



Washington State teacher
preparation programs

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION BRIEF



April 2021

www.pesb.wa.gov

WHAT IS SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING?

Social emotional learning (SEL) is [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 in life. SEL is an intentional approach to building student assets and emphasizing development of the whole child. SEL supports educational equity¹ and can function as a key protective factor for all students.²

LEARN MORE

[Washington State's school district implementation guidelines](#)

Washington State SEL framework and guiding principles



1. SEL implementation starts with capacity building.
2. SEL requires collaboration between families, educators, community partners, and young people in its design and implementation.
3. [Washington State SEL](#) is shaped by a commitment to the following guiding principles:
 - **Equity** | Each child receives what he or she needs to develop his or her full potential.
 - **Culturally responsive** | Equity-centered practices that authentically connect to students' cultural identities and sustain cultural practices.³
 - **Trauma informed** | Knowledge of the effects of trauma is integrated into policy and practice.
 - **Universal design** | Learning differences are planned for and accommodated.
- Washington State has [specific SEL requirements](#) for teacher preparation programs. Learn more on page 6.

The guiding principles for implementation in teacher and principal preparation programs will be reviewed and revised with the upcoming redevelopment of the cultural competency, diversity, equity and inclusion (CCDEI) standards.

Washington State social emotional learning student standards and benchmarks

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-management
3. Self-efficacy
4. Social awareness
5. Social management
6. Social engagement

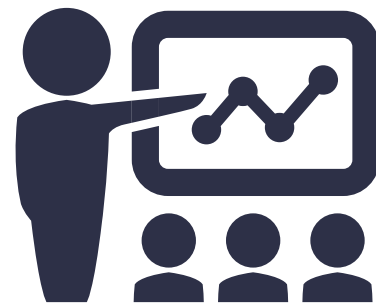
LEARN MORE [Social emotional learning standards and benchmarks](#)

WHY IS SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING IMPORTANT?

Social emotional learning (SEL) promotes important school outcomes including improved academic achievement for students.



SEL reduces toxic teacher stress and improves teacher retention rates.



SEL increases positive life outcomes, including improved graduation rates and employment prospects for students.



SEL improves school climate and school safety, including reducing emotional distress and bullying as well as providing a safe space for learning.⁴



HOW CAN WE PROMOTE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN TEACHER PREPARATION NOW?

Entry points for teacher preparation program providers

- **Relationships matter.** Preparation program providers model positive relationship building between program faculty; program faculty, school staff, and teachers; program faculty and community partners; and program faculty and candidates. Program leaders demonstrate how to draw from the diverse cultures and backgrounds of the faculty and candidates.
- **Context matters.** Individuals adjust their social emotional skills depending on the cultural, historical, social-political and racialized contexts in which they find themselves. Program leaders create environments that support the application and further development of each adult's own culturally responsive social emotional competencies, recognizing that individuals develop within these contexts, and include opportunities to practice and reflect upon all six of the Washington State SEL standards.
- **Knowledge of self matters.** Program leaders and faculty begin with developing their own social emotional learning (SEL) competencies and reflecting on how their experiences and cultural background impact their work as an educator. Program faculty model and discuss the metacognitive processes involved in self regulation and social interactions with candidates through a continuous cycle of learning and self-reflection.
- **Community engagement matters.** Collaborating with families, community members, and organizations is foundational to implementing SEL at any level. Program leaders and faculty model and discuss authentic community engagement to prepare pre-service teachers to enact culturally sustaining, equity-focused SEL.



“ Although there are multiple evidence-based SEL programs that support student development, most recognize that one of the first steps in implementing any SEL program is to focus on adult social and emotional skills. To model and encourage positive student interactions, teachers themselves need the social and emotional skills required to communicate effectively with students and to handle stressful situations that can occur in classrooms.⁵ ”

HOW CAN WE PROMOTE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN TEACHER PREPARATION NOW?

Entry points for teacher preparation program providers

- **Awareness of current social emotional learning (SEL) work matters.** Program faculty learn about the current SEL work in Washington State by familiarizing themselves with the standards, benchmarks, indicators, and guiding principles. Program leaders and faculty collaboratively explore ways SEL work can be embedded throughout coursework and fieldwork.
- **Theory-to-practice connections matter.** Candidates have opportunities to discuss how they observe SEL being implemented by individual classroom teachers and in school buildings through specific SEL programs and through integrated approaches. Program leaders also prepare field instructors and mentor teachers to be able to facilitate targeted observation of and reflection on structures that support SEL, including: academic lessons, everyday classroom routines, participation structures, explicit conversations about SEL, and more.⁶ Candidates be given opportunities to practice embedding SEL skill instruction into lesson design and implementation.
- **Leadership matters.** Program leaders should assemble a team of diverse stakeholders to advance the work of integrating SEL into the program. The team can reflect together on why the work is important and envision a future of what SEL looks like for their program. This includes setting goals, allocating staff time and resources, participating in professional learning, determining how outcomes are assessed, and identifying strategies for how to sustain momentum over time.

WHAT DOES WASHINGTON STATE REQUIRE?

Beginning January 2020, the Washington State legislature requires teacher and principal preparation program providers to ensure candidates can recognize signs of emotional or behavioral distress in students and appropriately refer students for assistance and support.

The guidance provided to candidates must include:

- [social emotional learning \(SEL\) standards and benchmarks](#)
- related competencies such as trauma-informed practices, consideration of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), mental health literacy, anti-bullying strategies, and culturally sustaining practices

The [Washington State SEL standards](#) are student standards which include:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-management
3. Self-efficacy
4. Social awareness
5. Social management
6. Social engagement

LEARN MORE

[Preparation program SEL requirements](#)
[InTASC standards and SEL standards cross walk](#)
[WAC 181-78A-232](#)
[RCW 28A.410.270](#)



RESOURCES FOR TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Social emotional learning

[Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's \(OSPI\) social emotional learning \(SEL\) webpage](#) includes guidance, resources, and multiple links to collective funds of knowledge on SEL such as:

- [OSPI's social and emotional learning in Washington State schools: building foundations and strategies module](#). This SEL online module has been designed in distinct learning segments including:
 - Learning Segment 1: Introduction to SEL
 - Learning Segment 2: Embedding SEL Schoolwide
 - Learning Segment 3: Creating a Professional Culture Based on SEL
 - Learning Segment 4: Integrating SEL into Culturally Responsive Classrooms
 - Learning Segment 5: Trauma Informed Social Emotional Learning
 - Learning Segment 6: Identifying and Selecting Evidence-Based Programs

[Professional Educator Standards Board's \(PESB\) SEL webpage](#) includes guidance and resources for educator preparation programs, as well as references to the WAC and RCW language addressing SEL and related competencies in Washington State.

[American Institutes for Research \(AIR\)](#) offers a [SEL Coaching Toolkit](#) for instructional coaches, administrators, and district leaders who support teachers/staff in integrating SEL into their daily instructional practices.

[Center for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child \(CRTWC\)](#) offers [a framework](#) for integrating social, emotional, and cultural competencies into P-12 pre-service teacher preparation.

LEARN MORE [Additional resources on social emotional learning and related competencies](#)



RESOURCES FOR TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Social emotional learning

[Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#) is the leading national source for research and resources related to SEL in schools and communities and offers many valuable resources for educators, such as:

- [CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL](#) | Guidance for systemic SEL implementation in schools
- [Focus on the Classroom](#) | How to foster supportive classroom environments that engage in explicit SEL and integrate SEL throughout instruction
- [Focus on Family Partnerships](#) | How to create meaningful partnership opportunities and two-way communication that invite families to understand, experience, inform, and support the social emotional development of their students.
- [CASEL CARES Initiative Resources](#) | Resources designed to support educators, parents, and anyone who works with children during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Related competencies

Adverse childhood experiences

- [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#) resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- [Center for Youth Wellness](#)
- [Washington State Department of Health](#)

Anti-bullying strategies

- [Bullying prevention and intervention: information for educators](#)
- [Bullying prevention and intervention in schools](#)
- [Framework for school-wide bullying prevention and safety](#)
- [Stop bullying.gov](#)

Culturally sustaining practices

- [Culturally sustaining pedagogy](#) from the California Department of Education

Mental health literacy

- [Mental health resources](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Trauma informed practices

- [CASEL resources on mental health, trauma, and well-being](#)
- OSPI resources on [trauma informed schools, youth suicide prevention, intervention, & postvention](#), and [behavioral health supports & resources](#).

WORKS CITED

1. National Equity Project. *Social Emotional Learning and Equity*.
<https://www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/social-emotional-learning-and-equity>
2. Jones, S. M., & Kahn, J. (2017). *The evidence base for how we learn: Supporting students' social, emotional, and academic development*. Aspen Institute.
<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/evidence-base-learn/>
3. Muhammad, Gholdy (2020). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy*. New York: Scholastic.
4. Committee for Children. (2019, May 10). *2019 Congressional Briefing: Preparing Teachers for SEL (highlights)* [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHntihIZdTY>
5. Brackett, M. A., Patti, J., Stern, R., Rivers, S. E., Elbertson, N., Chisholm, C., & Salovey, P. (2009). *A sustainable, skill-based model to building emotionally literate schools*. In R. Thompson, M. Hughes, & J. B. Terrell. (2009). *Handbook of developing emotional and social intelligence: Best practices, case studies, and tools* (pp. 329–358). Pfeiffer.
6. Sugishita, J., & Dresser R. (2019). Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in a Field Course: Preservice Teachers Practice SEL-Supportive Instructional Strategies. *Journal of Inquiry & Action in Education*, 10(1), 36-67. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1205159>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This brief was developed in collaboration with the Washington State Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Advisory Committee, under the oversight of the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). A special thanks to the following SEL Advisory Committee members for their extensive work on this brief:

- Dr. Bonnie McDaniel, Washington State Parent Teacher Association
- Dr. Caryn Park, Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs
- Dr. Deborah Tully, Washington Association of Colleges of Teacher Education