STUDENT SUCCESS SYSTEMS:
SHARED SET OF MINDSETS

Definition

Shared, student-centered mindsets propel student success systems and are shaped by them. Mindsets cannot be mandated—they arise through dialogue, reflection, and shared experience. To best support students, all the adults in the building need to share a common set of attitudes and beliefs that respect the whole child. A shared set of mindsets characterized by:

- Equity rather than injustice and unfairness
- Inclusion rather than separating and stigmatizing
- Empathy rather than judging and blaming
- Strength and asset based rather than deficit framing
- Proactive and preventative rather than reactive and remedial
- Belief in educator and student agency rather than thinking nothing can be done
- Belief in good outcomes for all can be obtained, rather than thinking only some can be helped
- Improving with and together, rather than alone
- Acting based on evidence and with shared understanding rather than because of compliance and custom.

HIGH-QUALITY STUDENT SUCCESS SYSTEMS ARE:

- transformative,
- inclusive,
- fueled by strong relationships,
- guided by improvement science, and
- shaped by student-centered mindsets

Student success systems provide schools with a unified system that integrates, extends, and increases the capacity of existing student support efforts, including early warning, on-track, and multi-tiered support systems.

Reflect on Mindsets

How do we get to shared mindsets?

Mindsets cannot be mandated—they arise through dialogue, reflection, and shared experience. Those characteristics listed in the definition of student success systems are illustrative of mindsets that evidence and experience have shown can help fuel student success systems. The characteristics also show that mindsets and thinking can change or evolve. They are not intended as an exhaustive list, but rather as a starting point for local co-construction of the mindsets needed to fuel student success.

What do a shared set of mindsets look like?

- Disaggregated data with analysis that reflects groups who are not being served with equity
- Strength/asset-based language use when speaking about families and students
- Safe practices for sharing information and ideas
- Coherence between student and adult perspective of school connectedness for all
- Educator and student input in idea formation, data review, and decision-making
- Student supports assigned to enable growth and development
- Team reflection protocol to examine why current student supports and processes exist, and their effectiveness

Everybody plays a part in a shared set of mindsets.

Developing shared mindsets is a journey, and continual process. Different team members and the school community will be at different parts of the journey at different times. There could be value in the team or school community taking stock of where they are on their journey.
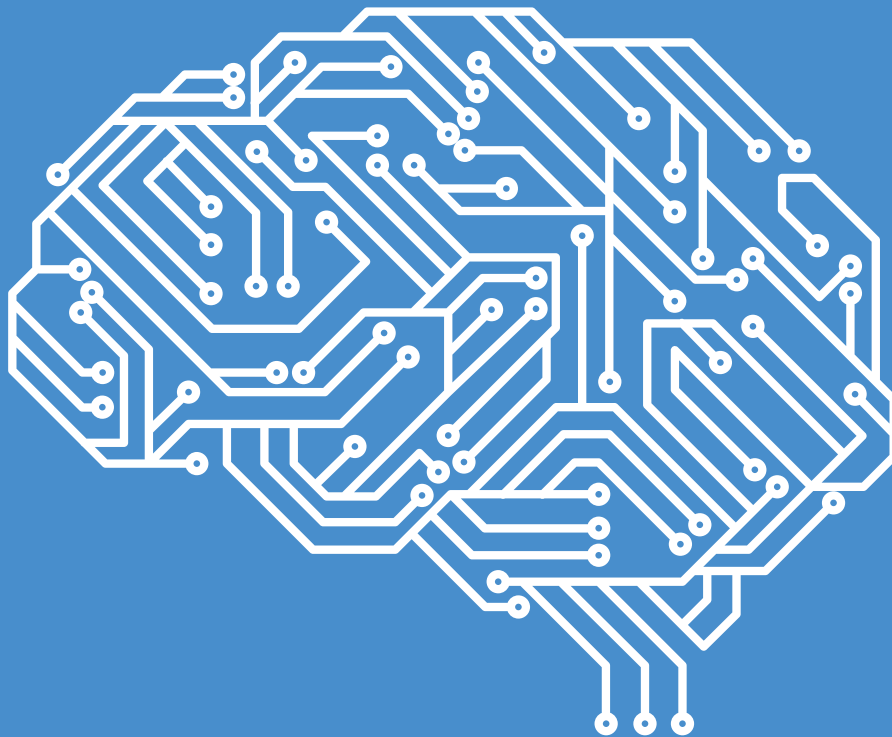
Moving Forward

Creating a student success system that enables your school to provide the learning environment, experiences, relationships, and supports all students need to thrive in school, and ultimately graduate ready for college and/or workplace training, is an on-going, adaptive process; especially since school and community capacities and student needs continually shift.

Key considerations/tips for moving forward:

- Measure where you are in terms of equity and fairness— begin with data and have open and honest conversations asking- who is NOT being served?

- Create systems and protocols that focus on inclusion and empathy rather than stigmatize and separate students and adults

- Open dialogue that examines implicit biases

- Promote educator and student agency

- Family engagement informs stronger engagement including celebrations of other cultures' traditions

- Take actions that are strength and asset based, proactive, and preventative

- Understand Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Model and be realistic about early adopters and laggers (see organizational psychology resources)

- Connections over compliance—People can focus on learning only if they feel safe and cared for/about in an educational setting. Consider these important concepts:
  - Emotionally intelligent classrooms
  - Neuroplasticity
  - Trauma informed practices
  - Positive Neuroscience

Resources

Are you interested in doing a deeper dive into some of the aspects of adapting student centered mindsets? Check out some helpful resources below.

Equity

- **Liberatory Design Deck:** Liberatory Design is a process and practice to generate self-awareness to liberate designers from habits that perpetuate inequity. Shift the relationship between the people who hold power to design and those impacted. Foster learning and agency for those involved. Create conditions for collective liberation.

- **Forum Guide to Collecting and Using Disaggregated Data on Racial/Ethnic Subgroups**. Learn more about data disaggregation in the field of education; decide whether data disaggregation might be appropriate for them; and if so, how to implement or continue a data disaggregation project.

- **Measuring Equity in Education**. Practical guidance on the calculation and interpretation of indicators designed to target the most disadvantaged groups. It is intended for anyone involved in the measurement and monitoring of equity in education

Neuroscience and Education

- **Dr. Marc Brackett on Emotional Intelligence** (video). Dr. Marc Brackett of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence talks with Character Lab about emotional intelligence.

- **The Sentis Brain Animation Series: Neuroplasticity** (video). A short and concise video explaining the way that our mindsets can change via neuroplasticity.

- **Childhood Trauma and the Brain** (video). A general introduction from the UK Trauma Council to what happens in the brain after children face traumatic experiences in childhood, like abuse and neglect.

- **Positive Neuroscience**. UC Berkeley white paper on positive neuroscience. Positive neuroscience focuses on the nervous system mechanisms that underlie human flourishing and well-being.

- **Connections over Compliance** (video). Interview with author Dr. Lori Desaultes, author of Connections over Compliance: Rewiring our Perceptions of Discipline.

Organizational Change

- **Developing a Growth Mindset in Teachers and Staff**. According to Jackie Gerstein, teachers, like the students they teach, can learn to develop a growth mindset, but this requires careful planning by school management. The most obvious way of applying a growth mindset to teacher professional development is through modeling.

- **The Psychology of Change Management**. Companies can transform the attitudes and behavior of their employees by applying psychological breakthroughs that explain why people think and act as they do.

- **Transform Teaching With the Diffusion of Innovation**. For decades, social scientists have been studying how change happens, and you may find the implications of that research useful in endeavors to implement transformational teaching changes in your school with colleagues, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders. A central theory that describes the pace and path of acceptance of new ideas and innovations was put forth by Everett Rogers.

References

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GRAD Partnership has developed a D*istrict Leadership Team Reflection and Action Planning Tool* and a *School Team Reflection and Action Planning Tool* to help guide reflection and planning to integrate the components of a student success system within your current practices. Each of these tools has a section specific to a shared set of student-centered mindsets.

Download your own copy of the tool.

Learn more **at gradpartnership.org**

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