year of the project, including findings on student growth in foundational reading skills from the mCLASS DIBELS 8 reading assessment and evidence of the intervention's effectiveness and acceptability among teachers.



Platinum 6

Continued Conversations: Planning for Technology Supports Within an MTSS Framework

Brian Wojcik, Education Program Supervisor, Assistive Technology Partnership, Nebraska Department of Education

Topics: Technology in Education

In Nebraska, MTSS is defined as an educational framework for continuous improvement, problem-solving and decision-making that offers a meaningful and effective way to organize instruction and intervention to improve outcomes for all students. Supportive technologies and assistive technologies serve a specific function of providing compensatory supports to address performance gaps that exist between what students are able to do and what students are expected to do, both academically and behaviorally, even while students are receiving interventions to address performance gaps. These technologies may be woven into a multi-tiered continuum of supports that provide increasingly intensive and individualized options that result in greater access to and engagement in learning, as well as improved student outcomes. This session will offer participants a blueprint with specific steps and strategies for effectively identifying, considering and implementing supportive and assistive technologies within an MTSS framework.



Platinum 7

Promoting Powerful Practices for the Classroom

Heather Robbins, NeMTSS Systems Consultant; and Scott Eckman, State Personnel Development Grant Coordinator, Nebraska Department of Education

Topics: Data-Based Decision-Making, SEBL, Communication and Collaboration, Layered Continuum of Supports

Schools and programs examine data to identify social, emotional and behavioral needs; then investigate evidence-based practices to address those needs and provide professional development to staff members to promote those practices. Throughout the busy school year, Nebraska educators attend many professional learning sessions, often acquiring multiple skills at once, and may need assistance implementing new practices in their classrooms. What approach is best to promote these practices and encourage teachers to apply their newly learned skills, so they can, in turn, transform their teaching? In this session, participants will examine powerful practices teachers can use and observe examples of effective promotional activities schools have used. There will also be an opportunity for the group to share ways they have promoted and strengthened implementation of powerful practices on their own campus, allowing attendees to learn from one another.