UNLOCKING POTENTIAL • ACHIEVING SUCCESS

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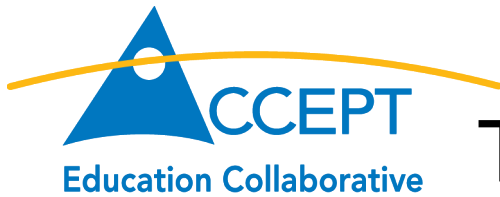**Education Collaborative**

Weymouth Public Schools:

TLC & Alternative Programs Evaluation Findings

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Purpose of Program Evaluations

- **TLC Program**: Determine program effectiveness in supporting positive outcomes for students with Emotional Impairments and to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement for the District to consider

- **Alternative Programs**: Determine overall program effectiveness of prior models and provide action-oriented recommendations regarding the development of a new model; programs had all been disbanded at start of present school year
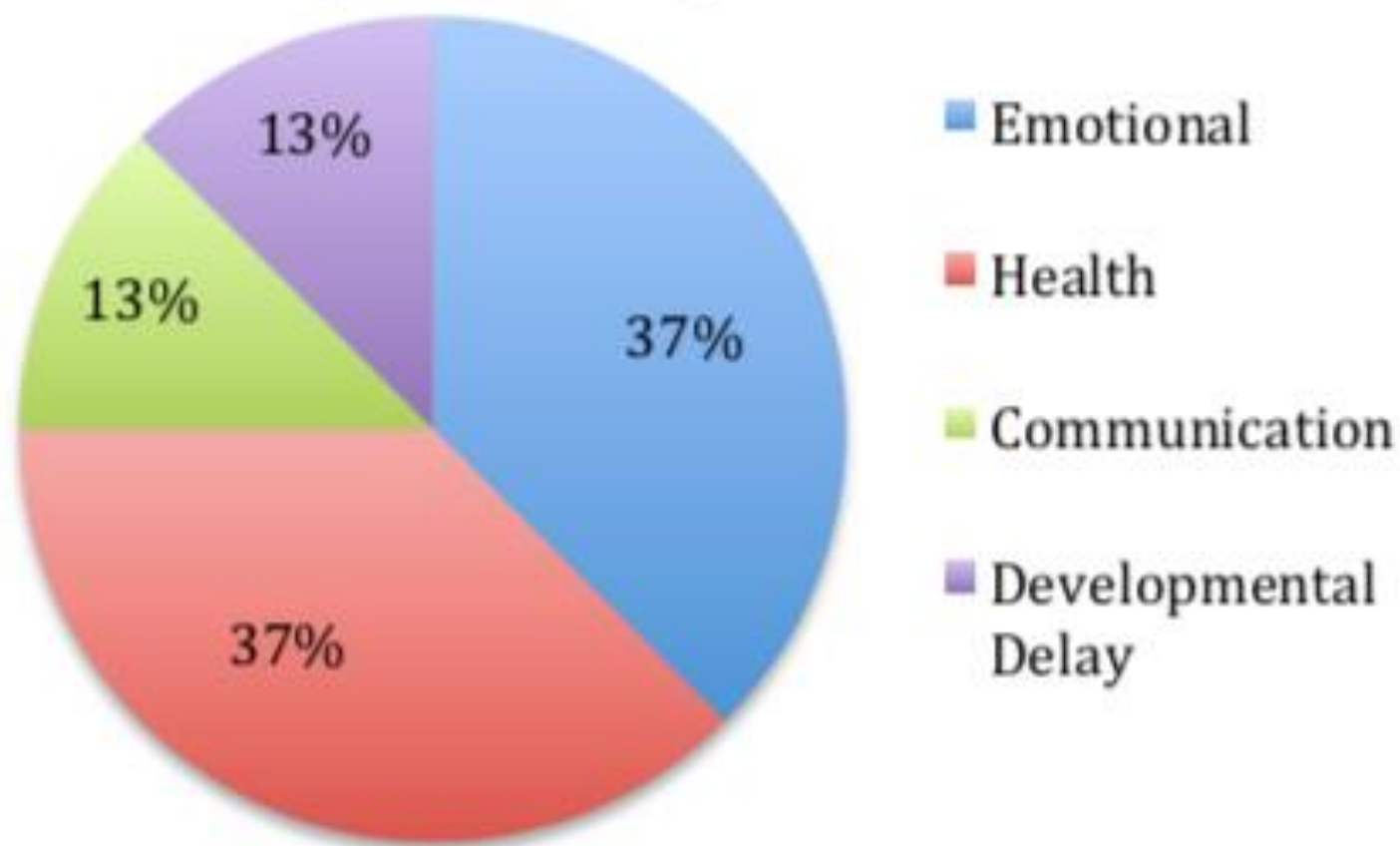
Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC) Program Description

- District-wide *special education* program continuum designed for students who meet the educational disability criteria for **Emotional Impairment**

- Students require "intensive behavioral interventions and therapeutic supports"

- Housed at Pingree Primary School (K-4), Adams Middle School (5-6), Chapman Middle School (7-8) and WHS (9-12)
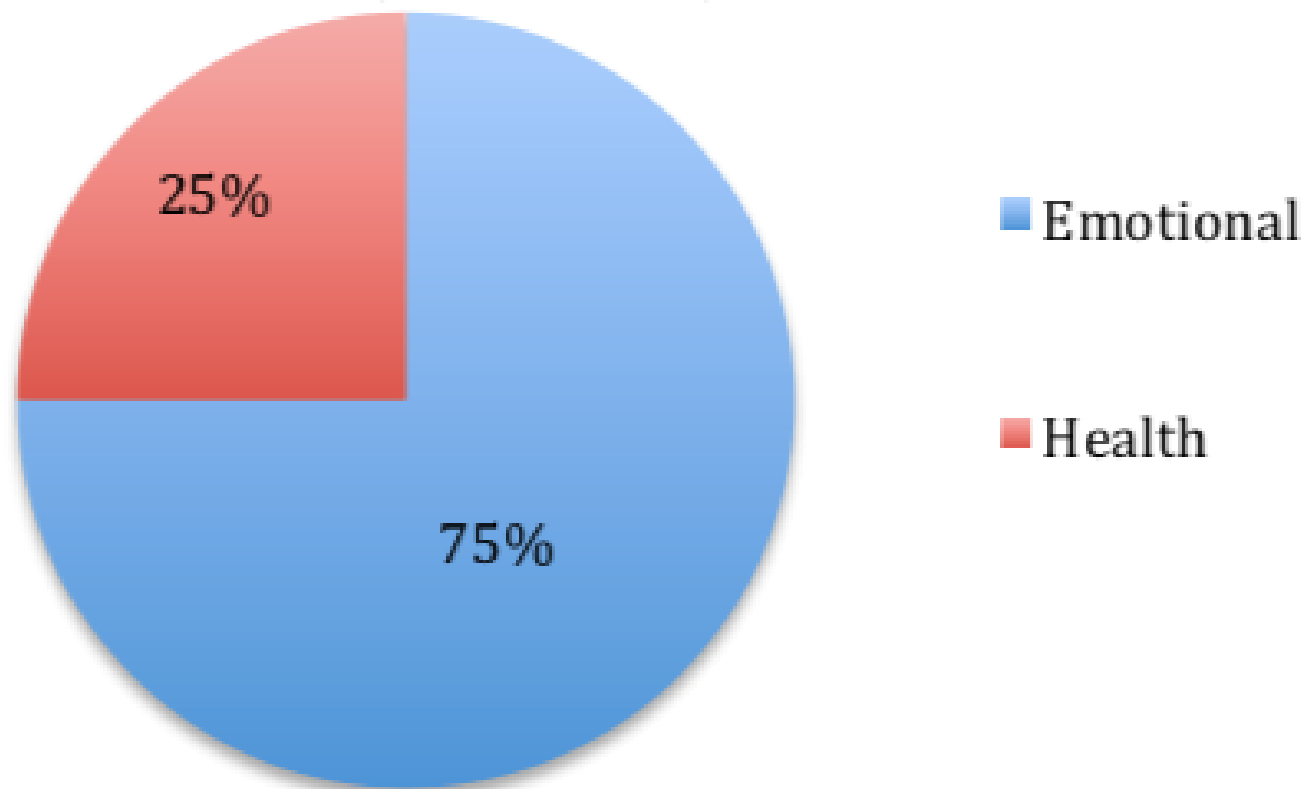
Student Profiles: TLC

- **TLC**: 37 students across grades K-12
  - a total of **67.5%** of students in the program had a primary educational disability of **Emotional Impairment**
  - where a "Health Impairment" was indicated as the educational disability, the student held a diagnosis of ADHD

Pingree TLC Program: Student Enrollment By Disability Category (Grades K- 4)

- Emotional — 37%
- Health — 37%
- Communication — 13%
- Developmental Delay — 13%

Adams TLC Program: Student Enrollment By Disability Category (Grades 5-6)

25%

75%

- Emotional
- Health

Chapman TLC Program: Student Enrollment By Disability Category
(Grades 7-8)

100%

■ Emotional

Weymouth High School TLC Program: Student Enrollment By Disability Category (Grades 9- 12)

- Emotional: 73%
- Health: 18%
- Autism: 9%

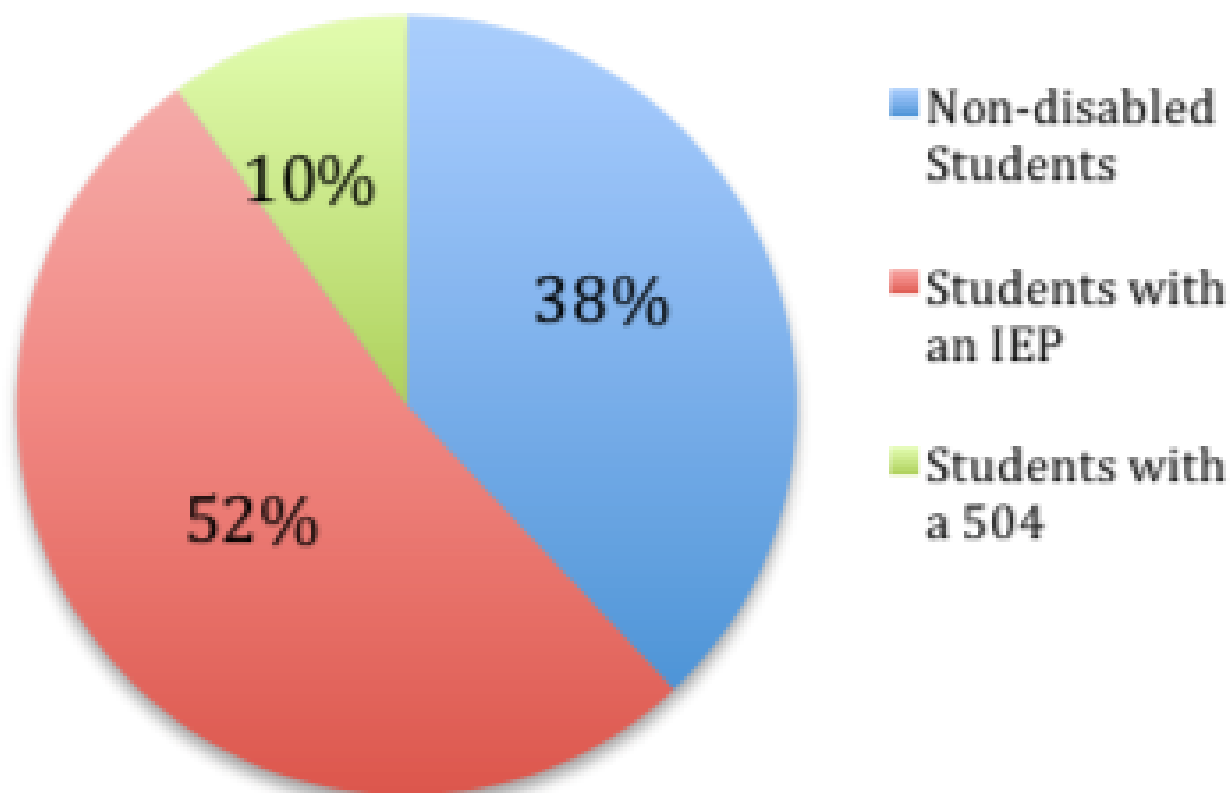# Alternative Program Descriptions

- *General education* programs for students identified at-risk for academic failure, largely due to behavioral challenges, chronic absenteeism, and poor grades

- Comprised of discrete programs available at upper grades:

  – Compass & Step-Up programs at Chapman Middle School (gr. 7-8)

  – Foundations program at WHS (gr. 10-12)

  – Decisions program (off-campus)

Student Profiles: Alternative Programs

- **Compass:** 29 students across grades 7-8 (not all concurrently)
  - a total of 62% of students had an identified disability
  - 79% of students were economically disadvantaged (in comparison to district rate = 28.1%)
- **Foundations**: 49 students across grades 10-12
  - a total of 44% of students had an identified disability
  - 70% of students were economically disadvantaged
- **Step-Up/ Decisions**: no district data on student enrollment

Compass Program: Percentage of Students with an Identified Disabilty

- Non-disabled Students
- Students with an IEP
- Students with a 504

38%
52%
10%

Foundations Program: Percentage of Students with an Identified Disabilty

- Non-disabled Students
- Students with an IEP
- Students with a 504

6%
38%
56%

Compass Program: Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students

21% — Non-economically Disadvantaged

79% — Ecomonically Disadvantaged

Foundations Program:
Percentage of Economically
Disadvantaged Students

30%

70%

Non-
economically
Disadvantaged

Ecomonically
Disadvantaged

Out-of-District (OOD) Placements

- Data from 2017-18 school year: 20 students* were sent OOD, of which **25%** were students from the **TLC program**, primarily due to mental health or behavioral needs

- Out of all the out of district placements for the 2017-18 school year, **45%** of students had a disability category of **Emotional Impairment**

Figure 1.2: Number of students in out-of-district placements by disability category[10] and year

Number of students placed out of district (vertical axis label)

Number of students out-placed (y-axis)

y-axis: 0, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000

x-axis: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

Legend:
- ▲ Emotional disability
- ◆ Autism
- ● Learning disability
- ■ Multiple disabilities
- ✕ Vision or hearing impairment
- ○ Intellectual disability

*Data on the following disability categories are not displayed: developmental delay, physical disabilities, other health impairment, neurological impairment, and communication.

TLC Program Evaluation Findings

Strengths

- Staffing structure of elementary TLC model (e.g. full-time SAC; BCBA support 0.4FTE)

- Revisions of class-wide behavior supports at elementary TLC

- Co-teaching practices and increased inclusion opportunities at Adams

Overarching Finding #1: The lack of a robust MTSS framework impacts the District's ability to effectively service students with emotional and behavioral disorders within the LRE

- Implementation of SW-PBIS varies significantly across buildings (more success at elementary levels)
- Limited implementation on universal SEL and trauma-sensitive practices across the District, with most pervasive needs occurring at upper middle school and high school levels
- TLC program is largely offering supports that should be conceptualized as Tier 1 (general education); limited Tier 2 and 3 supports evident
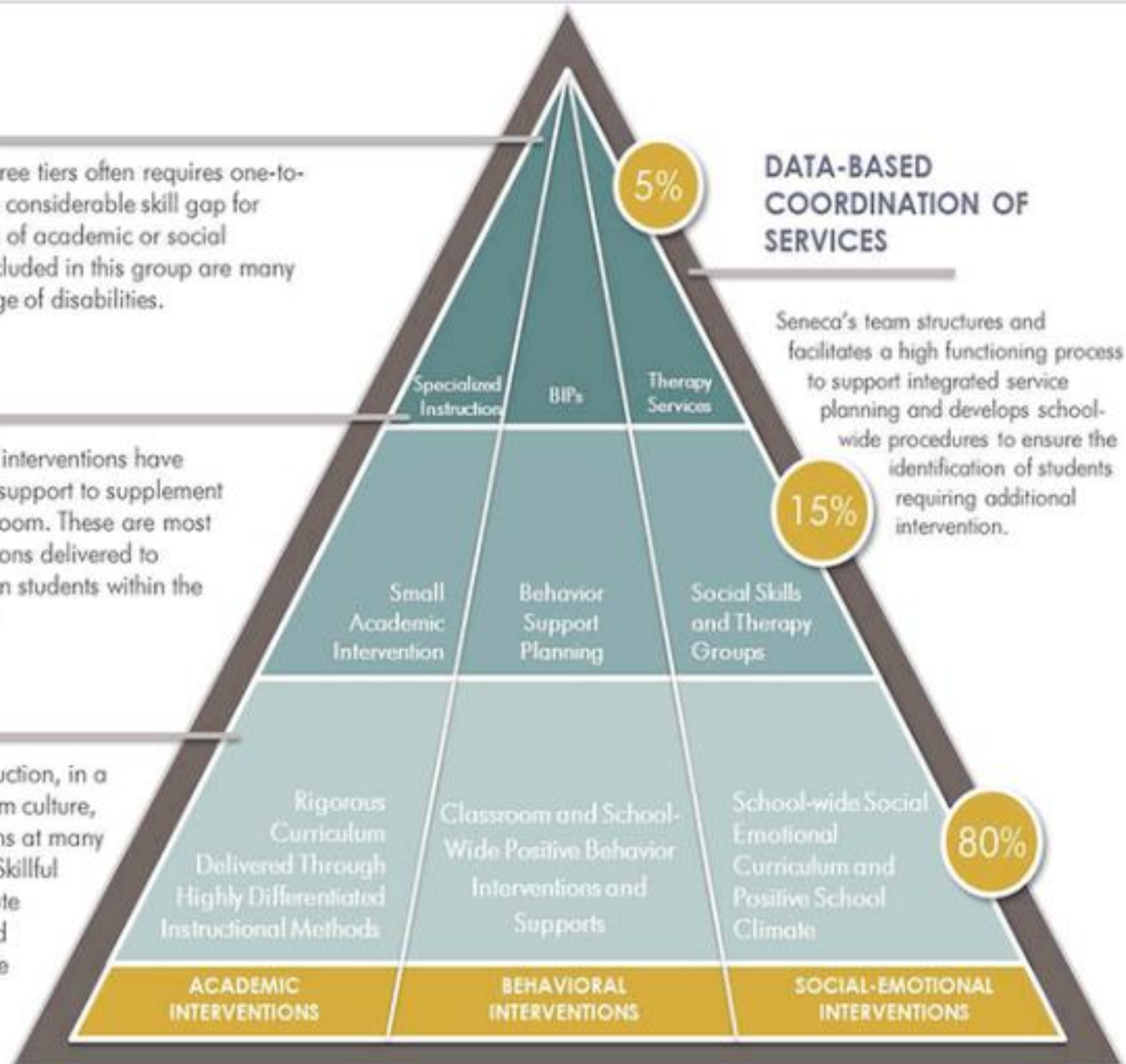
TIER 3 • INTENSIVE:

The most intensive of the three tiers often requires one-to-one support or addresses a considerable skill gap for students at the lowest levels of academic or social emotional achievement. Included in this group are many students with IEPs for a range of disabilities.

TIER 2 • TARGETED:

Students receiving targeted interventions have demonstrated the need for support to supplement what is offered in the classroom. These are most often small group interventions delivered to special or general education students within the classroom or as a pull-out.

TIER 1 • UNIVERSAL:

As part of high quality instruction, in a climate of positive classroom culture, students receive interventions at many points throughout the day. Skillful teachers plan for and execute interventions that adjust and accommodate to the unique behavioral and academic needs of their students.

DATA-BASED COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Seneca's team structures and facilitates a high functioning process to support integrated service planning and develops school-wide procedures to ensure the identification of students requiring additional intervention.

5%

15%

80%

Specialized Instruction

BIPs

Therapy Services

Small Academic Intervention

Behavior Support Planning

Social Skills and Therapy Groups

Rigorous Curriculum Delivered Through Highly Differentiated Instructional Methods

Classroom and School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

School-wide Social Emotional Curriculum and Positive School Climate

ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS

BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL INTERVENTIONS
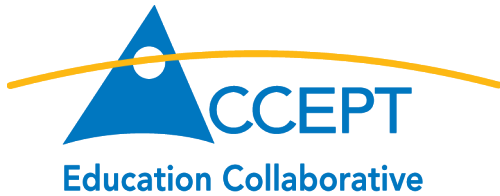
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Overarching Finding #2: There is no clear "continuum" in programmatic structure or practices that are replicated across TLC classrooms in each building

- Pattern of progressively reduced resources available as students age throughout the program; most significant weaknesses noted at Chapman and WHS

  – Inequitable access to BCBA and SAC

- Considerable differences in models of academic instruction (co-teaching vs. instruction in substantially separate classrooms)

  – No co-teaching opportunities at Chapman or WHS, limited access to true "inclusion" classes at WHS

- Limited focus on social-emotional and behavioral needs of students was apparent in IEPs; remarkably small percentage of students who have goals that reflect these critical areas

- Services delivered by SAC are largely done in isolation rather than embedded into the program
  - Service delivery model shows to substantive differences for students in TLC vs. full inclusion

- Inequitable access to key personnel required to make the model a truly 'therapeutic' program

Alternative Programs Evaluation Findings

Overarching Finding #1: *There was a notable lack of a clearly articulated vision for what the "alternative" program model should be*

- Limited practices that align with National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) standards of practice
- Lack of dedicated leadership roles and infrastructure that matches programmatic needs
- Disconnect between written program descriptions and actual practices

- Economically Disadvantaged= 79% Compass; 70% Foundations (in comparison to district rate of 28.1%)
- Disabilities= 62% Compass; 44% Foundations
- Minimal distinction in student learning profiles for students historically placed in Compass, Step-Up, and Foundations programs vs. TLC Program
  - Questions raised about assessment practices and identification of Emotional Impairment
- Impact of reduced MTSS at middle and high school levels (e.g. lack of effective behavior supports at Chapman → Step-Up)

- Need for a cohesive alternative program continuum that extends from 7th grade through 12th grade
    - Eliminate prior "9th grade gap"
- Streamlined program with clear vision and singular leadership
- Practices that align with NAEA standards

Recommendations

District-level Supports

- **MTSS:** continue work with building a robust PBIS framework at all levels;

  - implementation of *trauma-sensitive schools* aligned within this framework

- **LEAP:** staff training to better understand the impact of poverty on development and create stronger universal supports; reduce disproportionate rates

- Consider option of creating an **in-district Extended Evaluation Program** (former Decisions space)

- **De-escalation training**: *Safety Care* program
- **Mental Health Supports**: assist students and families in the larger community in accessing mental heath supports
  - William James College's INTERFACE service
- **Data Management Systems**: comprehensive data systems to track student enrollment across alt. programs and document student outcomes
  - e.g. PBIS SWIS

TLC Program Recommendations

- Creation of **TLC Task Force**: vertical alignment

- Expand **therapeutic supports**:

  - Increase staff allocation of BCBA and SAC

- **Staffing**:

  - Paraprofessional supports

  - Additional teacher at Pingree (split into K-2; 3-4 classrooms)

- **Assessments**:

  - Appropriate evaluations in the "areas of suspected disability" used to inform eligibility, e.g. FBAs; EDDT

- **IEP Development**:
  - Consistent goal areas that reflect the needs of students with an Emotional Impairment
  - Identification of "specially designed instruction" in TLC program
  - Students aged 14+, IEPs and TPFs that align with MA Secondary Transition Model (education/training, independent living, employment, community participation)
- **Inclusion**:
  - Co-teaching models of instruction across TLC continuum

- **Technology**:
  - Equitable access to instructional technology across programs; increase students' active engagement in classroom activities
- **Team Consult Times**:
  - create interdisciplinary team model
- **Credit Recovery** options at WHS TLC
- **CTE**:
  - Consider alternative models, such as differentiated CTE programs and/or team teaching approach

Alternative Programs Recommendations

- **Program Model**: create clear 7-12th grade program continuum
  - Eliminate prior model for Step-Up entirely
  - Clarity in student profiles and distinction in practices from TLC Program
    - Conceptualize as Tier 2 vs. Tier 3 supports
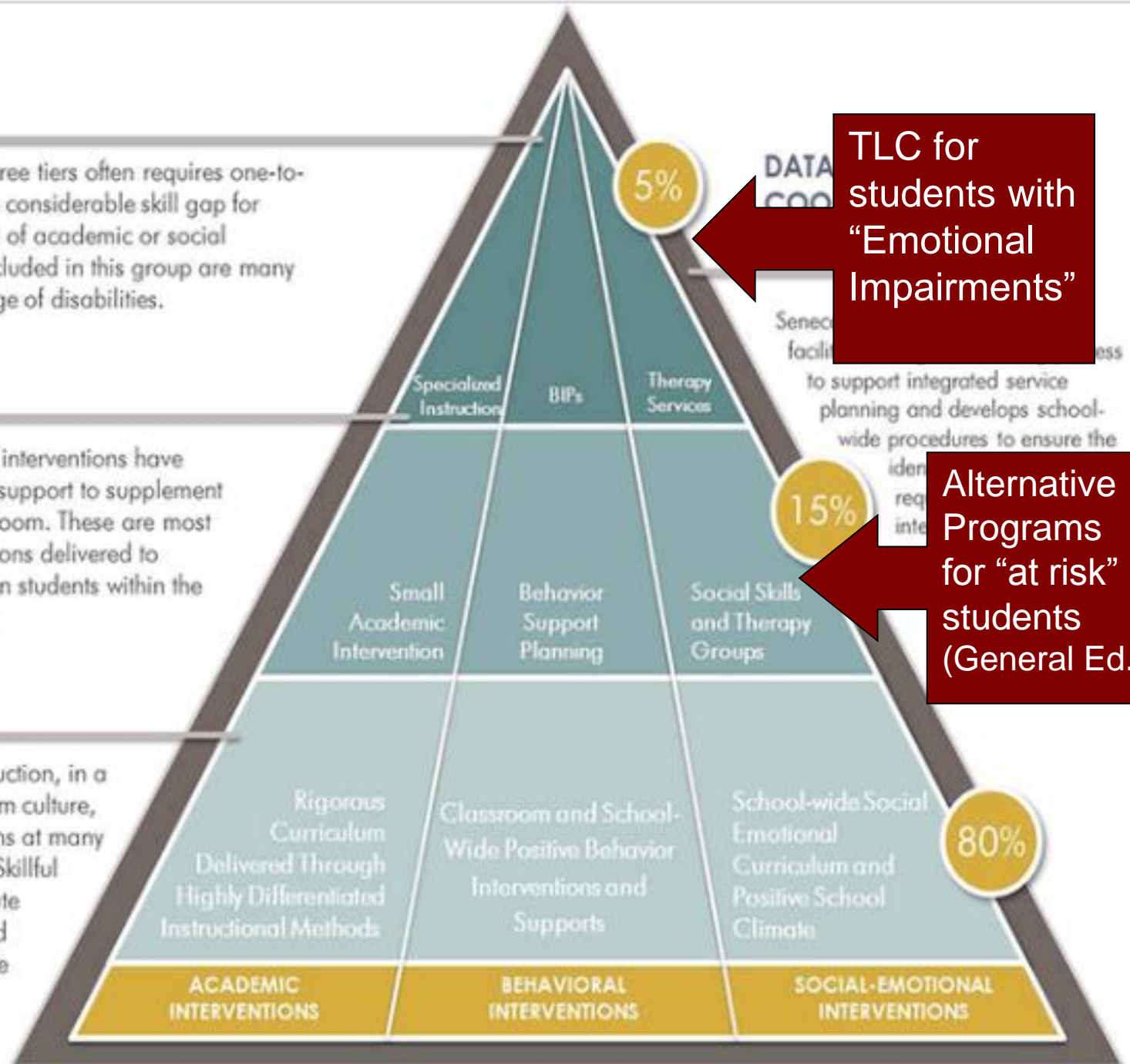
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TLC for students with "Emotional Impairments"

Alternative Programs for "at risk" students (General Ed.)

DATA
COO

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facili...   ...ess
to support integrated service
planning and develops school-
wide procedures to ensure the
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req...
inte...

5%

15%

80%

Specialized Instruction | BIPs | Therapy Services

Small Academic Intervention | Behavior Support Planning | Social Skills and Therapy Groups

Rigorous Curriculum Delivered Through Highly Differentiated Instructional Methods | Classroom and School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports | School-wide Social Emotional Curriculum and Positive School Climate

ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS | BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS | SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL INTERVENTIONS

- **Leadership**: cohesive leadership position identified for program continuum, *critical need* for program success
- **Staffing**: allocated program teachers with experience working with students with similar learning profiles; consultation with interdisciplinary team

- **Therapeutic Supports**:
  - *Increase SAC* allocation at each of the two buildings: facilitate targeted SEL lessons, small group & individual counseling, frequent check-ins (PBIS CICO) & facilitation of self-regulation strategies
  - Guidance Counselor at High School: weekly lessons related to college and career readiness, developing transition plans
  - Weekly consult with BCBA to develop behavioral supports
- **Special Education Services**: historically disjointed model; need to embed within program (co-teaching model)

- **Transition Planning Supports**: map key transition areas related to academic planning, personal/social/emotional development, and workplace readiness
- **Digital/Virtual Learning**: credit recovery options
- **Service Learning**
- **CTE**
- **Youth Diversion**