

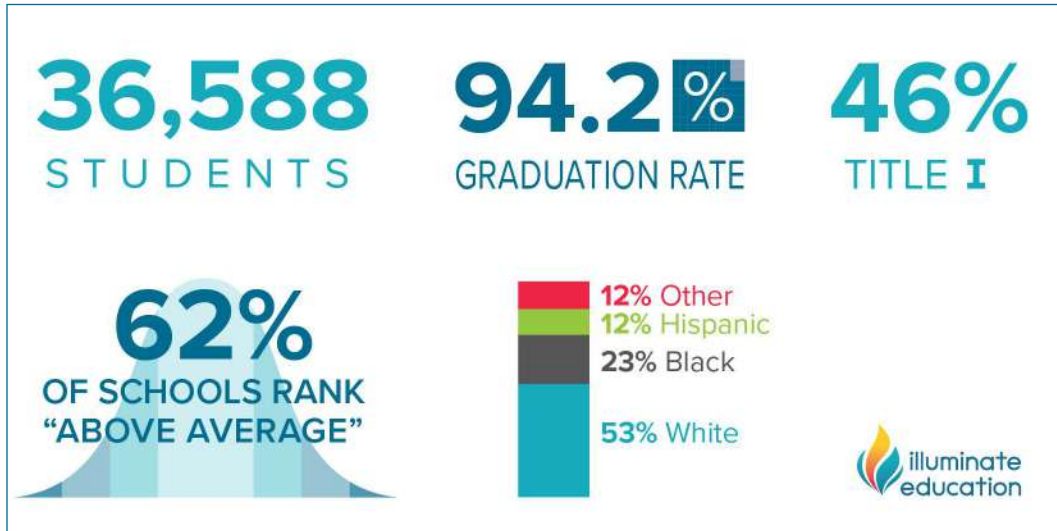


# Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (CMCSS)

SEB Data Provides the Missing Piece to Fully Support Student Success

Combining social-emotional behavior (SEB) assessments with academic screening and progress monitoring gives educators clearer insight into the “why” behind “what” skills students are struggling with.

## District Snapshot



Educators in Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (CMCSS) in Clarksville, Tennessee, believe that every student has a story. And that story can tell them a lot about each student’s academic needs.

However, CMCSS is the seventh largest district in the state. On average, about nine new students enter the school system every day. Capturing the right data to piece together the full, unique stories for each of the district’s nearly 37,000 students is a significant challenge—and educators have learned that not all assessment solutions are up to the task.

Illuminate’s FastBridge assessment tools, combining screening and progress monitoring across reading, math and SEB, has proven that it is. SEB assessments are helping CMCSS understand students’ full data stories so that they can provide stronger, more strategic academic and SEB supports.

## Improving Insight into Students' SEB Skills

CMCSS, like districts state-wide in Tennessee, uses a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework, similar to a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), that includes both academics and behavior data. In 2018–2019, the district updated its strategic plan to reflect this, including a goal to provide students with more SEB supports to improve achievement.

During the 2019-20 school year, CMCSS is partnering with the Tennessee Behavior Supports Project, a program funded by the Tennessee Department of Education, to pilot explicit social-emotional learning (SEL) programming in 10 schools. The district is also expanding SEL supports to students through collaboration with school counselors.

“This is new to our strategic plan this year,” says Patti Wilson, district Response to Instruction and Intervention Coordinator. “When looking at improving our access to social-emotional resources, this is our year to hit the ground running and put into place all of the supports we need.”

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One of the resources the district required was an assessment solution that could provide robust and reliable data around academics as well as SEB skills. The data provided by their current system simply could not capture a student's whole story in one single, integrated system.

“The data reports were not nearly as specific as we wanted,” she says. “We're a data-rich district. If we're going to take time for students to take an assessment, we want to make sure the data we receive can be used in a productive way to drive instruction and intervention. And that system was solely academic based. We didn't have anything to look at in terms of SEL or behavior. This was a huge issue for us, because it meant that we were spreading ourselves across multiple platforms.”

### SAEBRS and mySAEBRS SEB Screeners

The FastBridge [Social, Academic and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener \(SAEBRS\)](#) is completed by teachers to identify students in grades K-12 who are at risk for academic, social and/or emotional behaviors. When students complete the accompanying [mySAEBRS](#), teachers can compare their ratings with each student's perceived ratings of their own skills.

## Launching (and Expanding) the Pilot

The district began researching new assessment solutions that could improve efficiency and integrate as much of its embedded practices as possible, including SEL. Illuminate's FastBridge assessments immediately stood apart for a number of reasons, according to Wilson. The solution had many benefits, from research-based assessments and comprehensive reporting to ease of use and excellent customer service. Plus, they are the first and only assessment tools to include SEB measures alongside **reading and math**.

CMCSS piloted the FastBridge SEB assessments, SAEBRS and mySAEBRS, in 2018-19 starting in a single middle school with a highly diverse student population, high percentages of transient and economically marginalized students, and a need for positive behavior supports due to a high number of behavior referrals and write ups. Additionally, a middle school was chosen for piloting behavior screening as, if successful, the data could help with transition planning for students entering high school.

"The school counselors were searching for a way to better support students, and once I presented FastBridge to those counselors and the school leadership team, they were sold immediately," Wilson says. "Once they saw the data they could get, it was all about functionality: 'How soon can we do it?' 'How quickly can we get results?' It really spread like wildfire."

Leaders from many of the district's other schools desired the same actionable SEB data to inform supports for new students entering their buildings. By spring 2019, thanks to the benefits they were already seeing, CMCSS began administering FastBridge SEB assessments to all rising 6th grade and 9th grade students. By fall of 2019-20, they decided to include every K-8 student in the district in the screening.

District leaders were excited about this expansion. The assessments fit directly into their strategic work, supported overall SEL initiatives and aligned with CMCSS' broader RtI framework. However, they were concerned how teachers would react.

“It’s one thing to look at grades and see a student is struggling across most content areas. But when you’re able to piece together additional pieces of that data story—that they lack readiness skills or have difficulty with sustained attention and initial engagement—that informs the type of intervention needed.”

“We were a little worried because this was going to be one more thing we were going to ask teachers to do, but we didn’t have those barriers,” Wilson says. “Teachers were excited to have both a teacher and student perspective of behavior, and appreciated that the assessments weren’t time consuming.”

### **Illuminate's actionable academic and SEB data drives informed decision-making.**

As a district, CMCSS is very solution-focused. Once data reveals a problem, educators jump into action to identify root causes and solve underlying issues using a strategic and intentional approach.

“We may see our data and realize there are distinct needs, but no one is stuck admiring the problem,” Wilson says. “There is an immediate focus on strategic problem-solving—what are the target areas and how do we prevent them from occurring and provide early intervention to close gaps?”

#### **Education Is Key to Implementation Success**

Wilson says education was critical to successfully implementing their FastBridge assessments district-wide. Not only did the district provide background and training to teachers, it also created a presentation explaining the mySAEBRS screener to students, including what it is, how to complete it and how teachers would use the results.

“I think sometimes people forget that students are humans who thrive on the purpose of what they're doing,” Wilson says. “They need to understand the why.”

Wilson also calls the training modules within FastBridge “hidden gems.” The district utilizes them often to provide training to new staff. Not only are these modules a great starting point for initial professional development, but their 24/7 accessibility makes them a convenient resource when teachers need quick answers to questions about FastBridge.

## Applying the SEB Data

Wilson says SAEBRS and mySAEBRS screening data is not only informing district-level planning, but also making a difference at the student level. Each component of the measures offers meaningful insights for various planning areas. For example:



Data from **SAEBRS' Social scale** helps educators strategically place students who require additional structure. This data also guides professional development for teachers who are paired with these students so they are prepared for possible challenges.

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**SAEBRS' Academic scale** data helps educators match students who struggle in areas like time and task management with teachers who purposefully and seamlessly integrate executive functioning skills into content teaching.

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CMCSS' counselors and social workers utilize **SAEBRS' Emotional scale** data to select and plan small-group and one-on-one counseling opportunities. This data also provides additional insight for teacher observations, parent and/or student referrals, attendance, grades, and more, helping determine the "why" behind student skill deficits.

Especially beneficial to CMCSS is that this SEB data exists in one system and can be viewed alongside math and reading reports to determine supports that nurture the whole student.

"To have this data on one platform, in a single data warehouse, is fantastic," Wilson says. "A lot of times, when behavior is separate from academics, people believe that behavior is something other than a skill. But behavior is a skill. It's something we need to focus on improving and growing, just like we look at improving and growing academic gifts."

## Getting the Whole Story

Educators at CMCSS want to know every student’s whole data story—not just a single data point. By utilizing FastBridge SEB measures in tandem with its academic measures for screening and progress monitoring, those stories are finally being told.

“Analyzing data from SAEBRS and mySAEBRS behavior screening, and pairing that with our data sources, has helped our teams discover the possible “why” behind the “what,” Wilson says. “It’s one thing to look at grades and see a student is struggling across most content areas. But when you’re able to piece together additional pieces of that data story—that they lack readiness skills or have difficulty with sustained attention and initial engagement—that informs the type of intervention needed. This same academic score profile could exist for five students, and all for very different reasons. FastBridge assessments offer additional pieces to add to a student’s data story, and we want to fill in as many missing pieces as we can so our supports are strategic and targeted.”

Learn more about Illuminate’s Fastbridge assessments,  
or schedule a demo.

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