

# Impact in Action:

## *What Really Moves the Needle for Students*



***"When leadership, coaching, and systems work together, schools become places where both students and educators can truly thrive."***

## The Real "Triple Threat" Behind School Improvement

What actually makes a difference in schools? Not a single program, initiative, or silver bullet but a powerful combination of three forces working together. When these forces align, schools stop feeling fragmented. Everything from standards to curriculum to professional development starts pulling in the same direction.



Research consistently shows that instructional leadership is one of the strongest school based influences on teacher confidence, playing a critical role in how capable teachers feel about impacting student learning. That confidence matters because it shapes how teachers show up every day.

At the same time, instructional coaching has evolved into something far more meaningful than occasional support. It is now the engine of professional growth, helping teachers bring evidence based practices to life in real classrooms. But when these pieces are not aligned, schools can feel disjointed. Teachers juggle competing priorities, students experience inconsistency, and over time both engagement and morale begin to slip.

*"School improvement does not come from isolated efforts. It comes from alignment, and alignment is a choice that leaders make every day."*

# What This Means in Real Classrooms

When systems are aligned, the benefits show up quickly and they are measurable. Here is what the research tells us about outcomes for both students and the educators who serve them every day.

**4 to 8**

Percentile point gain in academic performance from sustained, well implemented SEL programs

**50%**

Reduction in teacher turnover rates when leadership support is strong and consistent

## FOR STUDENTS

- **Stronger academic growth.** Students learn more when teachers receive sustained coaching that meaningfully improves instructional practice over time.
- **Better behavior and more time learning.** Schools that implement aligned systems like MTSS often see meaningful reductions in disciplinary incidents including suspensions, which increases time in class and drives academic success.
- **Higher engagement.** When students feel supported socially and emotionally, they are more interested, more motivated, and more connected to school.

## FOR EDUCATORS

- **Higher retention.** Teachers who feel supported by strong leadership are far less likely to leave, cutting turnover rates in half.
- **Less burnout, more purpose.** Coaching that is non evaluative and supportive helps reduce emotional exhaustion and increases teachers' sense of accomplishment.
- **Better teaching and more creativity.** When teachers feel safe to grow, they take more instructional risks and that leads to stronger learning experiences for every student.



# So Where Do Schools Go From Here?

If the goal is lasting, meaningful improvement, the path forward is not about doing more. It is about doing things together and on purpose. Schools that align their leadership, coaching, and systems consistently outperform those that treat these as separate workstreams. Here is what that looks like in practice.

1

## Align everything that matters

Make sure goals, instruction, and assessments are working together rather than competing. This prevents drift and keeps everyone focused on the same outcomes.

2

## Protect the coaching relationship

Coaching works best when it is built on trust rather than evaluation. Keep it supportive, collaborative, and teacher centered so growth feels genuinely safe.

3

## Lead by learning

When principals actively participate in professional development, they send a clear message: growth is not optional. It is shared by everyone in the building.

4

## Use data to drive equity

Look closely at student data across all groups. Alignment should work for every student, especially those who have been historically underserved by the system.

5

## Grow leaders from within

Create opportunities for teachers to lead while staying connected to the classroom. This strengthens both instruction and the school's leadership pipeline over time.

## The Bottom Line

School improvement does not come from isolated efforts. It comes from alignment. When leadership, coaching, and systems work together, schools become places where both students and educators can truly thrive. That is where real, lasting change begins.

**SYSTEM  
CONTEXT**



**STRUCTURES**



**POLICIES**



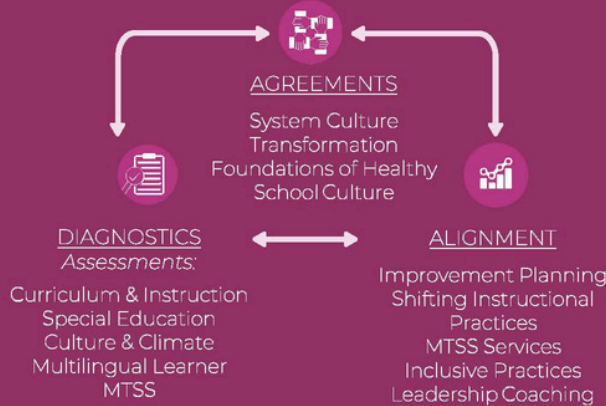
**RESOURCES**



**COMMUNICATION**



**CAPACITY BUILDING INPUTS**



**MEASURABLE OUTCOMES**



**LONG-TERM OUTCOME:**

*Increased system capacity to orchestrate equitable, inclusive transformation to reach intended outcomes through large-scale organizational change.*

When stakeholders work together around shared agreements...the unthinkable is possible. CEC's focus on the **System Agreements** in school reform efforts aim to realign the adult culture and dynamics. We know when systems cultivate healthy, values-based relationships within each school and classroom measurable outcomes are more likely. People matter. And people working together really matters in schools. Developing a strong adult culture as a foundation of a change agenda is what makes CEC stand apart.

CEC uses **System Alignment** to create collective efficacy on the agreed upon improvement aims of a school or district. Our tools and processes are designed to empower those closest to the issues to own the work. Our change management approach intentionally paces improvement through attainable short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals. It is the "secret sauce" of school improvement.

We invite you to explore the role our **Logic Model** might play in your system's large-scale improvement. Our website includes [FREE](#) resources that might be helpful in opening up dialogue with key stakeholders. Let's work together to turn ideas into action, so we can all see what's possible for our schools.