

# Social-Emotional Wellness: Key to Graduating On Time



Brighton Homecoming Parade – September 11, 2016  
<http://www.bcsd.org/news.cfm?NWID=2437>

## CASE STUDY: One district's universal approach to social-emotional health

The Brighton Central School District in upstate New York is located in a family-oriented community offering excellent public services and recreation to residents of all ages.

*"Everyone agreed that the data tracking capability of the T-CRS on COMET was needed for all students. The recommendation was made to create a continuum of social-emotional information about all students..."*



Dr. Deborah Baker  
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Brighton Central School District

### Executive Summary

The Brighton Central School District (Brighton) implemented a universal screening program using COMET and the Teacher-Child Rating Scale to improve student services and outcomes through a better understanding of individual social-emotional health.

### Challenges

Brighton, located in western New York near Rochester, routinely ranks at the top of both state and national lists of high performing districts. However, they also had about 7% of students who don't graduate. In 2009 the district set out to understand more about these students and why they struggle.

Dr. Deborah Baker, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction recalled, *“It really started a few years ago when the district charged a group comprised of K-12 parents, counselors and teachers to answer the question: Why don’t some of our students graduate in a timely fashion? In our district we celebrate our, on average, 93% graduation rate, but there are routinely around 7% of students who take an extra year or don’t graduate, and we wanted to know why.”*

After brain-storming meetings, focus groups, and one-on-one sessions, the graduation committee identified social and emotional health as being a key factor influencing a student’s likelihood of graduating on time. Carolyn Rabidoux, Brighton’s Director of Pupil Personnel Services shared, *“In parallel to the graduation committee, our Wellness Committee was also asking: What can we do to support social-emotional wellness? ... We discovered the committees were doing the same work, at the same time, just in two different areas—so we joined our efforts.”*

*“We listed out all the ways we think we reach kids, but we had no idea how effective this laundry list of programs and services was and we were taxing our employees,”* said Rabidoux.

*“We decided we were going to hone in on this social-emotional piece ... We really had no consistent way of measuring and monitoring social-emotional health. It was all anecdotal, or data stored away in manila envelopes across the district.” - Dr. Baker*

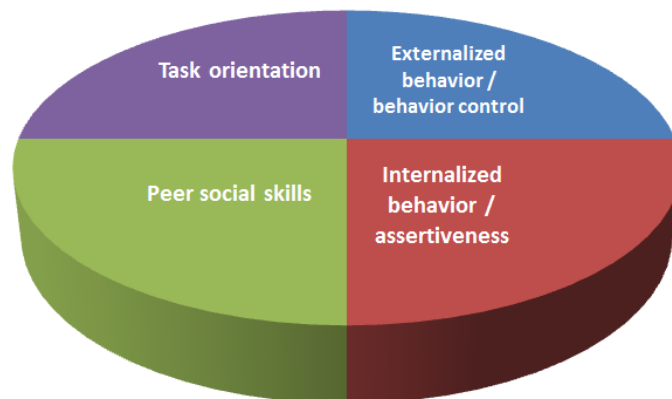
## How COMET Helped

In 2012, Brighton piloted a universal social and emotional screening program as part of their Response to Intervention process. The goal was to annually assess every student’s social-emotional health as a way to improve the district’s understanding of their population.

Enter the COMET® System (COMET) in partnership with Children’s Institute (CI). CI is a long-time partner of Brighton through the implementation of Primary Project, an evidence-based program that targets social and emotional needs in the early elementary grades.

Part of CI’s Primary Project, the T-CRS (Teacher-Child Rating Scale) is a teacher completed normative assessment used to determine social-emotional needs and competencies of students from pre-K to 12th grade. The T-CRS is a robust tool, applicable for students of all ages and sensitive enough to detect even small changes over time.

**The T-CRS assesses a child’s competencies and needs in four domains:**



Teachers use COMET to complete the T-CRS easily and quickly online (~2 minutes per child) and the scoring is automatic, allowing data to be accessible immediately. As Brighton continues to track year after year, the district has access to longitudinal data and leverages it to provide the best academic and social-emotional supports for their students as they grow.

## Results and Future Plans

COMET allows Brighton to give meaning and impact to their screening efforts. Implementation of this screening process on COMET allows the district to analyze their data at all levels—by building, grade, class, and individual student.

With routine assessment of their students, Brighton is systematically evaluating their programs and understanding outcomes for programs and students.

This data helps with identifying at-risk students, providing professional development to support teachers in the classroom, and decision-making at the district level like evaluating programs. What started as a project of identifying the social-emotional needs of children K-3rd, has grown to a K-10th grade effort.



While early identification and intervention are important, students of all ages should be screened and monitored for changes in behavior and social-emotional competence.

**Questions? Call 585-673-3200**

Contact Us

Personal Walk-Thru

*“Our goal is to be proactive rather than reactive and not wait until 11th or 12th grade when students are failing,” said Dr. Baker.*