



Ohio Social-Emotional Learning Brief: Implementation at the School Building Level

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING: PART OF THE FABRIC OF SCHOOL LIFE

Schools that focus on creating welcoming and inclusive environments and support the development of social development in students and staff in a culturally responsive way set everyone up for long-term success and well-being. The school environment and relationships with others directly affect how students learn and how they apply that learning. For example, learning is optimized:

- **In safe and supportive environments.** When students feel supported by and connected with their peers and educators, their brains function more effectively, and the learning networks in their brains become stronger.
- **In schools that are fair and welcoming.** When education leaders use fair discipline approaches that build community, students are more likely to attend school, stay enrolled and graduate.¹
- **In collaborative partnerships.** When social-emotional learning is done in partnership with all members of the school community, it builds a sustainable culture within the school

School leaders often are charged with creating this environment, including embedding systemic and systematic social-emotional learning throughout the school and during out-of-school time.

WHAT IS SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING?

Social-emotional learning is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.²

Social-emotional learning is **not** a way to “grade” or identify deficits, and it is not just a curriculum or add on. Rather, social-emotional learning is an intentional approach to building student assets.

Social-emotional learning supports **educational equity**³ in multiple ways: emphasizing whole-child development, drawing attention to the social nature of learning, advancing the belief that all children can learn, developing young people’s skills to navigate social contexts, and improving relationships between students and educators—a key protective factor for all students.

Ohio Social and Emotional Learning Standards

Self-Awareness: The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions and thoughts, including how they relate to one’s identity and culture and own emotions and thoughts and how they influence behavior. Self-awareness is the ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitations with a sense of integrity, confidence and optimism.

Social Awareness: The ability to consider diverse perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. It also reflects the ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior across settings and to be able to identify and use family, school and community resources and supports.

Responsible Decision-making: The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions within the context of ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms. It involves making realistic evaluations of the consequences of one’s actions and a consideration of the well-being of self and others.

Self-Management: The ability to navigate one’s emotions, thoughts and behaviors across different situations while managing stress, controlling impulses and motivating oneself. Self-management includes the ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

Relationship Skills: The ability to establish and maintain healthy relationships with diverse individuals and groups. Developing relationship skills promotes the ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist social and peer pressure, negotiate conflict and seek help or offer it to others.

Each Child, Our Future, Ohio’s strategic plan for education (2019-2024) includes social-emotional learning as a priority, with a focus on the whole child and the three core principles of **equity, partnerships** and **quality schools**.

- Student supports, school climate and culture are essential to achieving equity in opportunity. When properly deployed, holistic supports can improve the likelihood of student success.
- Addressing the needs of the whole child starts with parents, caregivers and schools and extends to other government and community organizations that serve children and business and philanthropy.
- The school is a focal point for addressing a child’s health, social, emotional and behavioral needs in the interest of learning readiness. Everyone in the school community can engage to establish consistent expectations for behavior and create a culture that is caring and supportive.

¹ Aspen Institute. (2019). From a nation at risk to a nation at hope: Recommendations from the Commission of Social, Emotional, and Academic Development. Retrieved from <http://nationathope.org/report-from-the-nation-download/>.

² CASEL. (2017). What is SEL? Retrieved from <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>.

³ Educational equity means that each child receives what he or she needs to develop his or her full academic and social potential.

Retrieved from the National Equity Project website: <http://nationalequityproject.org/about/equity>.

⁴ Jones, S. M., & Kahn, J. (2017). The evidence base for how we learn: Supporting students’ social, emotional, and academic development. Consensus statements of evidence from the Council of Distinguished Scientists. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute.



ENTRY POINTS FOR IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN SCHOOLS NOW

- 1. Relationships matter.** Build positive relationships with your students. Affirm the culture and background of the diverse students you serve. Draw from your students' cultural assets to enrich social-emotional learning in the classroom.
- 2. Context matters.** Students and adults use their social-emotional skills depending on the context in which they find themselves. Start by building an infrastructure to support long-term implementation of social-emotional learning. Build commitment and ownership with your school, families and community, and embed social-emotional learning into all the contexts in which students find themselves.
- 3. Knowledge of self matters.** Begin with developing your own social-emotional learning competencies. Use the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders' [Self Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies](#) to reflect on how your experiences and cultural background impact your own leading and learning.
- 4. Awareness of current social-emotional learning work matters.** Learn about current work by checking out this webpage for Ohio's [Social and Emotional Learning Standards](#). Explore ways you can meet these standards in your classes or embed them into classroom rituals.
- 5. Using effective social-emotional learning strategies matters.** Teachers and staff need to understand social-emotional learning and Why Ohio is Focused on Social-Emotional Learning before explaining it to students and families.
- 6. Collaboration with others matters.** There are many resources regarding school social-emotional learning implementation. Use step-by-step resources, such as the [CASEL School Guide](#), and connect with local schools that already are implementing social-emotional learning.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- ✓ Create a social-emotional learning leadership team comprised of multiple partnerships and relationships.
- ✓ Engage stakeholders and develop authentic family-school-community partnerships.
- ✓ Create a vision that prioritizes social-emotional learning and the whole child.
- ✓ Conduct a social-emotional learning needs and readiness assessment.
- ✓ Align resources and policies to connect social-emotional learning with larger efforts to transform education in support of equity.
- ✓ Create an implementation plan that includes school climate and culture, culturally responsive supports and explicit classroom-based approaches that promote social-emotional learning.
- ✓ Provide ongoing support.
- ✓ Monitor your social-emotional learning progress with a focus on continuous improvement.

SCHOOLWIDE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES

[CASEL Guide for Schoolwide Social-Emotional Learning](#)

CASEL has documented, field-tested and refined a strategic, collaborative process for schoolwide social-emotional learning.

[CASEL Schoolwide Social-Emotional Learning Implementation Rubric](#)

This resource includes a rubric to guide schools through a review of their current levels of social-emotional learning implementation. The rubric helps schools identify needs and resources, set goals and develop concrete action steps for social-emotional learning.

[Connecting Schoolwide Social-Emotional Learning with Other School-Based Frameworks](#)

This resource shows how implementing social-emotional learning schoolwide can enhance the use of other student supports frameworks like Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

[Leading an SEL School](#)

This brief summarizes the research on the roles of school leaders in successfully implementing schoolwide social-emotional learning; outlines 10 steps toward implementation of a sustainable, high-quality, schoolwide social-emotional learning program and includes practical advice, lessons learned and effective tools.

[Recommendations from the Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development](#)

Recommendations on how to embed social-emotional learning into the fabric of every school and community.

[Social and Emotional Learning Coaching Toolkit](#)

This toolkit is for instructional coaches, administrators and district leaders who support teachers and staff in integrating social-emotional learning into their daily instructional practices.

⁵CASEL. (2019). CASEL schoolwide SEL implementation: Indicators of schoolwide SEL. Retrieved from <https://schoolguide.casel.org/what-is-sel/indicators-of-schoolwide-sel/>