

SEL State Policy Background

Introduction

This document was developed as background reading and for discussion at an SEL State Policy Forum hosted by Committee for Children on April 29-30, 2019. We have amended the original version based on discussions at that forum.

It includes: a definition of SEL and policy categories to ground the discussion, a draft list of SEL state policy priorities, and summaries of several recently published documents and websites related to SEL state policy.

SEL Definition

We acknowledge the widely-used definition of social and emotional learning (SEL) articulated by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

SEL 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. Systemic SEL is promoted across multiple contexts every day. SEL is more than just a program or lesson. It is about how teaching and learning happens, as well as what you teach and where you learn. CASEL's widely used framework identifies five core competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) that when prioritized across settings – districts, schools, classrooms, families, and the wider community – can educate hearts, inspire minds, and help students navigate the world more effectively.¹

In addition, we acknowledge the connectedness of SEL to several other areas.

For all students to benefit, SEL must be grounded in a larger context of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts within education. In addition, when we refer to SEL, we acknowledge its complementary nature to other related areas, including: whole child development, positive youth development, character development, 21st century skills, workforce readiness, multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), restorative justice, and positive climate and culture for schools and communities.

¹ CASEL, retrieved from <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>

Policy Definitions

There are three main categories of education policy: legislation, regulation, and guidelines:

- **Legislation** refers to laws (also known as statutes) passed by the legislature. Legislative (or statutory) policy typically outlines general policy principles and also authorizes agencies to construct the specifics of the law's process and enforcement. Funding appropriations are dictated by legislation. New legislation may or may not include accompanying funding.
- **Regulation** refers to policy created by agencies, which are part of the executive branch. Regulations have the same legal force as statutes. Agencies are meant to have expertise in their field, and are expected to be better equipped to lay down the details of how a law will operate. When an agency is considering new regulations, they are usually required to submit these proposals to the public for comment during the decision-making period. Funding allocations (i.e. how appropriated funds are spent) are made by agencies. New regulations may or may not include accompanying funding.
- **Guidelines**, also known as guidance documents, refer to advice offered by agencies. It does not dictate *requirements* (like legislative or regulatory policy) but rather provides guidance on issues of importance to the agency. Guidelines generally have no accompanying funding.

When we discuss advocacy for state policy for SEL, we include policy in all three categories. For example, if learning goals for SEL is a policy priority, this may manifest as state guidelines or may be enacted through state regulation and/or legislation.

Roles in State Policy Work

- Research
- Knowledge sharing
- Pre-policy program development
 - Proof of concept
 - Seed capacity
- Draft policy
- Advocacy
- Post-policy implementation support
 - Ensure program success

SEL State Policy Priorities DRAFT

The following list highlights the most commonly cited and important SEL policy priorities in documents and websites from a wide variety of sources (see summaries later in this document).

1. Vision and Plan
 - a. Articulate a well-rounded and equity-focused vision of student and youth success
 - b. Integrate evidence-based SEL into school and community improvement plans
2. Student Learning Goals
 - a. Define SEL learning goals with culturally- and age-appropriate benchmarks for preschool through high school
 - b. Align or embed SEL learning goals with academic content standards
3. Implementation
 - a. Support and fund implementation of evidence-based SEL programs and practices
 - b. Articulate strategies and provide tools for SEL implementation best practices
4. Assessment
 - a. Support and fund collection and analysis of SEL assessment data
 - b. Provide or recommend well-validated tools for measuring SEL skill development and school climate
 - c. Include data on school climate in statewide data collection
 - d. Make accountability and statewide data related to SEL transparent to the public
5. Adult SEL
 - a. Support and fund professional development to improve educator and administrator SEL capacity
 - b. Require teacher and administrators preparation programs to include focused coursework and training on cognitive and social-emotional development and cultural responsiveness
 - c. Include demonstration of teaching competency for SEL and cultural responsiveness in educator certification and licensure renewal
 - d. Support micro-credentialing that incorporates SEL content to give educators opportunities to demonstrate their social-emotional competencies

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Policy Framework and Guideline Documents Related to SEL

CASEL – Emerging Insights from States’ Efforts to Strengthen SEL (June 2018)

<https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CSI-Insights.pdf>

Since 2003, there has been growing momentum in state efforts to promote student social and emotional development, evidenced by an ever increasing number of states that have developed policies and guidance to advance SEL. Key insights include:

1. **Customizing the Approach to SEL:** Each state is using an approach that works for its own districts and schools.
2. **Elevating State Leadership:** State education agency leadership is key.
3. **Integrating SEL Across State Programs and Policies:** Integration of SEL across state programs and policies is important to the ultimate success of these efforts.
4. **Addressing Equity, Cultural Competence, and SEL Together:** Equity, cultural competence, and SEL are intertwined, and policymakers and educators must address them together to optimize student SEL generally and employability in particular.
5. **Customizing Messaging and Communications:** Effective, customized messaging and communication are important to engage all the stakeholders.
6. **Supporting Professional Development:** Professional development is critical in advancing SEL, and states can play an important role in supporting districts and schools, using a variety of different approaches.
7. **Taking Advantage of a Cross-State Learning Community:** A cross-state community of practice can be very powerful in advancing systemic SEL.

CASEL – How State Planning For ESSA Can Promote SEL (April 2017)

<http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ESSA-and-SEL-Five-Strategies-April-2017-041717.pdf>

This paper suggests five ways that policymakers can integrate SEL approaches into their efforts and identifies strategies that have been proposed in several ESSA Consolidated State Plans. These examples are instructive for states as they work to finalize their plans for submission to the U.S. Department of Education by September 18, 2017.

1. **Articulate a well-rounded vision of student success**

- a. States may define and describe SEL in different ways (e.g. nonacademic skills, whole child development, 21st-century competencies, etc.), but they all stem from an overall premise that students need to be able to apply knowledge and skills to understand and manage their emotions, set goals, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.
 - b. Some states already have preschool through grade three (PreK-3) or K-12 standards that address these competencies. In addition, all states have formally adopted early childhood standards that include social and emotional domains of learning.
- 2. Provide professional development to improve educator SEL capacity**
- a. New flexibility within Title II, Part A, also allows LEAs to use funds for in-service training for school personnel in techniques and for supports for referring at-risk students to mental health services, as well as how to address issues such as safety, peer interaction, drug and alcohol abuse, and chronic absenteeism.
 - b. The Center for Great Teachers and Leaders has identified 10 teacher practices that support SEL, including:
 - i. Student-centered discipline
 - ii. Teacher language that encourages student effort and work
 - iii. Responsibility and choice given to students in the classroom
 - iv. Warmth and support shown by teachers and peers
 - v. Cooperative learning strategies, such as supported group work
 - vi. Classroom discussions
 - vii. Self-reflection and self-assessment
 - viii. An appropriate balance between direct instruction, group learning, and independent work
 - ix. Academic press and high expectations for students
 - x. Competence building—instruction includes modeling, practicing, feedback, and coaching
- 3. Identify evidence-based SEL interventions as a school improvement strategy**
- a. Under ESSA, states must reserve seven percent of their Title I allocations to assist low-performing schools. States can incorporate SEL into their school improvement plans.
- 4. Leverage Title IV grants to implement SEL strategies**
- a. LEAs are eligible to receive funds under the new *Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants* program in Title IV, Part A, to ensure that all students have access to a well-rounded education.
 - b. States have the ability to influence how LEAs spend their Title IV funds through the development of the application that LEAs must submit to receive funds. A state education agency (SEA) may promote the examination of specific areas of need (e.g., school climate, physical education, etc.) by developing a uniform needs assessment or by promising matching funding to scale up certain programs.

- c. In addition, states can reserve a small amount of Title IV funds to provide monitoring and technical assistance to districts.

5. Make data related to SEL transparent to the public

- a. Under Title I, Part A, of ESSA, states and LEAs are required to develop annual report cards that provide information on state, district, and school performance.
- b. Under ESSA states now have autonomy to designate at least one measure of “school quality or student success” as part of their statewide accountability systems. The “fifth indicator,” as it has come to be known among policymakers, presents an opportunity for states to include one or more nonacademic measures that are reflective of their goals and priorities

CASEL and AIR – Key Features of High-Quality Policies and Guidelines to Support SEL (January 2019)

<http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Key-Features-final-2-22-17.pdf>

This document is intended for state education agencies (SEAs) that want to implement high quality policies and guidelines for SEL. This document is intended to help SEAs identify the key features of SEL policies and guidelines, as well as associated example resources from other states or districts that implement SEL policies and guidelines. The intention of this document is to provide information about what makes high-quality policies and guidelines, and it should be used in combination with process documents as the SEA thinks about how to develop, disseminate, and implement SEL policies and guidelines (e.g., *The CSI Recommended Process for Developing State Policies and Guidelines to Support Social and Emotional Learning*).

1. Clearly stated, freestanding learning goals with age-appropriate benchmarks to articulate goals for student SEL, preschool through high school.
2. Are integrated and aligned with academic content standards.
3. Incorporate guidelines about teacher practices that support social and emotional development.
4. Include guidelines on how to create a positive learning environment.
5. Are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
6. Link to strategies and tools to enhance implementation.

Committee for Children – Advocacy Policy Framework (2018)

<https://www.cfchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/policy-advocacy/advocacy-policy-matrix.pdf>

Policy Goals

1. All children acquire social-emotional learning competencies in educational settings, inside and outside of school.
2. All educational settings that interact with children include evidence-based social-emotional learning as part of every child's experience.
3. All adults in entities that interact with children obtain ongoing, evidence-based professional learning on social-emotional learning.
4. SEL competence is measured to help inform and improve teaching and learning. Appropriate funding is made available to achieve any or all of these goals.

Policy Pathways

1. Develop SEL competencies in all students

- a. Early learning programs through grade 12 adopt developmentally appropriate, evidence-based SEL programs and practices.
- b. SEL is prioritized, aligned, and coordinated within and across entities and activities.
- c. Expanded learning opportunities and out-of-school time activities include SEL.
- d. Develop, adopt, and implement SEL standards across the states.
- e. For young people struggling in various areas (such as academics, health, safety, and school climate), include SEL interventions when applicable.

2. Fund SEL

- a. Fund adoption and implementation of evidence-based SEL assessment, programs, and practices.
- b. Establish and increase funding for SEL from various federal, state, and local sources.

3. Support educators

- a. Educator preparation providers integrate evidence-based SEL as a core component in their preparation of new educators.
- b. Educator certification and licensure renewal include demonstration of SEL teaching competency.
- c. School and out-of-school personnel who regularly interact with children obtain ongoing professional learning in SEL for themselves as well as for the children.

4. Assess SEL programs and practices

- a. Collect and analyze data on SEL competencies.
- b. Collect and analyze data on SEL programs and practices.
- c. Collect and analyze data in order to inform and improve SEL teaching and learning.

Committee for Children and CASEL — How SEL Can Improve Teacher Education (March 2019)

<https://files.constantcontact.com/2b18842b001/82924b0e-4e47-4499-8e5f-6a1bc953f5e9.pdf>

Despite recent advances, teacher training programs are not yet sufficiently preparing teachers to understand and model the social-emotional competencies students will need to adapt to twenty-first century life. To better prioritize SEL within traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs, policymakers should:

1. Include SEL in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act
2. Authorize federal funding for a pilot program that would incentivize state consortiums of higher education and community partners to redesign teacher preparation programs with SEL-embedded core content
3. Require existing teacher preparation programs to include focused coursework and training on cognitive and social-emotional development
4. Develop statewide standards for educator SEL preparation so educators can manage the stresses of their profession better and more easily cultivate SEL competencies in their students
5. Support micro-credentialing that incorporates SEL content, to give educators opportunities to demonstrate their social-emotional competencies

Learning Policy Institute — Encouraging SEL in the Context of ESSA (April 2017)

https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Social_Emotional_Learning_New_Accountability_BRIEF.pdf

This brief is based on the report *Encouraging Social and Emotional Learning in the Context of New Accountability*, which describes how states might measure and promote social and emotional learning (SEL) in their accountability and continuous improvement plans. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, states have an opportunity to broaden their definitions of student success to include students' SEL—the foundation for academic and life success.

The authors review measures of students' social-emotional competencies, as well as indicators of school climate, supports for SEL, and related student outcomes. They conclude their analysis with considerations for states as they revamp their accountability systems.

1. **States should not use measures of students' social-emotional competencies for high-stakes accountability purposes, at least for now. They can, however, support the use of these measures at the local level to inform teaching, learning, and program investments.** These indicators can provide important information that identifies students' strengths and needs as they relate to SEL, which might be reported

on an aggregate basis to inform school decisions about programs and supportive strategies. However, most measures of social-emotional competencies are relatively new, were not designed for cross-school comparison, and may be particularly vulnerable to reference bias because students are not always the best judges of their own level of competence. The authors therefore conclude that these measures are not currently appropriate for accountability systems at the state or federal levels, although they might be used locally.

- 2. States could consider including measures of school climate, supports for SEL, and related outcomes in their federal accountability and statewide reporting systems.** These measures may be more appropriate for high-stakes accountability systems than measures of students' individual social and emotional competencies because school climate and supports for SEL are areas that school staff can directly influence and measurement tools tend to be more advanced.

States might consider using student surveys to evaluate school conditions and supports. They can track suspension rates and chronic absenteeism to evaluate the outcomes of these conditions. These indicators are eligible to be used as measures of "school quality and student success" under ESSA, providing a more comprehensive picture of school functioning. If used for statewide reporting, school climate surveys should be well validated and meet criteria for comparative use.

States may also opt to report these indicators without using them to identify schools for intervention under the federal law. Teacher and parent surveys might also be considered as state-reported indicators, since they provide important insight into school functioning despite not meeting ESSA's requirements for federal accountability.

- 3. Even if not incorporated in statewide accountability systems, states can provide districts with well-validated tools for measuring SEL and school climate.**

Well-designed and well-implemented measurement tools can help educators make strategic decisions about needed investments in student services, programs, and professional development. These can range from measures of school climate and students' social-emotional competencies to diagnostic measures, such as protocols for observing and reflecting on educator practices and school structures.

- 4. State agencies and districts should provide schools with resources and technical assistance as they seek to advance SEL.** Data alone will not drive school success. Staff need to be trained to analyze and act on the data they collect and to implement high-quality programs, professional development, and school organizational changes that support students' development. State-level support may include technical assistance for program development or the facilitation of peer learning networks, as well as providing state and federal funding to support schools' efforts.

National Commission of Social, Emotional, and Academic Development – A Policy Agenda in Support of How Learning Happens (2018)

http://nationathope.org/wp-content/uploads/aspen_policy_final_withappendices_web_optimized.pdf

The authors' policy recommendations seek to accelerate efforts of leaders in states and local communities by strengthening four broad categories that influence student outcomes:

1. **Set a Clear Vision:** State and local leaders across the preK-12 education ecosystem should articulate a clear vision for students' comprehensive development.
 - a. **Construct a Local Definition of Student Success.** State and local leaders in partnership with communities should articulate the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities of a successful high school graduate inclusive of the social, emotional, and cognitive competencies demonstrated to contribute to students' academic progress, workforce success, and civic engagement with their communities.
 - b. **Realize the Shared Vision through Policy Mechanisms.** State standards, guidance, or frameworks should signal to districts and communities the importance of prioritizing the whole learner.
2. **Foster and Support Continuous Improvement of Learning Environments:** State leaders should enable districts and schools to create and continually improve supportive and affirming learning environments that ensure strong relationships, personalized supports for students, and engaging and relevant learning opportunities.
 - a. **Align Policies and Resources to Provide Equitable Access to High-Quality Learning Environments for Each and Every Student.** State leaders should prioritize equal access to safe, high-quality learning environments through funding, technical assistance, and other resources.
 - b. **Use Data for Continuous Improvement.** State and local leaders should support systems that use data and information to continuously improve learning environments for all students.
 - c. **Include Learning Environment Measures in Accountability Systems.** State and local leaders should use school- and district-level assessments of learning environments as a part of their formal accountability systems to showcase growth and identify areas for improvement.
 - d. **Allow Districts the Flexibility to Expand Where and When Learning Happens Through Partnerships.** State and local leaders should provide districts the flexibility to collaborate with partners to provide seamless learning experiences and supports across school and community settings.

3. **Promote the Development of Adult Capacity:** Promote the development of adult capacity to support students' social, emotional, and academic development.
 - a. **Incent the Redesign of Educator Preparation Programs and Educator Licensure Requirements.** State leaders should ensure that the accreditation of educator preparation programs and licensure requirements reflect the knowledge base and competencies required to support students' comprehensive development.
 - b. **Build and Leverage Credentials to Support the Ongoing Professional Development of Educators.** State leaders should acknowledge existing credentials (e.g., National Board Certification) and other forms of demonstrated expertise in child development (e.g., micro-credentials) and develop new ways to acknowledge educators' demonstrated competencies in the social, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of learning.
 - c. **Encourage Communities and Districts to Recruit, Hire, Support, and Retain Educators Who Develop the Whole Learner.** State policy should ensure local leaders can restructure recruitment, hiring, performance management, and career advancement practices to prioritize students' comprehensive learning and development.
4. **Align Resources Efficiently and Equitably:** Federal, state, and local government leaders should ensure the efficient, aligned, and equitable allocation of resources to support the success of the whole student.
 - a. **Distribute Resources Equitably and Adequately.** Federal, state, and local leaders should use their vision of student success to distribute resources equitably and adequately.
 - b. **Blend and Braid Resources.** To reduce fragmentation and improve alignment across programs and funding streams, state and local leaders should provide tools and strategies for districts and localities to evaluate their needs and then combine and align school-based and community-based resources to support students.
 - c. **Encourage Innovation at the Federal Level.** Federal leaders should remove barriers and provide incentives within federal programs to allow districts and localities to serve youth more holistically.

Transforming Education — A Data-Informed Approach to SEL: Policy Recommendations for State and Local Leaders (May 2018)

<http://measuringSEL.casel.org/leveraging-policy-support-data-informed-approach-social-emotional-learning/>

This paper lays out a series of policy recommendations for both state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) that support a locally-created, systematic, and data-informed approach to SEL.

Gather Input on Learning Environments

- **Engage an array of stakeholders:** SEAs and LEAs should gather input on SEL from students, families, educators, labor unions, and researchers to establish a common understanding of the need for SEL and identify specific competencies to prioritize.
- **Pilot culture and climate surveys:** Culture and climate surveys allow students to share the extent to which they feel connected to and safe within a school community. Such surveys can provide important information about aspects of a learning environment that support SEL.
- **Consider integrating SEL data collection into school-level needs assessments:** SEAs and LEAs can design school-level needs assessments to identify areas in which students are thriving or need more support for their social-emotional development.

Begin Measuring Social-Emotional Competence (SEC)

- **Pilot SEC measures:** SEAs should leverage the flexibility of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to collect data with a network of LEAs that seek to support SEL. The network can prioritize a set of competencies, identify a common set of measures, use data to invest in evidence-based practices, and share their lessons learned with other LEAs.
- **Seek opportunities to tailor other assessments to include SEC measures:** By tailoring culture and climate surveys or other innovative assessments to include SEC measures, SEAs or LEAs can access a range of data related to students' skills and mindsets as well as their learning environments.

Use Data to Build Local Capacity & Inform Practice

- **Fund data-informed SEL initiatives:** SEAs should leverage existing funding streams, namely Title IV grants within ESSA, to support SEL-related programs, data gathering, and analysis at the local level. SEAs and LEAs should also explore other sources of funding, both through their existing budget and other partnerships, to support this work.
- **Support professional learning opportunities on SEL and the use of SEL-related data:** Educators deserve actionable information on how to analyze data through a lens of equity and use those data to inform instructional decisions. Schools and LEAs should offer professional learning sessions with SEL coaches, experts, and/or researchers who will work alongside teachers to help interpret data, ensure student privacy, and provide guidance on practical next steps.
- **Provide actionable guidance to LEAs to catalyze local approaches to SEL:** SEAs can offer practical guidance on SEL by providing implementation guidelines on

evidence-based approaches to support and assess students' social-emotional development. Developing a "graduate profile" can also provide LEAs with a clearer picture of skills and mindsets that all schools should be helping students develop.

- **Engage students in data conversations:** SEAs and LEAs can complement the information they receive from SEC assessments with direct input and reflections on group-level data from the students taking the assessments.

Guideline Documents Related to Equity and SEL

Aspen Institute — Pursuing Social and Emotional Development Through a Racial Equity Lens: A Call to Action (May 2018)

https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/2018/05/Aspen-Institute_Framing-Doc_Call-to-Action.pdf

Productive strategies for implementing SEAD have demonstrated how an equity lens can support strong gains for all students, including students of color. In order for educators to address challenges around equity, they must be aware of—and intentionally avoid—the causes, taking these considerations into account:

- **Build on strengths:** Educators need to see students, families, and communities for more than their challenges and build on their already-existing cognitive, social, and emotional competencies, working to create environments in which they can thrive and targeting supports where needed.
- **Attend to root causes:** Students need supports that also address injustice and related trauma (including discrimination, violence, homelessness, and hunger) directly and need to understand that their negative feelings are legitimate and justified, even as students learn strategies to direct their feelings toward productive ends.
- **Address stereotype threat:** Stereotype threat can be mitigated in the classroom through teachers' use of affirmations that the student is seen as competent and valued and by a focus on tasks as the basis for ongoing improvement, rather than as judgments of ability.
- **Develop supportive learning environments:** Building healthy school culture and climate is critical, as is designing and utilizing space in a way that welcomes students, families, and community members and celebrates students' backgrounds, languages, and achievements.
- **Respect all cultures:** While all people, regardless of background, need to learn common norms in order to navigate and thrive in American society, efforts to teach SEAD competencies should accomplish this while affirming and sustaining students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and traditions.

- **Go beyond discipline:** Effective discipline should be part of a holistic effort that teaches students skills and guides them in taking responsibility for their actions, which leads to safer, better organized, and purposeful learning environments; healthy school culture; and comprehensive social, emotional, and academic development that is much broader than discipline reform.
- **Provide needed resources:** A focus on the social elements of learning—building relationships and trust—will strengthen and foster development in the cognitive domains of learning. Both areas need adequate resources and more integration. School systems and states should, where possible, allocate new funding from public and private sources to support this important work, and consider how to more effectively leverage existing resources, including funding, time, people, and content.
- **Invest in adult development:** Proper implementation of SEAD requires tailoring strategies to the specific context. Stronger preand in-service training on human and child development as well as culturally responsive teaching is needed. Further, educators need support in how to effectively, frequently, and openly communicate with families to build mutual trust, understanding, and support.
- **Support adult social-emotional health:** Teachers and administrators must be emotionally and physically healthy themselves in order to help students develop social and emotional competencies and school and system leaders can do more to understand and attend to this issue by ensuring that educators have agency of their own, feel connected to their values, and have growth mindsets.
- **Engage families and communities:** When implementing SEAD initiatives, school leaders and teachers need to understand families’ hopes and dreams, honor their culture, and provide them with the respect and appreciation they deserve. School leaders must also be clear that they are not making a choice between relationships or rigor, but that the two are inextricably linked and reinforce each other.

CASEL — Leveraging SEL to Promote Equity: What Educators Need to Know and Do (February 2018)

<https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Equity-SEL-webinar.pdf>

Educational equity through transformative SEL

- Educational equity implies that “every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education despite race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, family background, or family income” (CCSSO, 2017)
- In addition to required funding, striving for educational equity challenges us to examine biases and interrupt inequitable practices. We can then create inclusive, multicultural school environments that reveal and cultivate the interests and talents of children, youth, and adults from diverse backgrounds (Nat’l Equity Project).

- Justice-oriented global citizenship as a developmental imperative to address inequities (i.e., education, health, wealth and environment) and promote collective wellbeing
- Situated in global history of power, privilege, oppression, resistance, empowerment, and self-determination/liberation that is raced, classed, aged and gendered
- Schools and classrooms as mini-polities
- SEL as a viable lever for justice-oriented civic/sociopolitical development trajectories
- Academic excellence is foundational to realizing this developmental imperative

Equity, SEL, and Academic Instruction

- Classroom community building
- Cultural integration
- Promoting racial/ethnic identity development
- Integrating equity content into academic subject areas
- Project-based, experiential and/or participatory approaches

Quick Summary

- Movement away from adult-led (e.g., researcher, teacher, youth worker) toward youth-led SEL work
- Most forms of SEL are necessary, but not sufficient to advance an equitable multicultural, multilingual society and global community
- Equity elaborations and transformative SEL reflects an appreciation of the root causes of inequities (structural and internalized oppression) and a pursuit of equity outcomes

Penn State and Robert Wood Johnson – Applying an Equity Lens to Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (June 2018)

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2018/06/applying-an-equity-lens-to-social-emotional-and-academic-development.html>

There are barriers to SEL, however, that prevent many students of color and other marginalized youth from developing social and emotional competencies. For all students to benefit, SEL must be grounded in a larger context of equity and justice efforts within public education. Doing so will help to identify and dismantle barriers that prevent many students from accessing and benefitting from SEL. Importantly, these efforts should not be viewed as a corrective measure for students of color and marginalized youth, but rather as an opportunity to ensure all children

experience the benefits of a quality education that includes opportunities for social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD).

Barriers

- Systemic level barriers
 - Poverty limits the SEAD of young people and diminishes present and future education and life prospects
- Institutional level barriers
 - Exclusionary discipline practices and policies are disproportionately used to punish students of color and marginalized youth, limiting SEAD opportunities
 - Lack of trauma-informed practices adversely impacts students' SEAD opportunities and their life outcomes
- Individual level barriers
 - Implicit bias in school staff engenders low expectations and disengagement for students of color and marginalized youth
 - Educator stress and burnout reduce the safety and productivity of the classroom and educators' ability to model SEL skills

Opportunities

Although no single solution can eliminate the barriers noted above, the following programs, initiatives, and policies may increase access to SEAD resources:

- School racial and socioeconomic integration initiatives
 - Restorative justice practices for school discipline
 - Trauma-informed system interventions to create supportive school environments
 - Culturally competent and equity-literate educators and academic content to reduce implicit bias
 - SEL and mindfulness programming to support students and teachers to cope with stress, develop SEL skills, and create healthy, caring schools
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Lists of State SEL Pending Bills, Legislation and Regulations

Child Trends, Institute of Health Research and Policy at University of Illinois at Chicago & EMT Associates – Using State Policy to Create Healthy Schools (January 2019)

https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/WSCCStatePolicyReportSY2017-18_ChildTrends_January2019.pdf

In 2013, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in partnership with ASCD, convened stakeholders to develop a framework to integrate the various components of a healthy school environment. The resulting Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model highlights 10 components that are critical to ensuring students have the supports and conditions required to thrive.

The full set of topic areas, as well as applicable statutory and regulatory language, is available through the National Association of State Boards of Education's (NASBE) [State Policy Database on School Health](#).

1. Health Education

- a. National HE Standards
- b. HE Professional Development
- c. Healthy Eating/Nutrition Curriculum
- d. Mental and Emotional Health Curriculum
- e. Personal Health and Wellness Curriculum
- f. Violence Prevention (within Health Education)
- g. Bullying Prevention (within Health Education)
- h. Suicide Prevention (within Health Education)

2. Physical Education and Physical Activity

- a. National PE Standards (SHAPE America)
- b. PE Exemptions for Academics
- c. PE Exemptions for Illness
- d. PE Exemptions for Disabilities
- e. Adaptive PE Requirements
- f. PE Substitutions
- g. District Waivers from PE Requirements
- h. PE Professional Development
- i. Physical Activity Throughout Day
- j. Recess
- k. Sport Participation Fees

3. Nutrition Environment and Services

- a. Strategies to Increase Breakfast
- b. Access to Potable Water Throughout Day

- c. Competitive Food (Outside of School Meals)
 - d. Unhealthy Marketing Restrictions
 - e. Unpaid Meal Charge Policy
- 4. Health Services**
- a. School-based Health Services
 - b. Preventive Health Screenings – Elementary
 - c. Preventive Health Screenings – Middle
 - d. Preventive Health Screenings – High
 - e. Preventive Dental Screenings – Elementary
 - f. Preventive Dental Screenings – Middle
 - g. Preventive Dental Screenings – High
 - h. Asthma Plans
 - i. Diabetes Plans
 - j. Allergy Plans
 - k. Vaccination Waivers
 - l. School Nurse Availability
 - m. Referrals to Community Health Providers
- 5. Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services**
- a. School Counseling – Elementary
 - b. School Counseling – Secondary
 - c. School-based or School-linked Mental Health Services
 - d. Professional Development for Mental Health
 - e. Early Identification and Referral
 - f. Professional Development for Suicide Prevention
 - g. Suicide Prevention Policy
- 6. Social and Emotional Climate**
- a. Multi-tiered, Positive Behavior Supports
 - b. Social-Emotional Learning or Character Development
 - c. Professional Development for Cultural Competency
 - d. Chronic Absenteeism Early Warning Systems
 - e. Limits on Exclusionary Discipline
 - f. Alternatives to Exclusionary Discipline
 - g. Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Policy
 - h. Professional Development for Bullying Prevention
 - i. Hazing Policy
 - j. Dating Violence Policy
 - k. School Resource Officer Training
 - l. Limits on Referrals to Law Enforcement
 - m. Equitable Discipline Practices
- 7. Physical Environment**
- a. Corporal Punishment
 - b. Restraint and Seclusion

- c. Emergency Operations Plans
 - d. Multi-hazard Practice Drills
 - e. Tobacco-free Environments
 - f. Alcohol and Drug Use Intervention Programs
 - g. Chemical Hazards Protections
 - h. Water Quality Protections
 - i. Air Quality Protections
- 8. Employee Wellness**
- a. Staff Wellness Program
 - b. Staff Stress Management Program
 - c. Staff Health Assessments
- 9. Family Engagement**
- a. Family Engagement Plans
 - b. Family Engagement in Local Governance
 - c. Professional Development on Family Engagement
 - d. Family Engagement in Policy making on School Discipline
- 10. Community Involvement**
- a. Community Involvement in Local Governance
 - b. School-Community and Interagency Partnerships
 - c. Community Use of Public School Facilities

Committee for Children – SEL Bills

<https://www.cfchildren.org/policy-advocacy/bills-we-track/social-emotional-learning-bills/>

Social-emotional learning (SEL) gives tomorrow’s workforce much-needed skills to achieve their goals, while it contributes every day to improving school climate and management, as well as increasing academic success. Committee for Children supports legislation that advances the availability of evidence-informed social-emotional learning programs, supports children and the adults around them with funding, training, and guidance, and aligns and integrates with the full policy landscape affecting children.

40 states with SEL-related bills filed in current legislative sessions. Topics include (but are not limited to):

- Social emotional learning
- School climate
- School safety and security
- Mental health
- Education funding
- Education reform
- Afterschool / Out-of-school-time
- Addiction / substance abuse treatment
- Early education and care

- Behavioral / mental health promotion and/or services in schools
- Mental health education
- Civic engagement in education
- School disciplinary practices (expulsion, suspension, etc)
- Teen dating violence
- Guidance counselor staffing
- Restorative justice in education
- Educator professional development
- Trauma-informed care in education
- Bullying in schools
- Qualifications and duties of school resource officers
- Teacher preparation and certification requirements

Education Commission of the States – State Education Policy Tracking

<https://www.ecs.org/state-education-policy-tracking/>

Education Commission of the States tracks state education policy on a wide variety of education topics. There are three options available:

1. Scroll down to view enacted and vetoed bills on a wide variety of education topics for the 2017, 2018 and 2019 legislative sessions.
2. Click [here](#) to view our 2019 State Education Policy Watch List, which includes pending legislation in a few issue areas.
3. Click [here](#) to view an archive of state policy tracking for the 1996 through 2016 legislative sessions.

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments – Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations (January 2018)

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/school-discipline-compendium>

This Compendium is designed to help state and local policymakers, as well as school-level personnel and other education stakeholders, better understand the current school discipline practices in our country. It provides information on school discipline laws and administrative regulations for each of the 50 states, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands effective as of January 2018.

For each of the states or jurisdictions, discipline related laws and regulations are categorized by the type of specific discipline issue they address. Resources from government-sponsored websites and other sources are also included for each jurisdiction where available. Categories are:

1. General Provisions
 - a. [Authority to develop and establish rules of conduct](#)
 - b. [Scope](#)
 - c. [Communication of Policy](#)
2. In-School Discipline
 - a. [Use of multi-tiered discipline approaches](#)
 - b. [Teacher authority to remove students from classrooms](#)
 - c. [Alternatives to suspension](#)
 - d. [Use of corporal punishment](#)
 - e. [Use of student and locker searches](#)
 - f. [Other in-school disciplinary approaches](#)
3. Out-of-School and Exclusionary Discipline: Suspension, Expulsion, Restraint and Seclusion, and Alternative Placements
 - a. [Grounds for possible suspension or expulsion](#)
 - b. [Grounds for mandatory suspension or expulsion](#)
 - c. [Limitations, conditions, or exclusions for use of suspension and expulsion](#)
 - d. [Administrative procedures related to suspension and expulsion](#)
 - e. [In-school suspension](#)
 - f. [Return to school following removal](#)
 - g. [Use of restraint and seclusion](#)
 - h. [Alternative placements](#)
4. Disciplinary Approaches Addressing Specific Infractions and Conditions
 - a. [Firearms \(as required by the Gun-Free Schools Act\)](#)
 - b. [Other weapons](#)
 - c. [Students with chronic disciplinary issues](#)
 - d. [Attendance and truancy](#)
 - e. [Substance use](#)
 - f. [Bullying, harassment, or hazing](#)
 - g. [Other special infractions or conditions](#)
5. Prevention and Behavioral Interventions (Non-Punitive)
 - a. [Prevention](#)
 - b. [Behavioral interventions and student support services](#)
 - c. [Professional development](#)
6. Monitoring and Accountability
 - a. [Formal incident reporting of conduct violations](#)
 - b. [Parental notification](#)
 - c. [Reporting and referrals between schools and law enforcement](#)
 - d. [Disclosure of school records](#)
 - e. [Data collection, review, and reporting of disciplinary policies and actions](#)
7. School Resource and Safety Officers (SROs/SSOs) and Truant/Attendance Officers

- a. [Authority and power to implement school arrest](#)
 - b. [Certification or training](#)
 - c. [MOUs, authorization, and/or funding](#)
8. State Education Agency Support
- a. [State model policies and implementation support](#)
 - b. [Funding appropriations](#)
9. Other/Uncategorized
- a. [Community input or involvement](#)
 - b. [Professional immunity or liability](#)
 - c. [Other or Uncategorized](#)

National Conference of State Legislators – SEL

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/social-emotional-learning.aspx#5>

Web page that defines SEL and its benefits, highlights importance of SEL in afterschool programs, lists and links to 16 bills and resolutions in 12 states related to SEL as of June 2018, describes the National Commission’s work, discusses SEL state standards, and links to additional resources.

Key resource: 2-page [LegisBrief: Boosting Social and Emotional Development In and Out of School](#) (Nov 2017) describing SEL, its benefits, and state and federal action related to SEL.