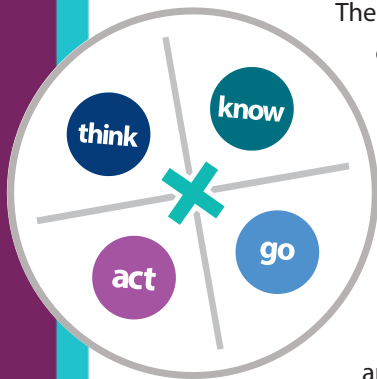


# Connecting the Dots: MTSS and the Four Keys to College and Career Readiness

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a framework designed to address academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning in a fully integrated system of support. Teams use data to guide instruction and identify students who require additional support for increasingly intensive interventions based on need. Student supports are universally designed, differentiated, and integrated. MTSS offers the potential to create needed systematic change through intentional design and redesign of services and supports to quickly identify and match to the needs of all students. In California MTSS, counties, regions, and state educational agencies are the source of technical support, local educational agencies are the place of intervention and schools are the place of transformation. MTSS is a framework that supports equity based inclusion within a multi-tiered framework.



## What are The Four Keys to College and Career Readiness (Think, Know, Act, Go)?



The concept of college, career, and life readiness is greater than the sum of a transcript full of A–G courses or a specific set of scores on standardized, summative assessments. While reading, writing, math, and content-specific knowledge are critical— they certainly do not represent a holistic set of skills students need to ensure postsecondary success. Based on over 20 years of research, Inflexion’s founder (formerly EPIC), Dr. David Conley’s Four Keys to College and Career Readiness provides a holistic framework that encourages schools to rethink readiness as encompassing both cognitive (academic) and noncognitive (academic, behavioral, and social-emotional) skills. The Four Keys represents four cross-curricular domains (Think, Know, Act, and Go) that have a variety of applications and can be integrated and taught in all classrooms and school settings.

The strength of the Four Keys framework is that it incorporates academic, behavioral, and social-emotional skills with enough specificity to provide districts, schools, and communities with a shared understanding of what it takes to ensure student readiness. Further, the Four Keys recognizes the inherent value of the domain-general skills (Think, Act, and Go) including both behavioral and social emotional skills. Dr. Conley’s research and a growing body of evidence suggest that these skills are critical for postsecondary success in college, career, and life and should be reflected explicitly in the learning environments and desired outcomes for all students.

## How do MTSS and the Four Keys align?

High school contexts present a very different challenge for understanding and implementing MTSS (e.g., Flannery et al., 2013). High schools are often characterized by broad academic, programmatic, and co- and extracurricular offerings available to students based on interest, aspiration, and need. Further, an emerging body of research



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suggests that readiness for college, career, and life is dependent on both cognitive and noncognitive skill development (Dweck et al., 2011; Kyllonen, 2012; Richardson, Abraham, & Bond; 2012). Traditional emphasis on reading, writing, and math are not adequate in such a context. Because high schools typically serve larger student population with autonomous departments and individual students with varied interests and aspirations, Tier 1 (universal) supports are not as easily defined and often absent in traditional high schools.

Furthermore, the inclusion of SEL skills, implies specific types of skills (self-management, responsible decision-making, etc.) need to be included as intended outcomes at the student level. High school staff need to understand that social skill fluency and generalized use cannot be assumed; not all students have the capacity to be responsible for their own learning; and that students are not always motivated by academic or social success (Bohanon-Edmonson, Flannery, Eber, & Sugai, 2005). Thus, incorporating specific social-emotional learning outcomes as part of the broader “curriculum” is both critical and necessary.

A quality Multi-Tiered System of Support is an essential component of an approach to ensure every student is prepared for college, career, and life, and to meaningfully contribute to community. Specifically, ensuring every student develops the necessary skills – both cognitive and noncognitive–needed for postsecondary success requires a system of support designed against a holistic framework, such as the Four Keys. An approach that values the noncognitive skills (behavioral and social emotional) and recognizes the need to address them in each of the three tiers. Schools that employ this type of an approach are better able to consider and leverage student strengths in support of building skills. Further, taking a holistic approach mitigates the incessant focus on academic skills and allow students who may struggle with reading, writing, and math to excel in other areas like communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.

### Want to learn more about using MTSS and the Four Keys to College and Career Readiness?

Check out these resources to support your CA MTSS work:



<https://www.inflexion.org/what-we-do/readiness-for-all/>

<https://www.inflexion.org/four-keys-look-for-documents/>

