



# Ohio Social-Emotional Learning Brief: Implementation for Education Leaders

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

Schools that focus on creating welcoming and inclusive environments that support all students' social-emotional development in a culturally responsive way that honors students' histories and cultures can set youth 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.<sup>1</sup>
- When social-emotional learning is intentionally embedded into every aspect of daily school life (intentional and consistent strategies, practices, and policies) and occurs in partnership with families, communities and after-school programs.

Education leaders lead the charge in creating this environment, including embedding systemic social-emotional learning throughout the school and during out-of-school time.

## WHAT IS SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING?

Social-emotional learning is broadly understood as a process through which people build awareness and skills in managing emotions, setting goals, establishing relationships and making responsible decisions that support success in school and life.

Social-emotional learning is not a way to identify deficits, and it is not an add on. Rather, social-emotional learning is an intentional approach to building student assets.

Social-emotional learning supports **education equity**<sup>2</sup> 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.

## Implementation of Ohio Social-Emotional Learning

1. Social-emotional learning implementation starts with capacity-building.
2. Social-emotional learning involves collaboration among families, educators, community partners and young people in its design and implementation.
3. Ohio social-emotional learning is shaped by a commitment to five standards:
  - Self-Awareness;
  - Self-Management;
  - Social Awareness;
  - Relationship Skills;
  - Responsible Decision-making.

[Getting Started with Social-Emotional Learning](#)

<sup>1</sup> 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/>.

<sup>2</sup> 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>.

<sup>3</sup> 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.



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“The most effective social and emotional learning (SEL) requires a strategic, systemic approach that involves everyone, from district and school leaders to community partners to family members, working together to ensure students receive the support they need.”<sup>5</sup>

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

REVIEW OHIO’S K-12 SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS WHICH WERE ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION IN JUNE 2019 TO HELP DISTRICTS CONSIDER THEIR OWN LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION.

- ✓ Examine connections between Ohio Standards for Principals and Ohio’s K-12 Social and Emotional Learning Standards.
✓ Each district and school will decide for itself the extent to which it uses these standards and how it uses these standards.
✓ A school’s or district’s choice will be informed by the values and needs of its local community.
✓ The standards are meant to be integrated into the regular daily activities in school and do not mean more classes for students or more work for teachers.
✓ The Ohio Department of Education will not develop tests to measure students’ progress in the learning standards.
✓ Use the resources in the column to the right to support district and school needs.

SCHOOLWIDE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES

CASEL Social-Emotional Learning School Guide: How It Works

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

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.

The Collaborating Districts Initiative (CDI)

A hub for knowledge, resources and tools to promote high-quality, systemic social-emotional learning implementation.

Social Emotional Learning and Equity Pitfalls and Recommendations

Resources for achieving educational equity in your school.

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/