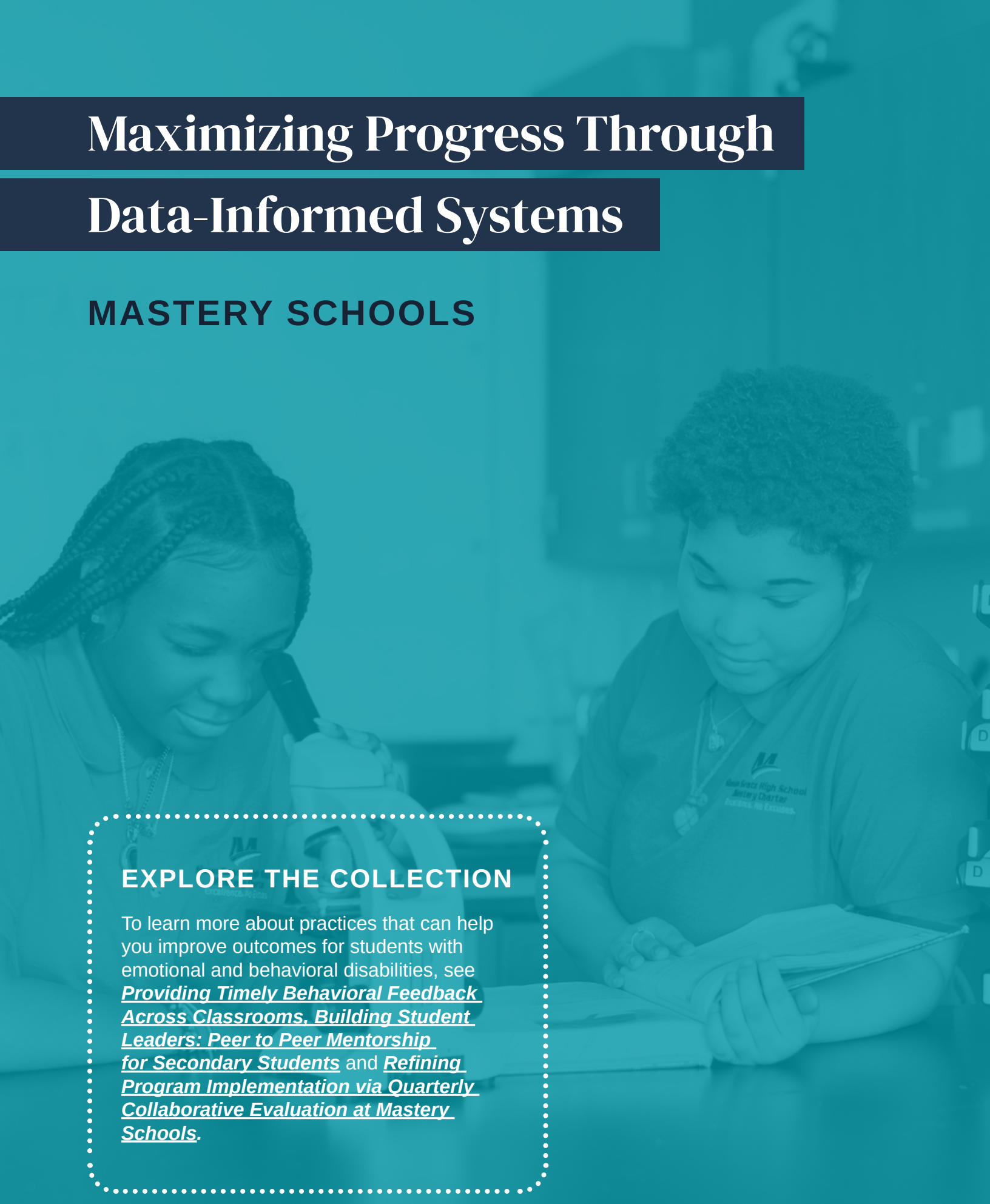
Maximizing Progress Through Data-Informed Systems

MASTERY SCHOOLS



EXPLORE THE COLLECTION

To learn more about practices that can help you improve outcomes for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities, see ***Providing Timely Behavioral Feedback Across Classrooms***, ***Building Student Leaders: Peer to Peer Mentorship for Secondary Students*** and ***Refining Program Implementation via Quarterly Collaborative Evaluation at Mastery Schools***.

Snapshot

WHAT IS THE PRACTICE?

The regular collection and analysis of data for goal-setting, decision-making, and reflection to ensure fidelity, quality, and outcomes at all levels of any program.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- The purpose of data-based decision-making is to set goals, adapt instruction, evaluate the effectiveness of programs and practices, improve policy, and reallocate resources to improve student outcomes.[1]
- Data-based decision-making is particularly important when supporting students with disabilities, to ensure that interventions, instructional strategies, and accommodations have their desired effects.
- It is best not to use just one type of data to provide the necessary information to make decisions but to include various types of data.[2]
- In the case of Mastery's Anchor program for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities, as with all special education supports and services, it is important to know whether students are in the least restrictive environment possible for them to make appropriate academic progress. Data needs to be collected and analyzed regularly to ensure that students are making progress and are receiving the appropriate level of support to do so.



"There are times when data may look a little off, but we can look at other data to understand what's going on."

— VERONICA KOFF, MASTERY GRATZ ANCHOR PROGRAM DIRECTOR



The Challenge

Ensuring Students Are Receiving the Appropriate Level of Support and Services

Data-driven decision-making has always been a key component of special education when students are initially assessed and re-evaluated every three years to determine their eligibility for services. Between evaluations, schools do not always make frequent use of data to ensure that they are providing students with an education in the least restrictive environment possible for the students to make educational progress. As a result, schools often keep students in programs or provide interventions and services that are overly restrictive and limit the amount students are educated with their peers without disabilities.[3] When educators do not collect and review data to take action for their students in a timely manner, they often overlook students' real, current needs.

At Mastery Schools, using data to make decisions about students' supports is an essential component of their Anchor program. In order for their team to meet the needs of students with emotional and behavioral disabilities in their highly individualized program, they need to look at data daily and weekly to responsively adjust their programmatic supports for students. The Anchor team also reviews data monthly and quarterly to look at the bigger picture of their program in order to monitor its effectiveness and identify longer-term improvements they can make.

At Mastery's Simon Gratz High School, Specialized Services Program Director Veronica Koff needs to ensure that students are continuously receiving the most appropriate level of support within the program. The only way Veronica can be confident that students are getting what they need is to know with certainty that each component of the program, as well as the overall program, is working. Data is critical for her as she makes decisions about what students and the program need.

The Practice

Using a Variety of Data Sources to Make Decisions about Students, Practices, and Programs

Mastery Schools created a network-wide data infrastructure that makes it possible for each school's Anchor program to make data-driven decisions for students. Veronica and her Anchor team at Gratz collect, analyze, and respond to data on a regular basis to help students make progress. But their use of data doesn't stop there. The team regularly aggregates data for analysis at the program and network level and uses structured meetings to look at the results and address the needs that arise.

Veronica and her team collect multiple types of data to make decisions about what students, staff, and the program need to be successful. Three particular systems exemplify their use of data to make decisions at different levels of their program:

1. A **behavioral feedback** system, supporting daily analysis that includes data from a behavioral feedback app, daily conferences, and staff huddles
2. A **level system**, which evaluates, in two-week cycles, the data from the system's leveling criteria and student support provided, as well as team meetings and students' level conferences
3. A system for **program evaluation** using quarterly reporting-period analyses of data from a "Must Haves" rubric and student progress on IEP goals

Enabling Conditions

Enabling Conditions describes the minimum conditions needed for successful implementation, including resources, mindsets, staffing, and recommended time allocation.

Prerequisites	★ Network-level leaders set expectations around data culture as a foundational program component. ★ A system of coaching is in place to help all staff members improve their practice. ★ A system-wide belief exists that students with disabilities are best educated when they are with their typically developing peers to the greatest extent possible. ★ Individual staff members, along with entire programs, are capable of changing when data indicates it is necessary.
Recommended Materials	★ Pre-existing tools or applications (e.g., Must Haves rubric, Kickboard, student information systems) to support data collection, visualization, and analysis
Staff Commitment	★ Program lead who analyzes data regularly and supports the team to reflect on trends and devise how to respond to data ★ Network-level staff who analyze school-level and aggregated data to determine school and network supports and professional development ★ Staff members who regularly collect data that can be analyzed from the student level to the network level
Recommended Time Allocation	★ Training (staff at all levels of the system, from instructional assistants to department directors) – Collecting valid data: 30–60 minutes at least quarterly – Analyzing data: 30–60 minutes at least quarterly ★ Meetings to set goals, analyze data, and respond to data – School/program level: 1 hour biweekly or weekly – Network level: 1–2 hours monthly ★ Coaching to improve data collection and implementation of responses to data – 1 hour weekly for all staff

Behavioral Feedback: Using Daily Data for Immediate Action

Anchor staff use **Kickboard**, an app for collecting data on student behavior throughout each school day, as they observe, support, and coach students on the **SAM skills** identified in their IEPs. Students and staff can use the app to see data from feedback given to students in real time. Counselors enter information on tablets, which are also available in Anchor classrooms for students to use throughout the day to look at their feedback and at the end of the day to cash out points they earned from their behavior. In daily conferences with a staff member, students reflect on their behavior, progress, and goals for the next day.

In the same way that students use the data from Kickboard to reflect and plan, Anchor staff use the data from behavioral feedback to make important decisions about students, staff, and the program. During short daily huddles, the Anchor team meets to discuss the specific and daily needs of students:

- They share information they each know about students' specific situations that can impact the students during the day (e.g., Marquis left his phone in the car; Jenna is absent due to a death in the family).
- They ask questions about upcoming schedule changes and related needs and suggest students who may need check-ins during that day.
- They reflect on previous student-teacher interactions, behaviors, and any changes that can be made to improve interactions in the future.

To get a more holistic picture of student progress on behavioral outcomes, Veronica also regularly conducts observations of the behavioral feedback intervention to compare qualitative observation data with the student performance metrics tracked in Kickboard. The figure on the following page shows an example of observation data collected. Alternating weeks, Veronica uses qualitative and quantitative data to identify bright spots for celebration and prioritize areas for further development of staff. Her observations are shared with staff in Anchor team meetings and drive decisions for professional development to continue to improve how they implement behavioral feedback.

Using Daily Behavioral Feedback Data to Make Programmatic Decisions

The Anchor team repeatedly saw data showing that students were struggling behaviorally in math classes. Notes recorded in Kickboard clearly indicated that a number of students in Anchor needed more support with their foundational math skills, making math classes particularly challenging because academic frustration was often the antecedent to students being redirected by counselors. In response to the data, Anchor added a math skills class to their academic offerings to help students increase their foundational math skills and feel more successful in their math classes.

Date	Time	Location/Setting	Type of Points	Visualizing Y/N	Vocalizing Y/N	Initial Praise/Empathy	Description of behavior	Consequence (Positive/Negative)	Request Acknowledgement	LP Only - Describe Appropriate Behavior	LP Only - Bounce Back Statement Y/N
3/27	8:30	Personal Communications		N	Y	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Y
3/27	10:20	General Education room		Y	N	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N
3/27	1:00	General Education room		Y	Y	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Y
3/27	1:24	General Education room		Y	Y	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Y
4/11	8:35	Personal Communications		N	Y	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	N
4/11	9:00	Personal Communications		Y	Y	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Y
4/11	10:00	General Education room		Y	Y	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Y
4/14	10:14	General Education room	PP	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4/14	10:30	General Education room	LP	☑	☑	☐	☑	☑	☐	☑	☑
4/17	8:35	Personal Communications	PP	☑	☑	☑	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
4/17	10:05	General Education room	PP	☑	☑	☑	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
4/18	9:12	General Education room	LP	☑	☑	☐	☑	☑	☐	☑	☑
4/17	11:58	General Education room	PP	☐	☑	☑	☑	☑	☐	☐	☐
4/18	9:21	Personal Communications	LP	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☐	☑	☑
4/18	10:11	General Education room	PP	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☐	☐	☐
4/27	11:20	General Education room	PP	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☐	☐
4/27	9:15	General Education room	PP	☑	☑	☑	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
4/27	9:15	General Education room	LP	☐	☐	☐	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
				☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Anchor's observation data tracker on counselors' implementation of behavioral feedback

Level System: Using Data Regularly to Adapt the Support Students Receive

The Anchor program uses a level system to determine the amount of support each student receives. Every two weeks, Veronica leads her team in making the important decision of whether students need more or less support to make progress on their goals. To make a level decision, the team uses three types of data:

1. Behavioral feedback data — specifically the ratio of positive to overall points a student received in the previous two weeks
2. School discipline data, such as referrals or suspensions, input by any Mastery staff member
3. Attendance data

At the end of each two-week period, students can move up, move down, or stay at the same level. While

Modifying How Staff Respond to Students Based on Their Disability and Needs

All students at **Mastery Schools** are held to behavioral expectations. For students in the Anchor program, school staff need different ways to respond to schoolwide "culture" infractions to support students' therapeutic needs. To that end, Mastery created the **Modified Anchor Response Plan** (MARP) as an adaptation to their existing culture plan. The MARP provides questions and protocols to guide staff responses, which vary based on the level of infraction:

- Level I Infraction: A behavior that disrupts the learning environment or that is insubordination
- Level II Infraction: A behavior that impacts the school culture and community of safety, respect, and cooperation that is fostered at Mastery
- Level III Infraction: Serious violations of the Mastery Disciplinary Code of Conduct and/or behaviors that are criminal violations

The level and frequency of a student's culture infractions impact the student's Anchor program level.

changing levels can be perceived as a reward or punishment to students, the purpose of leveling is to determine the amount of support students receive from Anchor staff. After leveling decisions are made, Anchor staff hold a conference with each student to review their data and discuss their upcoming level so students understand why they are placed at that level and how they can continue to grow in the program. Students' levels amount to their least restrictive environment for the subsequent two-week period of time. The frequent review and adjustment process ensures that students receive the necessary support at that moment, enabling them to track their progress and overcome setbacks promptly. Additionally, the level system provides valuable data for the Mastery team to assess the overall health of the Anchor program and identify any changing resource needs.

The Data Used to Make Level Decisions

Criteria for each Anchor program level fit into three categories: attendance, culture, and SAM skills. A student's performance in all three categories helps the team determine **which level the student is in** and **how** the team will provide the appropriate support to help the student move up levels. The following table shows the criteria in each category for students in a high school Anchor program. (See the **Appendix** for elementary and middle school criteria).

Anchor Level Criteria for High School

	Attendance	Culture*	SAM Skills
Level 5	90% attendance or more (1 day or less unexcused absence out of cycle) or 2 or fewer tardies	No level II infractions within the cycle	90% or more of one individualized target skill
Level 4	90% attendance or more (1 day or less unexcused absence out of cycle) or 2 or fewer tardies	One level II infraction or fewer	80–89% of one individualized target skill
Level 3	80% attendance (2 days or less out of cycle) or 4 or fewer tardies	Two level II infractions or fewer per cycle, OR 50% decrease in level II infractions per cycle	80–89% of one individualized target skill or 40% increase
Level 2	80% attendance (2 days or less out of cycle) or 3–4 tardies	Three level II infractions or fewer, OR 25% decrease in level II infractions per cycle	70–79% of one individualized target skill or 20% increase
Level 1	70% attendance or less (3 days or less out of cycle) or 5 tardies or more	Any level III culture infraction* Four level II infractions or fewer	0–69% of one individualized target skill

** Any level III culture infraction will move the student to Level 1 in Anchor, and supports will be adjusted immediately. All level III infractions require an IEP meeting where student supports and privileges are adjusted. At a minimum, the student will move to Level 1 for one cycle.*

How the Team Uses this Data to Place Students into Levels

When measuring data against the criteria for leveling, the team balances how each student is progressing in the three categories to determine the appropriate current level. A spreadsheet tracks all of the students in the Anchor program, using color coding to indicate at a glance each student's level for each time period:

Level 1 | **Level 2** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** | **Level 5**

The tracking tool allows the Anchor team to easily see which students are progressing through the levels, who is consistently struggling or succeeding in the program, and who has had some good and some challenging weeks. An example is shown in the table below.

			Attendance		Culture				SAM Skills		Behavioral Feedback Interactions			
School	Grade	TargetSkill	Days Absent	Days Tardy	Level 2 Prior Cycle	Level 2 Current Cycle	Level 3 Prior Cycle	Level 3 Current Cycle	Current Target Skills %	Target Skills % Change	Target Skill	All Skill(s)	Prior Cycle Rating	Current Cycle Rating
Gratz HS	11	ROT	2	0	1	3	0	0	92%	-1%	25	26	4	2
Gratz HS	12	IAT	1	4	1	0	0	0	100%	14%	14	14	1	1
Gratz HS	12	INB	0	4	1	0	0	0	86%	-7%	22	23	1	3
Gratz HS	11	ROT	0	4	0	0	0	0	50%	-33%	4	23	1	1
Gratz HS	12	INB	1	1	0	0	0	0	86%	8%	14	14	2	3
Gratz HS	09	FD	0	2	0	0	0	0	94%	21%	32	35	1	5
Gratz HS	09	FD	5	0	0	0	0	0	100%	50%	1	1	1	1
Gratz HS	10	SC	0	0	1	1	0	0	82%	16%	44	48	1	4
Gratz HS	11	ROT	0	5	0	0	0	0	50%	-50%	4	9	1	1
Gratz HS	10	FD			0	0	0	0	79%	11%	38	43	1	2

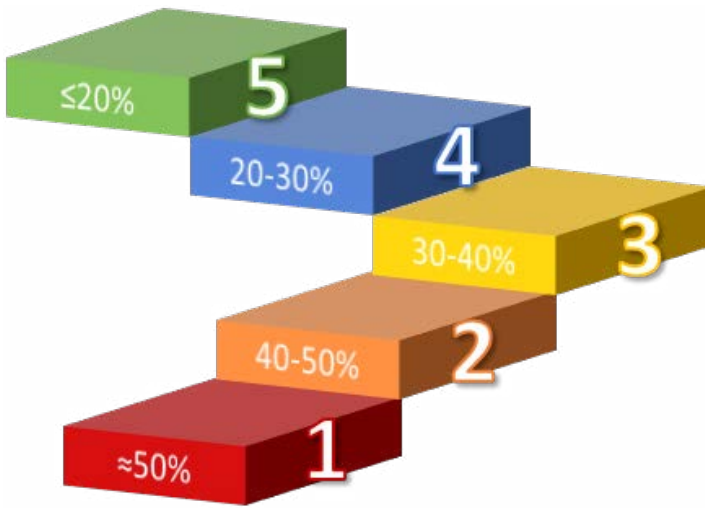
How Level Decisions Inform Student Supports and Services

Students in Anchor receive a different amount of support and different privileges at each level in the system. The supports provided by the Anchor program are in place to help students learn the necessary skills to make progress. Privileges vary at each level and serve as incentives for students to work on the skills that will help them behaviorally. The table on the following page shows how supports decrease and privileges increase as students move up the levels.

Anchor Program Supports and Privileges by Level

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Supports	1. Check-in each period 2. Only shop at the end of each day 3. Supported breaks 4. Complete daily conferencing sheet (with staff) 5. AM check-in 6. Cannot purchase gym and game time	1. Check-in each period 2. Only shop at the end of each day 3. Supported breaks 4. Complete daily conferencing sheet (with staff) 5. AM check-in	1. Decreased push-in support 2. AM/PM Check-ins 3. Daily conferencing sheet independently	1. Decreased push-in support 2. Daily conferencing sheet independently 3. Break independently	1. Decreased push-in support 2. Daily conferencing sheet independently 3. Break independently
Privileges	1. Access to store (with support)	1. Access to store (with support) 2. Can purchase gym/ game time 3. Can attend field trips/ school events (with staff)	1. Can attend field trips/ school events independently 2. Can shop independently (once a day) 3. Can purchase gym/ game time	1. Can attend field trips/ school events independently 2. Can shop independently (2 items) 3. Can purchase gym/ game time/ dress down 4. Break outside (1) 5. Homework passes 6. Can receive credit for mentorship	1. Can attend field trips/ school events independently 2. Can shop independently (two items) 3. Can purchase gym/ game time/ dress down 4. Break outside (1) 5. Homework passes 6. Can receive credit for mentorship 7. Can leave early (with permission from family) 8. No skills classes

Based on the amount of support students need at each level to make progress academically as well as behaviorally, students in Anchor may spend more or less time in a general education setting. The ultimate goal for the level system is to provide an individualized set of services that ensure students can be successfully served in their neighborhood school and make progress that enables them to be educated in an increasingly less restrictive environment with their peers.



Anchor's estimate of the percentage of the day students at each level will be outside of the general education classroom

Program Evaluation: Improving a Program Using Multiple Sources of Data

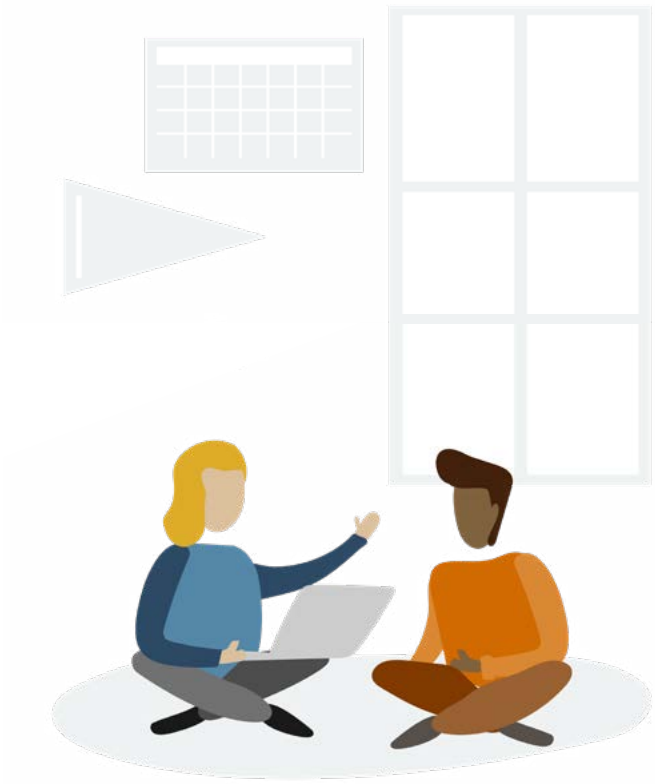
Once each quarter, each campus Anchor program director meets with the network-level director of specialized services, Ann McKetta. Together, they use Anchor's **program evaluation rubric** to look for specific programmatic elements — their "Must Haves" — within the campus's Anchor program. The rubric is broken into two phases of progress: Phase 1, in which the program meets the minimum requirements of each criterion, and Phase 2, in which the program exceeds the minimum criteria. A major purpose of these evaluations is to create consistency across Anchor program student experiences so that students receive high-quality intervention and support regardless of the school they attend. The practice ensures campus and network teams partner together to identify bright spots within the program implementation they can celebrate, as well as to consider opportunities for growth at the campus level and the network level support needed to progress in priority areas.

At Mastery Gratz, Veronica and Ann walk through Anchor spaces to check for specific program elements in the rubric before sitting down to review all the data Veronica and her team have collected. They look at Gratz's data to look for specific areas to celebrate or elements for growth that Veronica can work on with her staff or students. While this time gives Veronica a chance to zoom out and look at her program's progress and areas for improvement, Ann is able to observe Gratz as a data point from the network's point of view, as just one of Mastery's Anchor programs. Currently, Gratz is scoring mostly at Phase 2 on all the rubric criteria, so Ann can learn from Gratz's implementation of the program and practices to consider how other campuses can learn from the areas in which Gratz excels.

The Impact

Using Data to Improve Student Outcomes

Veronica and her team at Gratz have made data-based decisions to improve Anchor's systems and structures. They have also been able to increase attendance and reduce the number of suspensions for students in their program. The percentage of students in Mastery Gratz's Anchor program attending school at least 90% of the time has increased by almost 30 percentage points since 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the percentage of students in Anchor who received at least one suspension declined by about 35 points. By using data to drive decisions on the quality and fidelity of program implementation, Veronica and her team have also helped improve student outcomes that will make a difference in those students' lives for years.



This practice directly supports the use of data to make decisions about supports and services for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. For more specific information on practices to support students with emotional and behavioral disabilities, see *Anchoring Emotions*.

Mastery Schools *serves approximately 14,000 students in grades K–12 across Philadelphia, PA, and Camden, NJ. The focal school for the practice was Mastery Simon Gratz High School in Philadelphia.*

Mastery Schools is a part of the ***Marshall Street Networked Improvement Community,*** *a three-year intentional community of 10 public charter school networks nationwide aiming to make dramatic gains for Black and Latinx students with disabilities experiencing poverty. Collectively, the 10 networks identified over 20 best practices that improve learning outcomes and school culture for students positioned furthest from opportunity. Learn more here.*

FURTHER LEARNING

Significant Disproportionality in Special Education

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

What is Data-Based Individualization?

THE NATIONAL CENTER ON INTENSIVE INTERVENTION

Appendix

Mastery Anchor Level Criteria for High School

	Attendance	Culture*	SAM Skills
Level 5	Elementary: 90% attendance or more (1 day or less unexcused absence out of cycle) Middle: 90% attendance or more (1 day or less unexcused absence out of cycle) Or 2 or fewer tardies High: 90% attendance or more (1 day or less unexcused absence out of cycle) or 2 or fewer tardies	No level II infractions within the cycle	90% or more of one individualized target skill
Level 4	Elementary: 90% attendance or more (1 day or less unexcused absence out of cycle) Middle & High: 90% attendance or more (1 day or less unexcused absence out of cycle) or 2 or fewer tardies	One level II infraction or fewer	80%–89% of one individualized target skill
Level 3	Elementary: 80% attendance (2 days or less out of cycle) Middle & High: 80% attendance (2 days or less out of cycle) or 4 or fewer tardies	Two level II infractions or fewer per cycle, OR 50% decrease in level II infractions per cycle	80%–89% of one individualized target skill or 40% increase
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Level 1	Elementary: 70% attendance or less (3 days or less out of cycle) Middle & High: 70% attendance or less (3 days or less out of cycle) or 5 tardies or more	Any level III culture infraction will move the student to level 1 in Anchor* Four level II infractions or fewer	0%–69% of one individualized target skill

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Notes

1 Skiba et al., “Disparate Access”

2 van Geel et al., “Assessing the Effvects”

3 Hamilton et al., *Using Student Achievement Data*

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