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A project of the OKC Schools Compact

- The Compact is a collective impact model whose partners are the Oklahoma City Public Schools, the Oklahoma City Chamber, the Oklahoma City Public Schools Foundation, the United Way of Central Oklahoma, and the City of Oklahoma City to support improvements identified by the Oklahoma City Public Schools.
- Modeled after ReadOKC, Embrace OKC is the Compact's newest collaborative initiative with a focus on mental health.

**Embrace OKC means that we have come together, as a community:**

- To embrace mental health as preventable and treatable
- To protect children's mental health for life
- To achieve maximum social and emotional wellbeing for children and their families; and
- To hold the school and community as a sanctuary of safety and support.

The Oklahoma City Public School Board of Education's leadership and the support of the Oklahoma City Chamber is unsurpassed, and this community and its children will be forever improved due to this effort.

# Empirical Evidence Supporting Student Mental Health

## **Emotional, Mental, Behavioral Health Impacts Academic Achievement**

- Even moderate substance use and/or violence/delinquency is associated with test scores a full level below other students.
- Students with depression, trauma/violence exposure, serious emotional disturbance are more likely to be absent, have poorer grades, be retained, and not complete secondary education as compared to other students.
- School-based social and emotional learning programs have effects equivalent to a 10 percentage point gain in academic test performance and improvements in school attendance.

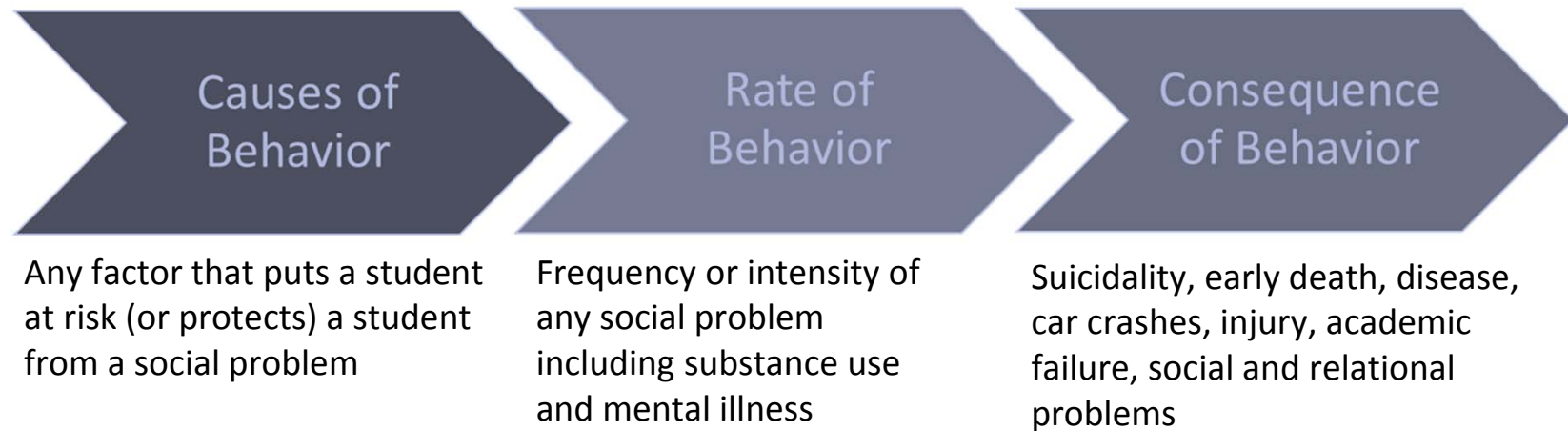
# Empirical Evidence Supporting Student Mental Health

## **School Mental Health Has Secondary Effects**

- Social and emotional learning programs reduce teacher stress, anxiety and depression; improve quality interactions with students; increase teacher engagement and perceived job control; reduce burnout; and increase teaching efficacy.
- School-based interventions can mitigate negative effects of non-school risk factors.

## Developing a Comprehensive Mental Health Plan

- Addiction and other behavioral disorders are driven by the presence of risk factors in one or more domains – individual, peer, family, school, and community.
- The strategy behind Embrace OKC is to reduce risk and increase protection across all domains.



## Risk and Protective Factors

- Behavioral health results from an interplay of risk and protective factors at the individual, family, community, and societal levels.
- Risk and protective factors are well established and often shared across problem behaviors.
- First symptoms of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders typically precede a disorder by 2 to 4 years.



# Steps to Strong Student Mental Health





# Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment (OPNA)



## Purpose of the Assessment

- Identifies substance use and mental health patterns, but also captures risk and protection of problem behaviors (drivers)
- Provides critical data for planning: selection of evidence-based practices, evaluating progress, and resource allocation
- All responses are anonymous - the following data (including those related to substance abuse, psychological distress, and suicidality) reflect *overall patterns* in the student body, *not individual* responses

# Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment (OPNA)



## Survey Administration

- 20-60 minute anonymous risk and protective factor survey of 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders
- Administered every other year
- Aim for at least 70% participation rate
- About one-half of states administer a similar survey

# Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment



- A total of 7,074 OKCPS students in 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades were included in the district results
- Achieved nearly 80% participation rate overall
- A total of 55 school sites participated

Characteristics of Participants

	Number	Percent
Students by grade		
6	2,615	37.0
8	2,022	28.6
10	1,456	20.6
12	981	13.9
Total	7,074	100.0
Students by gender*		
Male	3,409	48.7
Female	3,597	51.3
Students by race/ethnicity*		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	976	10.1
Asian	289	3.0
Black, or African American	1,938	20.1
Hispanic or Latino	3,951	40.9
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	98	1.0
White	2,402	24.9



## Priorities of Focus

A review of OPNA results identified three priority areas for planning and coordination of prevention and intervention services:

1. Substance Use
2. High Risk Behaviors
3. Psychological Distress

A summary of key findings and strategies to reduce student risks and increase protections related to these priorities follows.



## Substance Use

Substance use among youth predicts academic failure, life long problems with addiction, lost productivity at work during adulthood, family and relationship problems, as well as increased costs to the entire community.

Alcohol is the number one drug of choice among students.

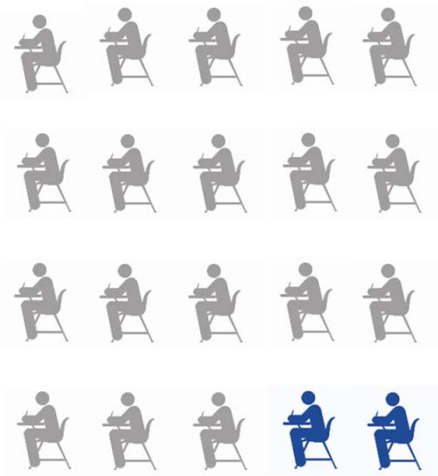
The OPNA tool assesses alcohol by asking students:

- In the past 30 days, on how many occasions (if any) have you had beer, wine, or hard liquor to drink?
- In your lifetime, on how many occasions (if any) have you had alcoholic beverages (beer, wine or hard liquor) to drink – more than just a few sips?
- How many times have you had 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row in the past 2 weeks? (one or more times)

# Alcohol Use

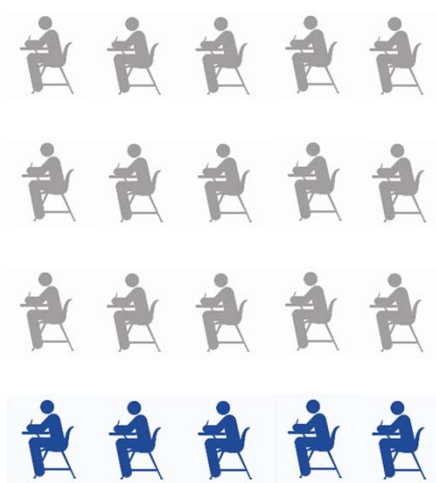


## 30-Day Use



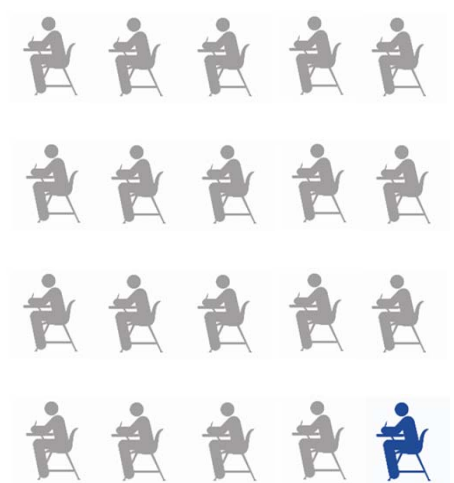
Yes – about 10%

## Lifetime



Yes – about 27%

## Binge-Drinking

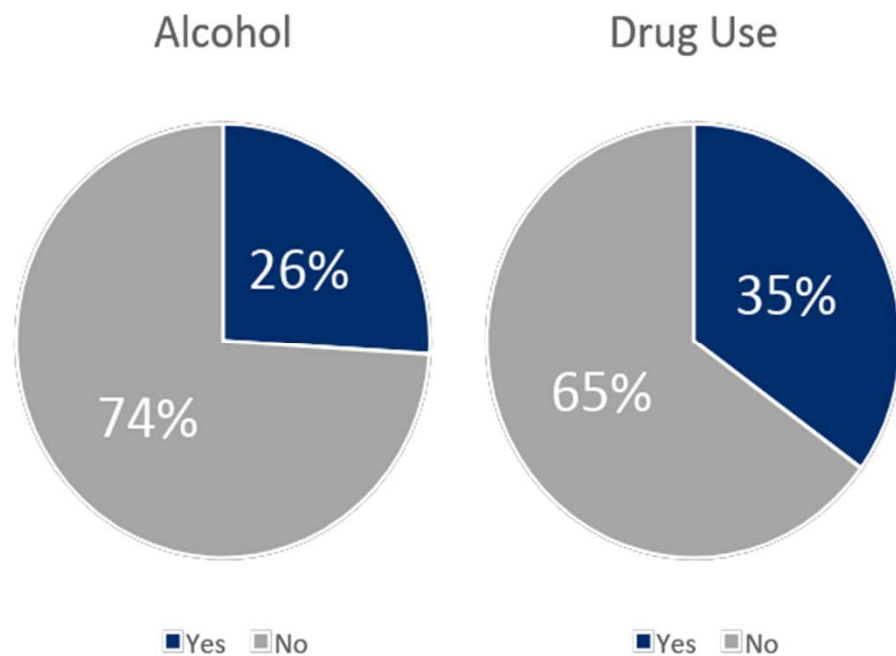


Yes – about 6%

## Alcohol Use – Community and Family Domains



During the past 12 months, I have talked with at least one of my parents about the dangers of...



If you drank ALCOHOL (beer, wine, or hard liquor) and not just a sip or taste in the last year, how did you USUALLY get it?

Students in OKCPS are more than **1.5x** more likely to report getting alcohol from a retailer compared to students in the rest of the state.

The two most common sources of alcohol according to student responses are:

**37.2%**  
“From someone I know  
age 21 or older”

**27.9%**  
“From home with my  
parents’ permission”

# High Risk Behavior



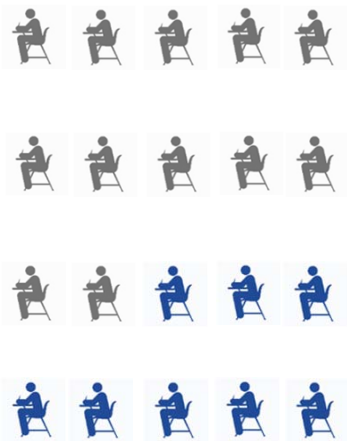
- The survey measures the percentage of students whose answers reflect significant risk for substance abuse (and other problem behaviors) due to the presence of certain risk factors.
- High risk behavior was prioritized as the most important risk factor to address due to the number of OKCPS students reported as at risk, but also because early and persistent high risk behavior is predictive of a number of social problems including substance abuse, depression and anxiety, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school drop-out, and violence.
- High risk behaviors are a measurement of involvement in behaviors that are counter to the community's values, the safety of the community, and healthy attachment/relationships including: being drunk or high at school, getting suspended from school, using or selling illegal drugs, stealing a vehicle, being arrested, attacking someone with the idea of hurting them, carrying a handgun, or having a handgun at school.
- The presence of high risk behaviors are shown in two domains - Individual/Peer and Family.



# High Risk Behavior – Individual/Peer Domain



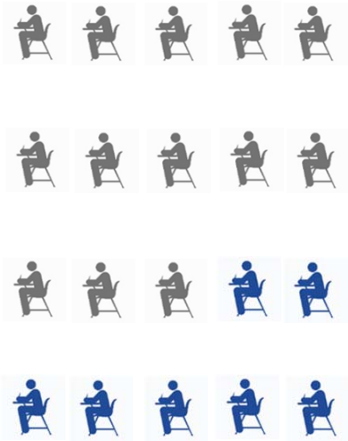
Early Initiation of High Risk Behavior



Yes – about 38%

*Scale based on how old students were when they first engaged in a list of high risk behaviors.*

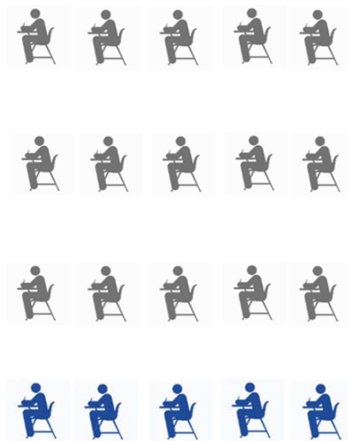
Interaction with High Risk Peers



Yes – about 37%

*Scale based on involvement of four best friends in a list of high risk behaviors in the past 12 months.*

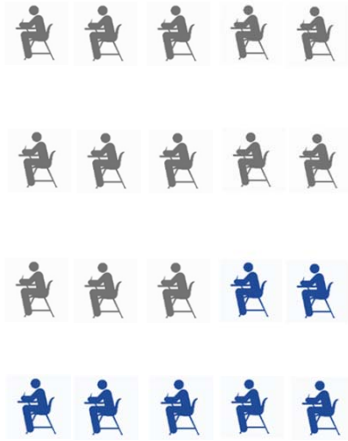
Rewards for High Risk Involvement



Yes – about 23%

*Scale based on the chances the student thinks they would be seen as cool if they engaged in a list of high risk behaviors.*

Favorable Attitudes Toward High Risk Behavior



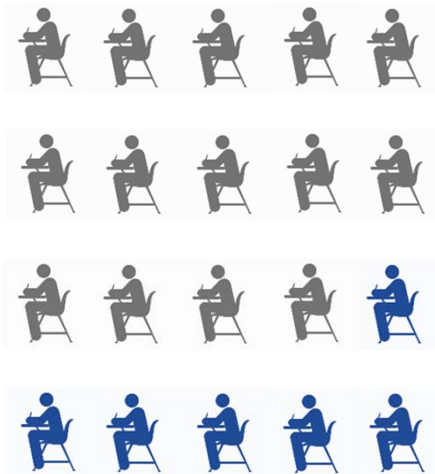
Yes – about 36%

*Scale based on how wrong the student thinks each of a list of high risk behaviors is.*

# High Risk Behavior – Family Domain

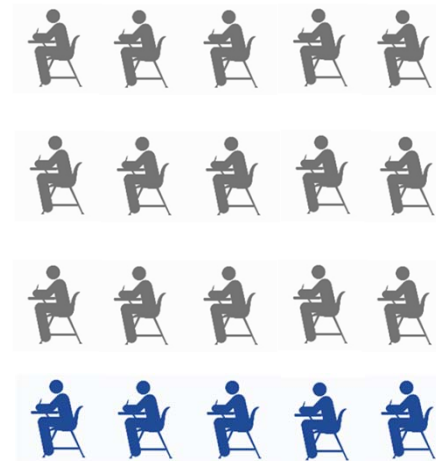


Parental Attitudes  
Favorable to High Risk  
Behavior



Yes – about 32%

Family History of High  
Risk Behavior



Yes – about 27%



## Psychological Distress

- Overall mental health, or psychological distress, is estimated using an adaptation of the K6 Scale developed by Kessler with support from the National Center for Health Statistics for use in the National Health Interview Survey.
- The tool assesses psychological distress by asking students:  
During the past 30 days, how often did you:
  - feel nervous?
  - feel hopeless?
  - feel restless or fidgety?
  - feel so depressed that nothing could cheer you up?
  - feel that everything was an effort?
  - feel worthless?
- Student responses are scored on a scale of low, moderate, or high, indicating level of psychological distress and potential need for mental health treatment.

# Psychological Distress



In the past 30 days, how often students felt the following MOST or ALL of the time...

feel hopeless



about  
1 in 5 students

(four kids in a  
classroom of twenty)

feel worthless



about  
1 in 5 students

(four kids in a  
classroom of twenty)

feel so  
depressed that  
nothing could  
cheer you up



about  
1 in 5 students

(four kids in a  
classroom of twenty)

feel that  
everything was  
an effort



about  
1 in 3 students

(seven kids in a  
classroom of twenty)

feel nervous



about  
1 in 4 students

(five kids in a  
classroom of twenty)

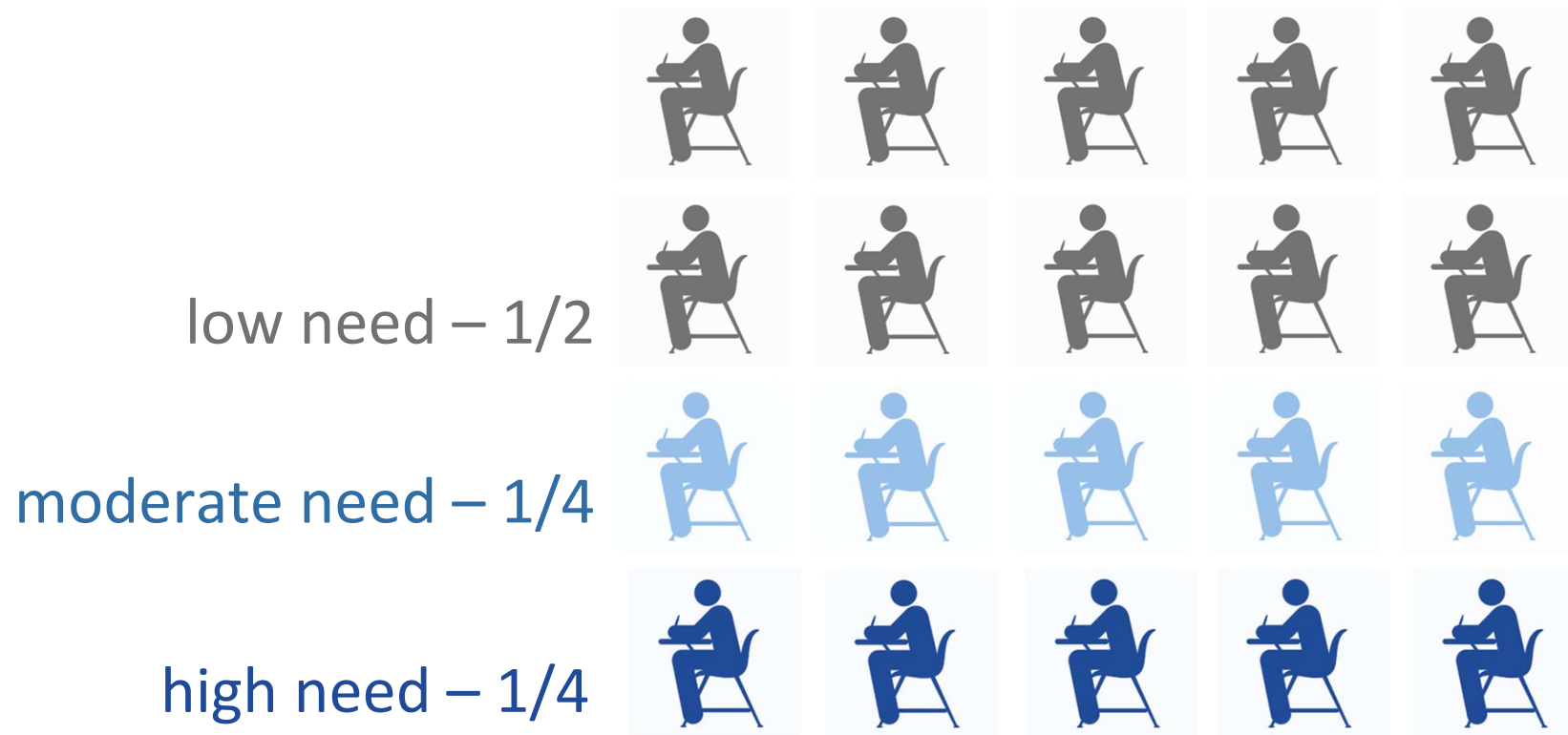
feel restless or  
fidgety



about  
1 in 5 students

(four kids in a  
classroom of twenty)

# Psychological Distress



We now understand, more than ever, key points in brain development and our ability to mitigate, or even prevent, mental illness if we act early and often. Over time, we should expect to see the rate of students experiencing psychological distress decline.

# Suicide



- Suicide related indicators further inform student mental health.
- Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for 15- to 24-year-olds in the U.S.
- Oklahoma has the eighth highest suicide rate in the country.
- The tool assesses suicide ideation and attempts by asking students:
  - During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?
  - During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?

# Suicide

# 361

Students responded that they had attempted suicide (1 or more times) within the last 12 months



The vast majority (90–95%) of people in the United States who complete suicide have a diagnosable mental disorder, yet only about half of them are diagnosed and treated appropriately.

Suicide is the **2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death** for Oklahoma youth.

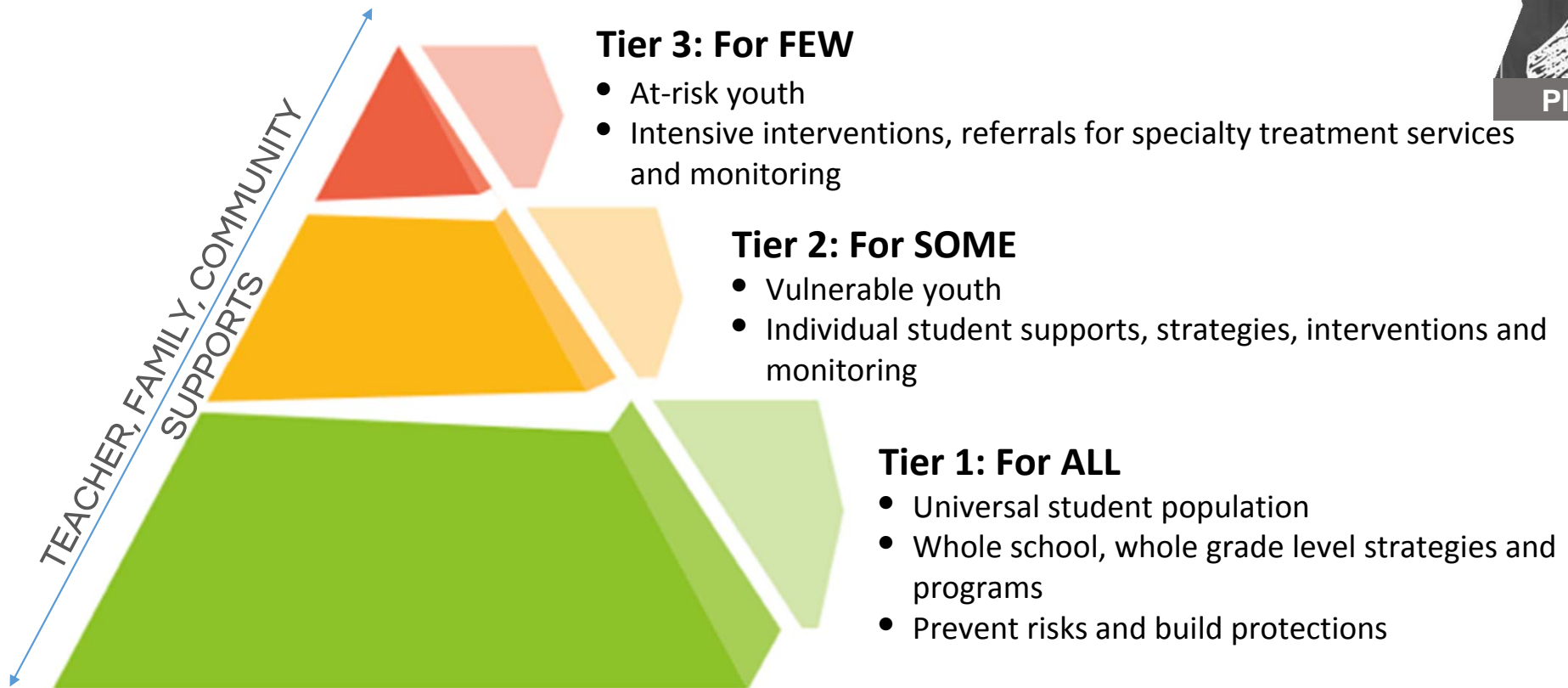
## Planning Team



- A planning team was convened to review the OPNA results, identify priorities, and develop recommendations.
- The team consisted of representatives from the Oklahoma City Public Schools, the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and the Compact.
- The team heard from experts in youth mental health, reviewed data, and selected research-based prevention and treatment approaches in a series of half-day work sessions.



# Matching Students to Prevention & Treatment Based on Need



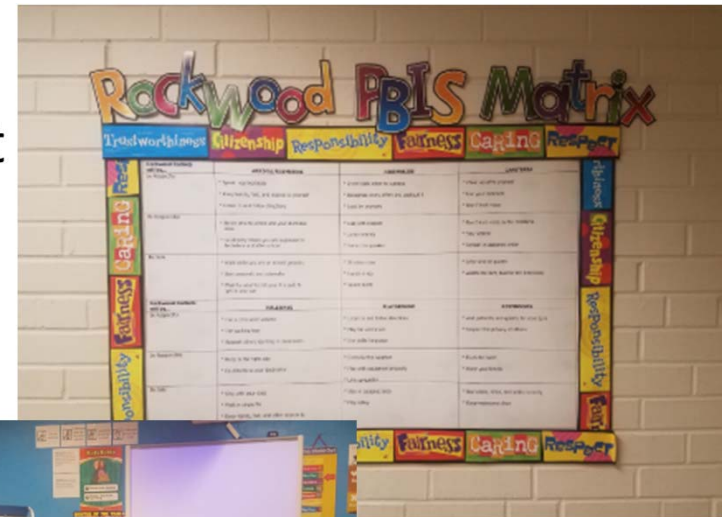
Embrace OKC layers onto the PBIS framework with universal prevention strategies appropriate for all students in order to prevent mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders; Tier 2 intervention strategies are for those students showing early signs of mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders; Tier 3 strategies are for those students with treatment needs.

# What Works in School Based Mental Health

- Evidence-based approaches
- Array of prevention, intervention & treatment
- Nurturing environments & relationships
- Community and family interventions
- Appropriate staffing and resources
- Continual assessment and monitoring

## Avoid:

- One-off interventions
- Exclusionary, punitive, stigmatizing, inducing practices
- Waiting for problems to develop

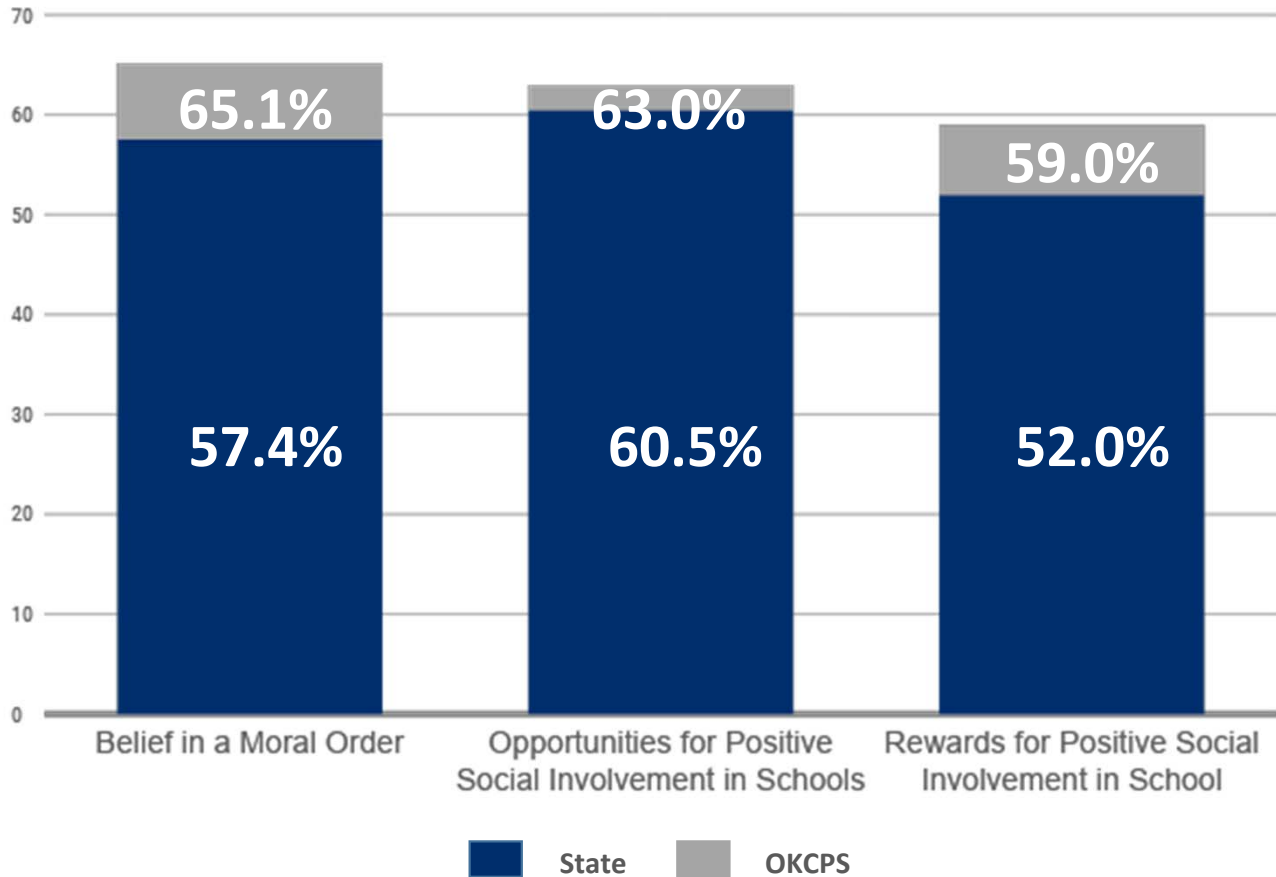


# OKCPS Mental Health Plan – Student Career Path



## Building on Existing Strong Protective Factors

- It's important to not only reduce risk, but also build on protection.
- There are several areas where the district showed a higher level of protection than the rest of the state.
- These data points and others represent opportunities to leverage what is going well in OKCPS.





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