



Blending and Braiding Funds to Support MTSS Implementation

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Presenters



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NCSI at-a-Glance

NCSI provides TA that builds capacity for lasting impact through a focus on four high-impact transformation priorities and the complementary knowledge and skills needed to achieve them.

HIGH-IMPACT TRANSFORMATION PRIORITIES

1

Maximize leadership to align general and special education systems to close equity gaps

3

Operationalize evidence-based practices for teaching and learning

2

Optimize general supervision, accountability and support systems to improve results

4

Actualize improvement for students with disabilities in low-performing schools

FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO ACHIEVE TRANSFORMATION PRIORITIES

NCSI helps states to develop and deepen the foundational knowledge and skills required for sustaining impact in each priority:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>a. Data Literacy: Collecting necessary data and determining quality, understanding what the data mean, and deriving sensible data-based conclusions to guide decision-making.</p> | <p>c. Stakeholder & Family Engagement: Meaningfully engaging diverse stakeholders and strengthening the role of family members in shaping educational systems and decisions.</p> |
| <p>b. Research-Informed Practice: Providing effective TA&PD on using high-leverage evidence-based practices (EBPs) for students with disabilities and supporting implementation of EBP frameworks.</p> | <p>d. Systems Coherence: Designing interconnected policies and allocating resources to enable efficiency and effectiveness in developing and implementing strategic improvement plans.</p> |

Agenda

1. Level setting and basic terminology
2. Why braid or blend?
3. What braiding and blending look like



Warm Up

To get us focused for the day, identify one thing that has made you feel hopeful in the past week.

Anticipated Outcomes

1. Describe the 'why' for blending and braiding
2. Walk away with examples of blending and braiding in school settings
3. Understand the state role in blending and braiding

Level Setting and Basic Terminology



Meaning and Eligible Funding

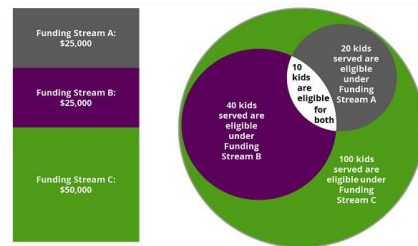
Braiding Funds

- **Coordinated** to meet one purpose
- Individual funding stream maintains identity for eligibility and reporting
- Restricted state funds
- Federal funds
 - ESEA Titles I, II, III, and IV
 - IDEA including IDEA CEIS
 - CARES Act GEER and ESSER Funds



Blending Funds

- **Consolidated** into one funding stream to meet one purpose
- Funding streams loses its identity
- Unrestricted state and local funds; some restricted state funds
- Federal funds
 - ESEA Titles I, II, III, and IV
 - IDEA including IDEA CEIS



Basics of Flexibility under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)



ESSA has ushered in a new era of flexibility among federal education resources. For example:

- **Transferability:** movement of resources among most Title programs (ESEA section 5103)¹
- **Consolidation:** collapse resources to support the administration of the program aligned to design of the intervention (ESEA section 8201(a))²
- **School/District Discretion to Allocate based on Need:** a lot of latitude to administrators for how and where to direct resources to improve outcomes (ESEA section 1111(d)(1)(B) and (d)(2)(B))³

¹ <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/covid19-transfer-funds.pdf>

² <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essa-flexibilities-document-for-publication.pdf>

³ <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essa-flexibilities-document-for-publication.pdf>

Basics of Flexibility under Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)



- All IDEA funds may be consolidated in a schoolwide program
 - IDEA Section 613(a)(2)(d)); 34 CFR §300.206
- Coordinated Early Intervening Services may also be braided or blended to maximize impact
 - An LEA may use up to 15% of its IDEA Part B allocation services for students grade K-12 who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support
 - LEAs are required to use 15% for comprehensive CEIS when identified with significant disproportionality
 - IDEA Section 613(f); 34 CFR § 300.226(a)

Guardrails for braiding and blending

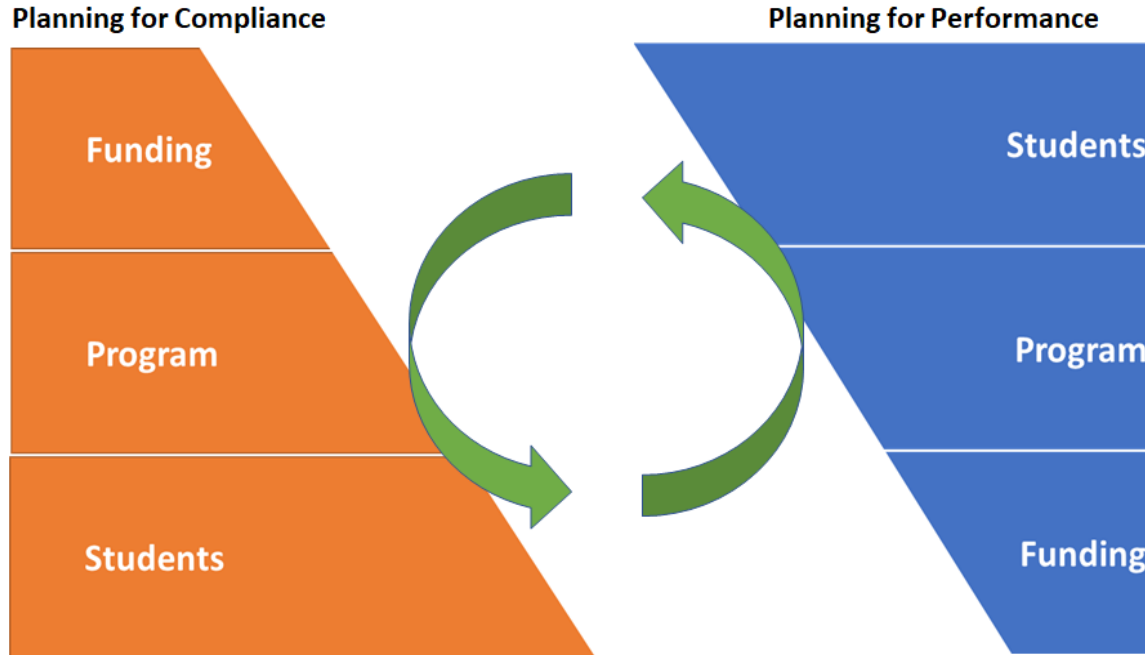


- Ongoing vs. one-time expenses
- Supplement not supplant (ESSA)
 - LEAs are required to demonstrate equitable resource allocation practices
 - Federal funds DO NOT replace State funds
 - FPM no longer “audits” purchases for SNS; however time accounting is still required
- Maintenance of effort (IDEA)
 - LEAs cannot reduce the amount of state and local funds used for special education



Why Consider Blending and Braiding?

Re-orienting the resource planning mindset



Why Coordinate Funds?

- Better serve students with complex needs by providing access to streamlined services rather than services from multiple separate programs
- Differentiate fiscal and human resources based on need and not based on program eligibility
- Reduce arbitrary routines of fractioning staff FTE based on funding streams rather than maximizing FTE to support students
- Reduce duplication of human and fiscal resources



Greatest Impact

“The most likely implication of school closures relates to equity. Students who come from well resourced families will fare much better than those from lower resourced families.”

“We need to be ***doubly concerned about those students who most need teacher expertise***—those from homes where parents are least likely to be teachers, students with special needs who require specialized instruction, those who already do not like learning at school, and those who come to school primarily to be with their friends.”


Polls

What percentage of students in your state fall into overlapping need categories?



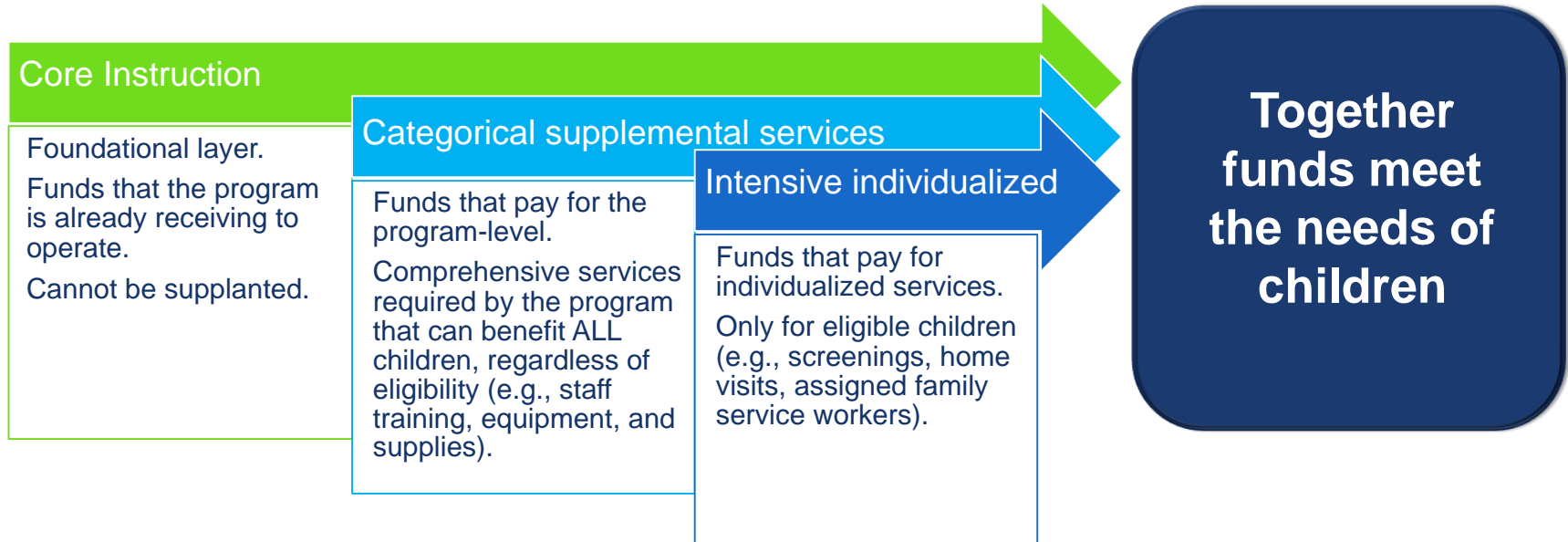


Questions?



What do braiding and blending look like?

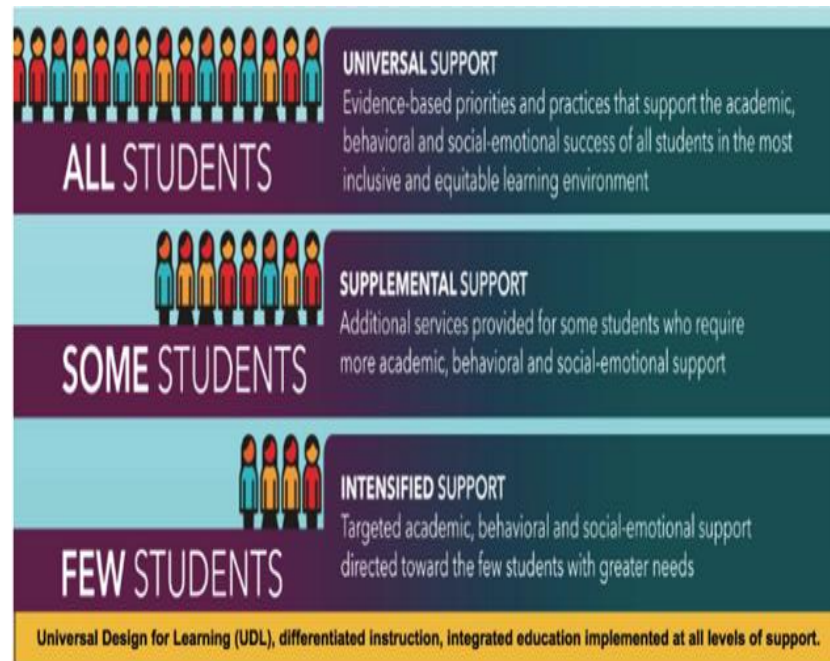
Baseline: Layering Funds



What does layering look like?

Example: Differentiated Supports

- State general funds and other funds provide universal support to all students
- EL teachers, funded by Title III and state funds provide add-on targeted and intensive supports for eligible EL students
- Special ed teachers, funded by IDEA funds and state special education funds provide add-on targeted and intensive supports for eligible students
- Reading interventionists, funded by Title I funds, provide add-on targeted and intensive supports for other students who need them

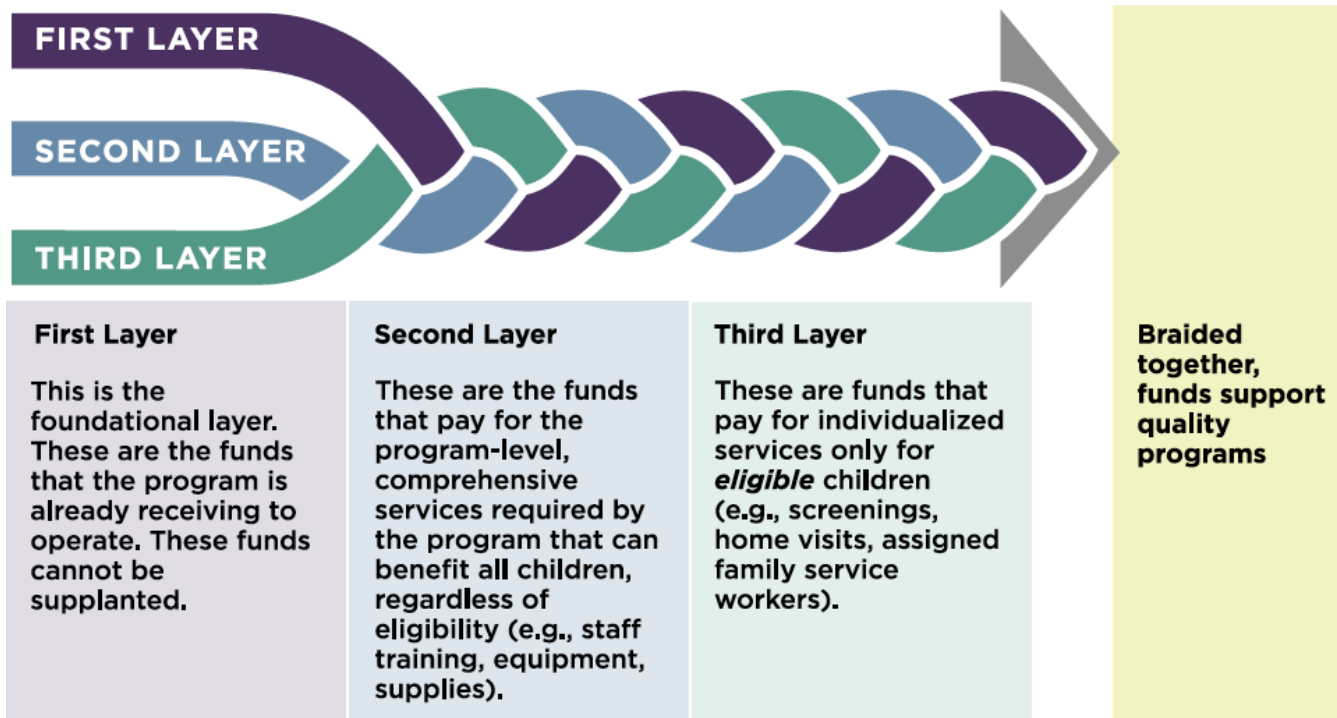


Source: California Department of Education



Braiding Funds

Braiding All Funds

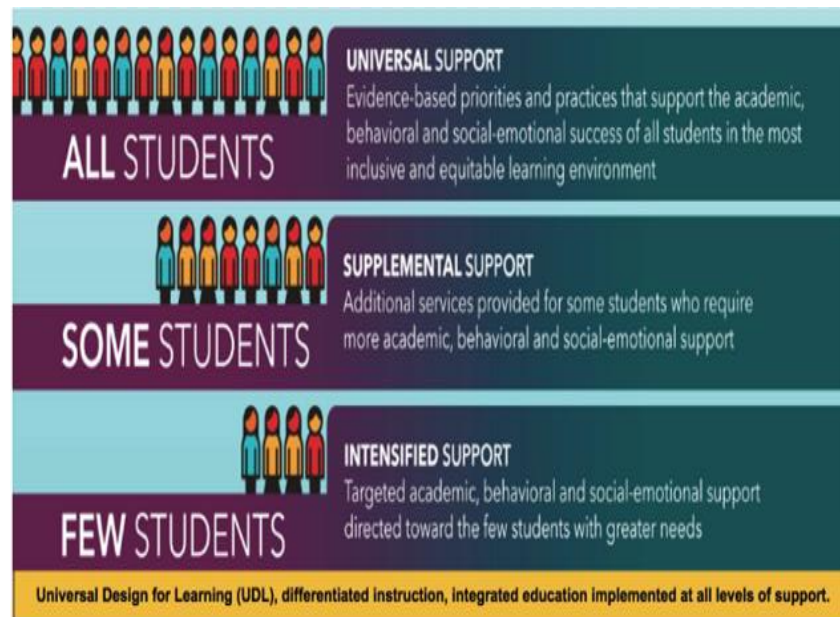


Source: NC Early Childhood Foundation. (2014). *Layered funding: Hallmark of EHS* – Child Care Partnerships. Retrieved from <http://buildthefoundation.org/2014/03/layered-funding-hallmark-of-ehs-child-care-partnerships/>

What does braiding look like?

Example: Differentiated Supports

- State general funds provide universal support to all students.
- EL teachers, reading interventionists, and special ed teachers provide targeted and intensive supports for students grouped based on need and are paid proportionately based on the number of students served from eligible groups.
- Students and funds are tracked and reported separately.



Source: California Department of Education

What does braiding look like?

Example: Differentiated Supports

- Student is in 3rd grade and receives core instruction in 3rd grade classroom
- One interventionist, trained in EL and for work with migratory needs provides push-in services for this student and other students in the class
- The same interventionist supports after-school tutoring
- Interventionist paid proportionately, student tracked and reported



EL, MIGRATORY CHILD ATTENDING A TITLE I TARGETED ASSISTANCE SCHOOL

Assessing Student Needs

- What is the student's educational background? What classes is the student missing?
- How will the school ensure that teachers receive professional learning to address the student's needs?
- How will the school involve the student's parents?
- How will the school ensure the student is acclimating to a new environment?
- What is the child's EL proficiency level?

Examples of Federal supports

- Services to help with current courses or to recover credit (IA, IC)
- Supplemental services to help develop English proficiency (IIIA)
- Parent activities that relate to student's learning (IA, IC, IIIA).
- Professional learning activities (IC, IIA, and IIIA)
- Engagement activities to cultivate a sense of belonging (IC)
- Assistance with student records transfer (IC)

* Other federal program funds may also be used

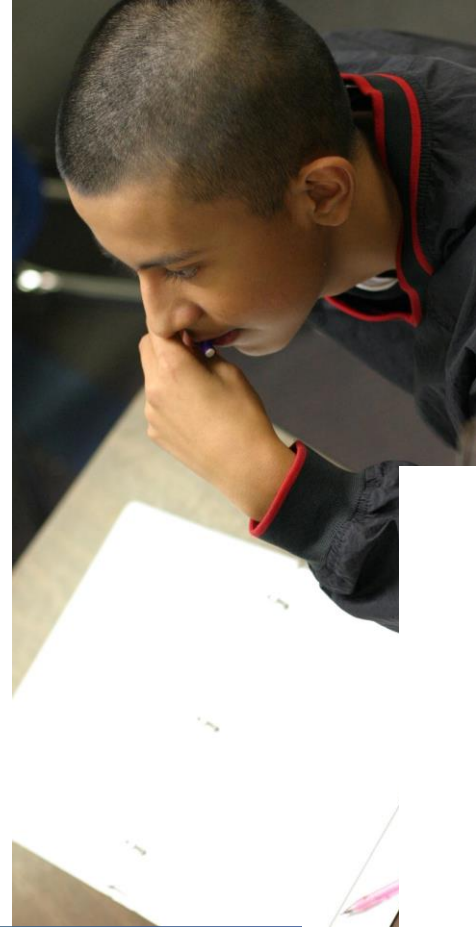


Poll

Do you know of a district or school in your state that has effectively braided funds?

- If so, which one(s)?

Share challenges/successes in chat.



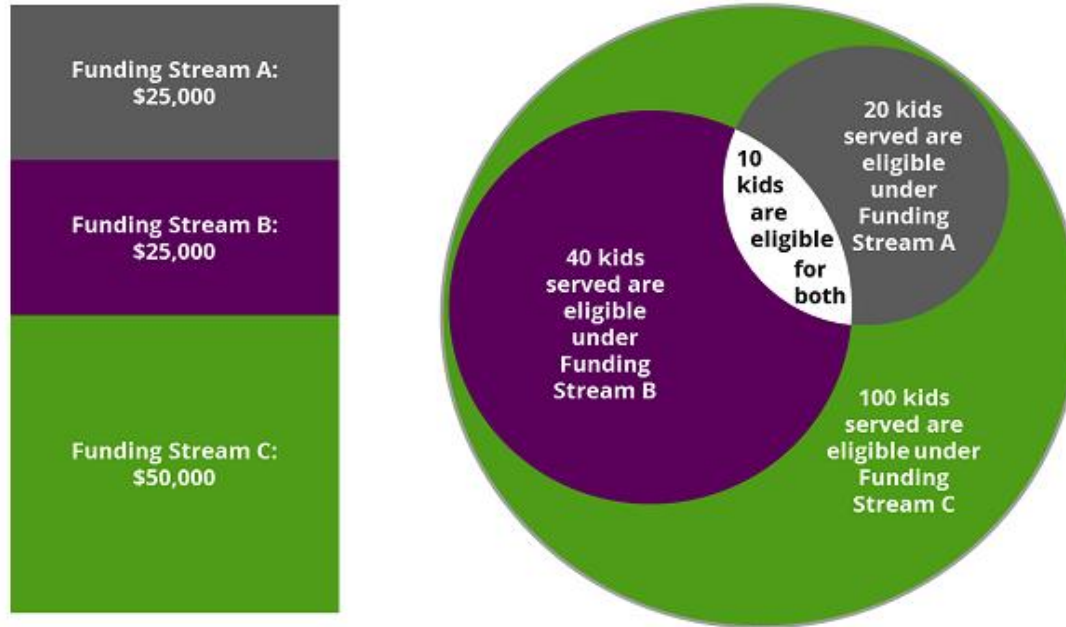


Questions?

Blending Funds



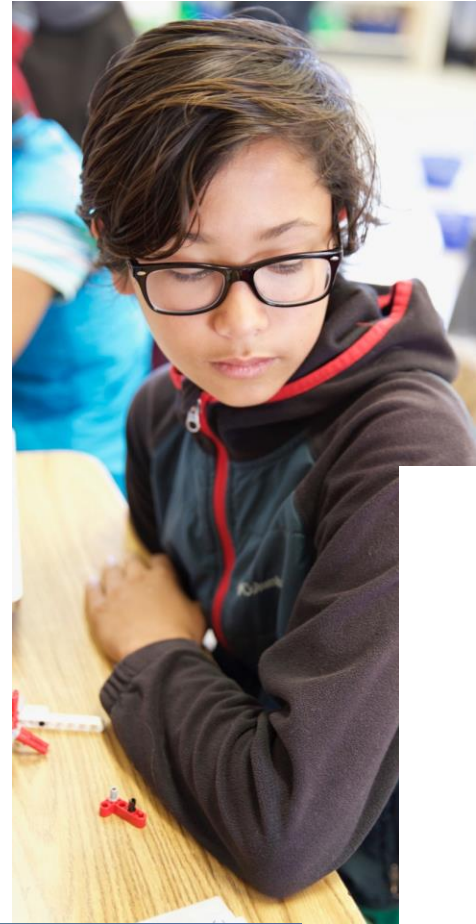
Blending allowable funding streams



Source: Tools for Social Innovators. <http://tools.sparkpolicy.com/overview-blending-braiding/>

Conditions for successfully blending funds

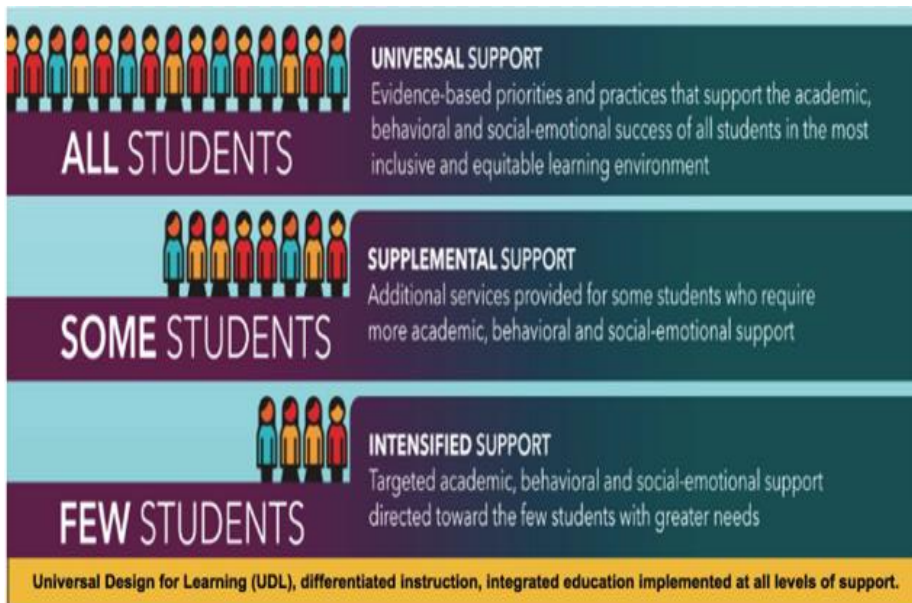
- Participate in a Title I schoolwide program
- Complete a comprehensive needs assessment to develop improvement plan
- Must outline how plan aligns with intent and purpose of funds
- Monitor for improvement of outcomes and effectiveness of resources



What does blending look like?

School example: Differentiated Supports

- State general funds provide universal support to all students.
- EL teachers, reading interventionists, and special ed teachers provide targeted and intensive supports for students grouped based on need and are paid from the consolidated funding stream.
- No separate tracking, must continue to meet IEP requirements.



Source: California Department of Education

What does blending look like?

Student Example: Homeless, EL, Student with a Disability attending a Targeted Assistance school

- Student is in 3rd grade and receives core instruction in 3rd grade classroom
- One interventionist, trained in special ed, EL and homelessness provides push-in services for this student and other students in the class.
- The same interventionist supports after-school tutoring.
- Interventionist paid from consolidated funds, no separate tracking. IEP must be met.



CONSOLIDATED FUNDS SCENARIO

HOMELESS, EL STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY IN A SCHOOLWIDE SCHOOL THAT CONSOLIDATES* TITLE I, PART A, TITLE II PART A, TITLE III PART A, TITLE IV PART A, TITLE V, PART B AND IDEA FUNDS WITH STATE AND LOCAL FUNDS

Assessing Student Needs

- Does the student need assistance with transportation to school of origin?
- How will the school ensure that the student's teachers receive appropriate professional learning?
- How will the school include the student's parents?

*Consistent with all ESEA and IDEA requirements.

The consolidated funds may pay for:

- Any activities that meet the student's needs included in a comprehensive schoolwide program plan based on the school's comprehensive needs assessment.



Key differences when blending

Traditional Layered Funding

- **Supplemental services are separate add-ons** to the core educational program
- Supplemental services are provided only to **eligible students** by **specially assigned and funded staff**
- Services are grounded in program requirements

Blending Funding

- **Supplemental services are consolidated into one add-on** to the core educational program
- Supplemental services may be provided to children **based on need** by staff who are best trained to address needs
- Program decisions are child-centered

SEA Role in Blending and Braiding



- Establish an expectation of child-centered programming
- Demonstrate willingness to innovate
- Eliminate barriers and fear of repercussions
 - Provide clear guidelines and guardrails
 - Work closely with state auditors to build capacity
- Create consolidated applications for funds and reporting mechanisms



Questions?



Thank you. Please contact the presenters directly with follow-up questions.

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