



Mary E. Walsh  
Center for Thriving Children

 BOSTON COLLEGE

# School-Community Partnerships

What we know about what works  
to improve student success

August 14, 2023

# Why School-Community Partnerships

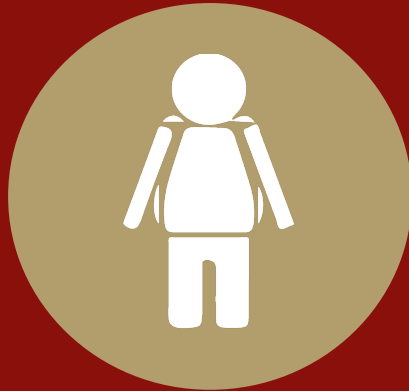
Science tells us that it is harder to learn with hunger, unmet medical needs, or trauma. These experiences can also undermine a child's ability to pay attention, regulate emotions and behaviors, and organize and remember information – the very things required for academic learning, holding a job, and contributing to our shared prosperity.

Stresses which undermine healthy development and readiness to learn, can be countered with **protective relationships, resources, and opportunities**. Schools and community organizations provide these, along with safe, enriching settings for learning and development.

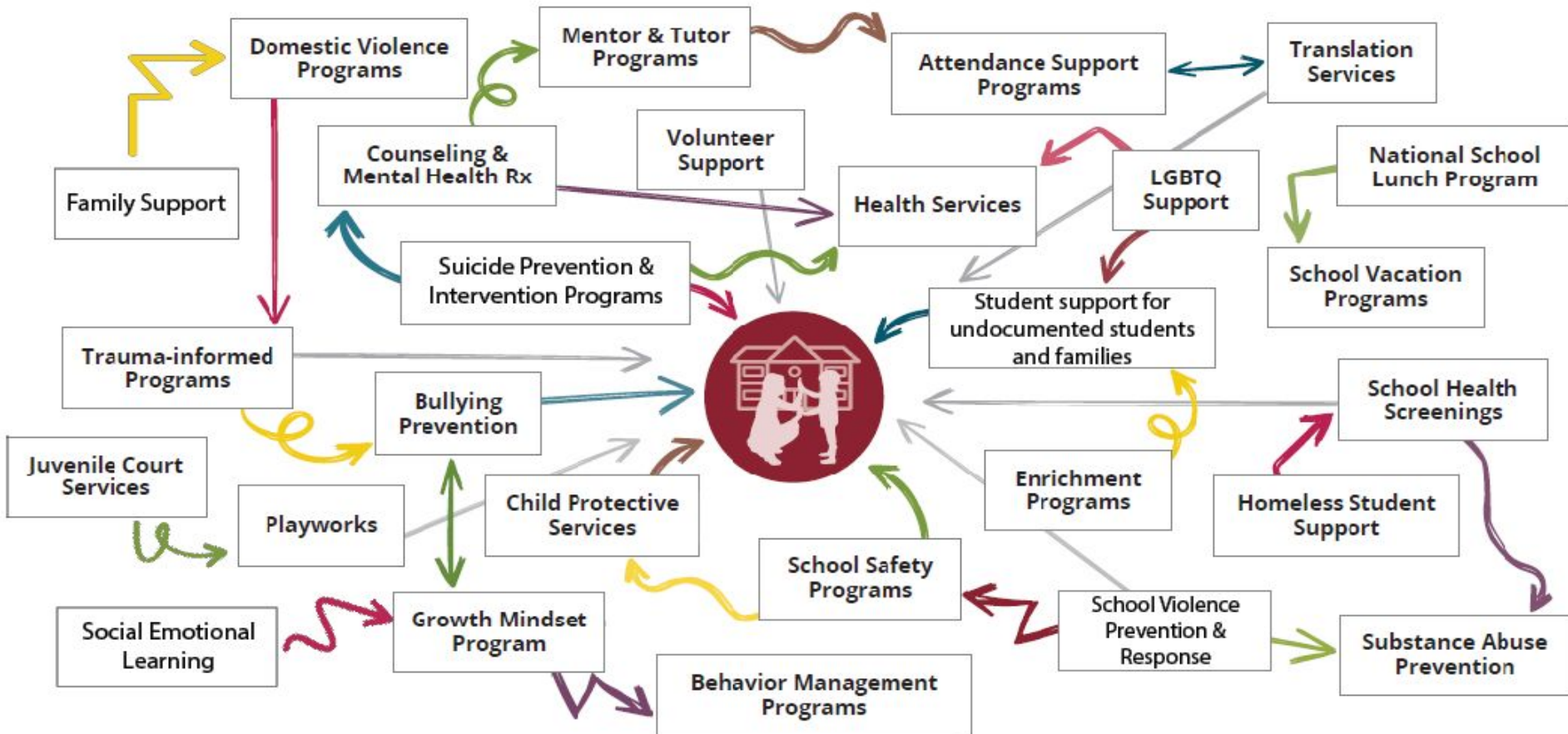


## **Key:**

Get the right resources to the right student  
at the right time, over time



# The current delivery system



# A high quality Integrated Student Support delivery system

School Based Supports

Prevention

Early Intervention

Intensive Intervention



Community Based Supports

Prevention

Early Intervention

Intensive Intervention

# What is Integrated Student Support?

---

Integrated student support is an evidence-based approach for **schools** to provide student support by **intentionally and systematically** leveraging and coordinating the resources and relationships available **in the school and in the surrounding community.**

Integrated student support addresses the **comprehensive strengths and needs** of **each and every student** in a school in order to help promote healthy child development and learning.

**For any school.**



Mary E. Walsh  
Center for Thriving Children

 BOSTON COLLEGE

# The National Guidelines for Integrated Student Support

- Draws on the sciences of learning and development, and proven models in the field
- Answers HOW effective approaches get results
- Co-developed by practitioners and researchers including: Building Assets Reducing Risks (BARR), City Connects, Communities In Schools, NYC DOE Community Schools, National Center for Community Schools



NATIONAL  
GUIDELINES  
for Integrated  
Student Support



Mary E. Walsh  
Center for Thriving Children

 BOSTON COLLEGE

# The National Guidelines for Integrated Student Support

The Guidelines help policymakers **identify effective approaches** to school-community collaboration and **support schools** to establish the **operational infrastructure and best practices** necessary to broker resources, relationships, and opportunities that promote student learning and lifelong opportunity.



NATIONAL  
GUIDELINES  
for Integrated  
Student Support



Mary E. Walsh  
Center for Thriving Children

 BOSTON COLLEGE



## Key:

Effective approaches to school-community partnerships transform the student support function of schools to include:

Universal,  
comprehensive  
**review** of all  
students



Personalized  
**plans** support  
learning and  
thriving



Intentionally  
**coordinated** school  
and community  
resources



Unified and  
**systematic**  
**data-informed**  
approach



# City Connects: **whole child, whole school**

REVIEW OF EVERY STUDENT  
WITH THEIR TEACHER



INDIVIDUAL  
STUDENT REVIEW



PROPOSED  
PLAN & TIER

FAMILIES



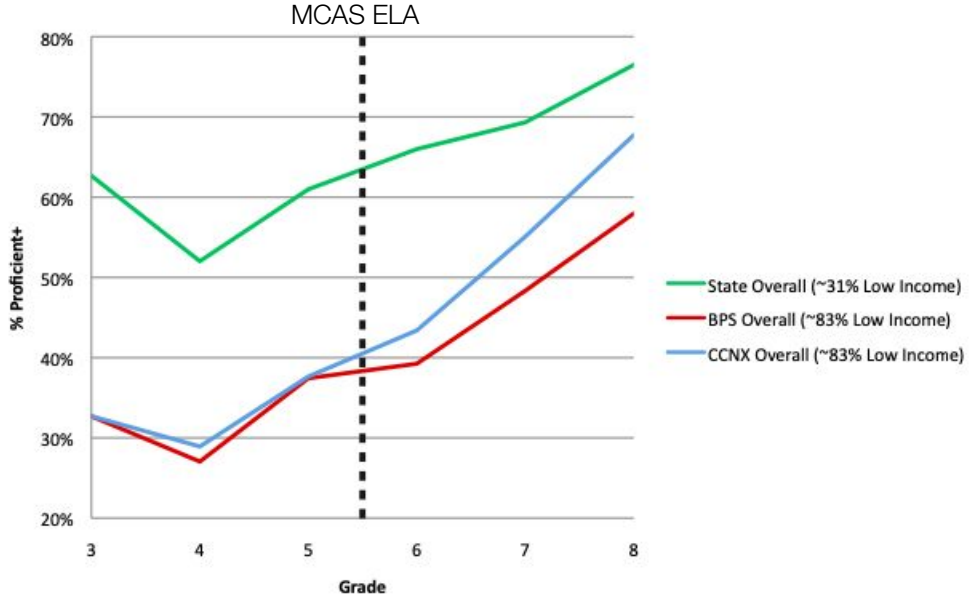
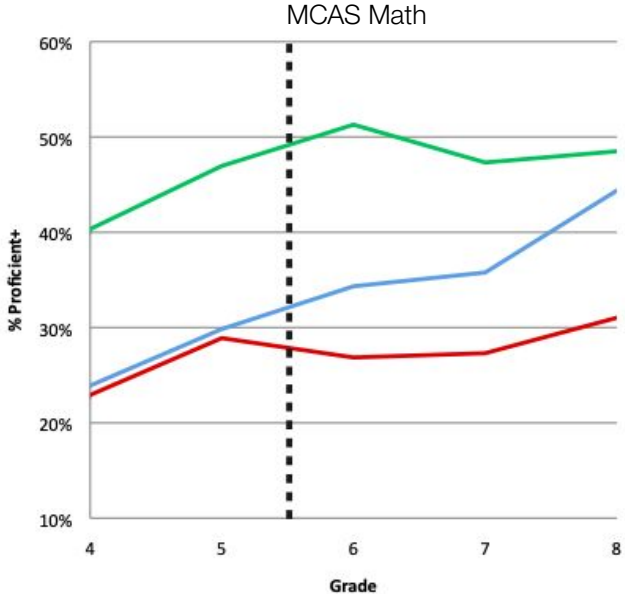
COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS

TAILORED SUPPORT PLAN  
FOR EVERY STUDENT



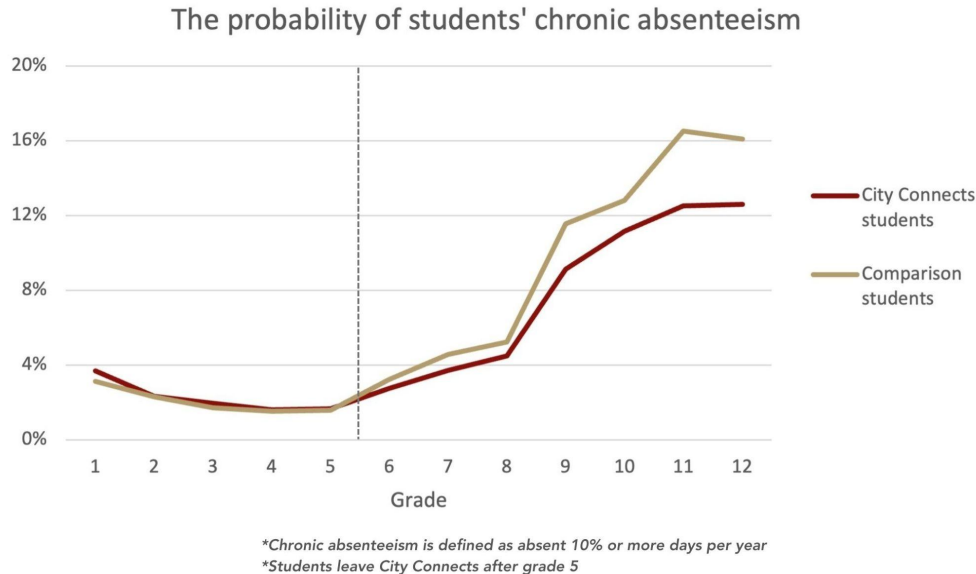
# City Connects students improve **academic test scores**

Improvement in MCAS test scores and the closing of the achievement gap

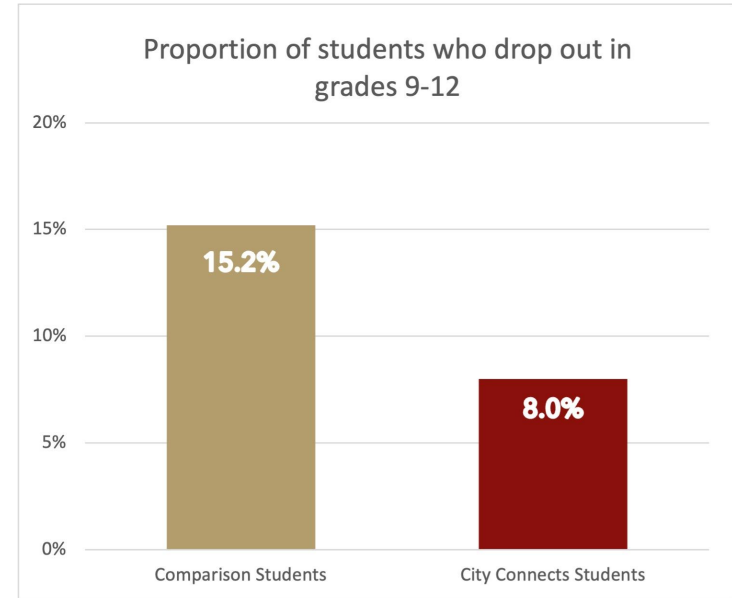


# City Connects leads to **reduced absenteeism and dropout**

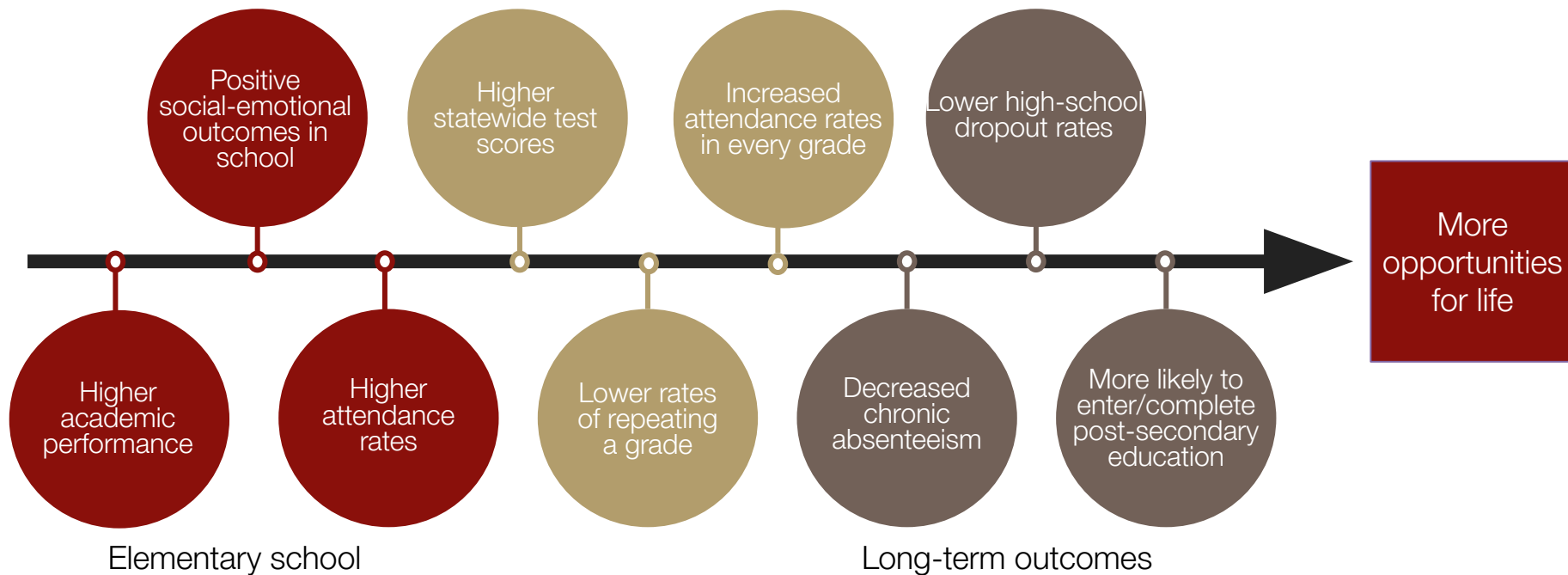
Less likelihood of chronic absenteeism



50% lower high school dropout rates



# City Connects leads to **positive life outcomes**



# Return on Investment

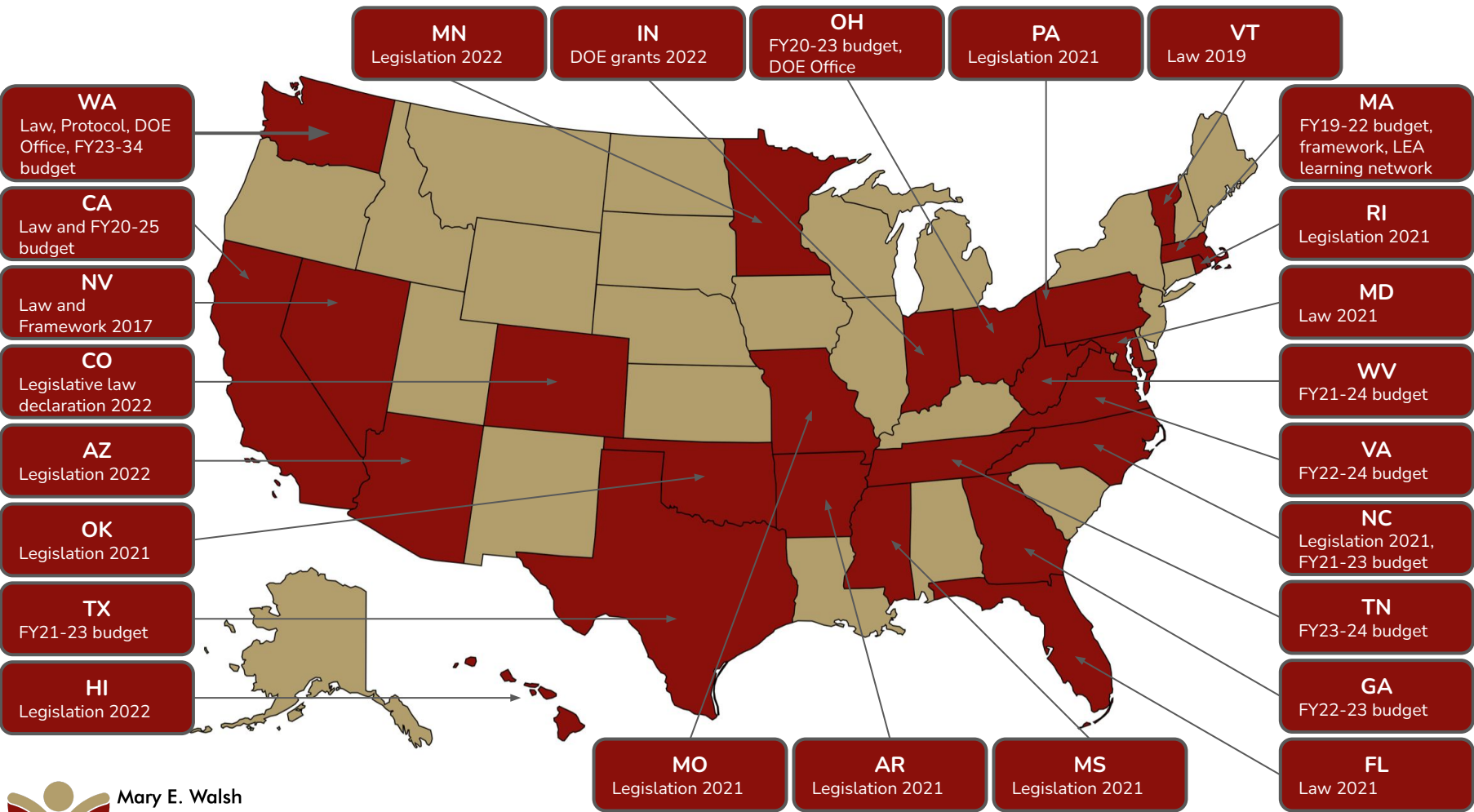
The Center for Benefit Cost Studies of Education at The University of Pennsylvania has analyzed the return on investment of the City Connects system of integrated student support by comparing benefits to costs.

- When accounting for both the cost of implementation and the cost of comprehensive services to which children and families get connected, City Connects **produces \$3 in benefits for every \$1 invested**
- If effective integrated student support were widely implemented, existing investments in children and families could produce **triple the benefits**



Integrated Student  
Support is  
**Relevant** to:

- **Child and youth mental health**
- **Wraparound services**
- **Academic gaps**
- **School-Community partnerships**
- **Community Schools**
- **Student support improvement**
- **Efficient use of government funds**





# Key: Quality

States are advancing on three policy trajectories:

1

Advancing  
frameworks and  
best practices

2

Incentivizing the  
implementation of  
evidence-based models

3

A hybrid  
approach



# Integrated Student Support STATE POLICY TOOLKIT

SECOND EDITION

Designed to provide state policymakers with **research-informed recommendations** and sample language from existing legislation, laws, and frameworks to best promote **the effective and efficient implementation of integrated student support.**

# Key Takeaways

---

- School-community partnerships are vital to supporting healthy child development and learning
- **Effective approaches** to integration across school-community-and-family **have common features**
- **Policymakers can support and incentivize quality implementation and expect accountability for outcomes**
- States are moving on 3 trajectories: (1) Best Practices (2) Evidence-Based Models (3) Hybrid
- The **National Guidelines** for Integrated Student Support help define quality
- The Integrated Student Support **State Policy Toolkit** puts the science, best practices, and current legislative language in your hands so you can make strategic choices more likely to benefit kids, families, schools, and communities



# Policy Resources

---

New Integrated Student Support State Policy Toolkit

[The Center for Thriving Children: Our Work For Policymakers](#)

[The National Guidelines for Integrated Student Support](#)

[Building Systems of Integrated Student Support: A Policy Brief for Federal Leaders](#)

[Building Systems of Integrated Student Support: A Policy Brief for Local and State Leaders](#)

[The Whole Child: Building Systems of Integrated Student support During and After COVID-19](#)

[Select Research Publications](#)



Mary E. Walsh  
Center for Thriving Children

 BOSTON COLLEGE

# Questions?

## **Joan Wasser Gish, J.D., M.A.**

Director of Systemic Impact

Boston College

Mary E. Walsh Center for Thriving Children

Lynch School of Education and Human

Development

[joan.wassergish@bc.edu](mailto:joan.wassergish@bc.edu)

