

# **Social and Emotional Learning Review 2018-2019**

Report to Westwood School Committee

*February 7, 2019*

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## What is SEL?

*Social and emotional learning (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.*

(CASEL, 2018)

# The CASEL Framework





**A different  
review  
process for  
a different  
type of  
learning**

- No formal curriculum standards
- Competencies, not content
- Differing frameworks
- Relatively new research focus
- Many approaches and options

# The process

Generate guiding questions

Reading, research, outreach

- Focus groups (students, parents, educators)

- Current WPS curriculum resources and practices

- Approaches in other communities

- Program comparison

- Student data (VOCAL)

Draft recommendations

## Leadership

- Create a leadership team to facilitate work at all levels and in all buildings.
- Hire an SEL Coordinator to support K-8.
- Develop a vision for SEL that aligns with district goals and priorities.

## Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development

- Identify and implement programs that support the infusion of SEL into instruction and daily activity of schools.
- Ensure that *all employees* are well-versed in the CASEL framework for SEL as well as program-specific vocabulary.
- Provide PD around supporting SEL for marginalized students.
- Ensure that all WPS employees have opportunities to understand and improve their own SEL competencies.

# District-Wide Recommendations



## **Assessment**

- Use existing data related to student well-being, school climate and SEL competencies (e.g., VOCAL survey, discipline referrals, YRBS) to assess SEL efforts.

## **Parent and Community Outreach**

- Ensure that all WPS community members (parents, students, staff, community partners) understand the academic and lifelong benefits of SEL.
- Offer parent programming to support the generalization of SEL competencies outside of schools.

# **District-Wide Recommendations**

## **Space and Time**

- Consider how to use existing space to support SEL and student well-being.
- Work with the School Building Committee to ensure elementary building project reflects up-to-date thinking about how the physical environment can support SEL.
- Revise or refine schedules at all levels to support SEL and student well-being.

# **District-Wide Recommendations**

## **Leadership**

- Provide SEL teacher leadership at each school to support training and consistent implementation.

## **Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development**

- Develop plan for training and implementation of Responsive Classroom K-5.
- Investigate lesson-based programs (e.g., Second Step) as a resource for more explicit instruction.

# **Elementary Recommendations**

## **Outreach**

- Provide parents with program information and support for SEL at home.
- Encourage parent partnerships through survey input and collaborative parent/child tasks.

## **Additional Resources**

- Invest in program resources (quick guides, suggested activity books) that support implementation.

# **Elementary Recommendations**

## **Leadership**

- Form teacher leadership team to support SEL coordinator in investigating curriculum options, identifying PD, and supporting teachers with implementation.

## **Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development**

- Involve full faculty in exploring curriculum options for implementing SEL during advisory.
- Visit other school systems to assess SEL program options.

# **Middle School Recommendations**

## **Assessment**

- Assess faculty understanding of and comfort with SEL in order to determine PD needs.
- Implement a universal formative assessment/benchmark linked to curriculum to assess student SEL progress.

## **Parent and Community Outreach**

- Offer relevant, targeted parent programming focused on adolescent development and SEL.

# **Middle School Recommendations**

## Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development

- Examine timing and delivery of health and wellness classes as well as universal prevention programs such as SOS (Signs of Suicide) and SBIRT (substance abuse screening).
- Develop courses that address SEL explicitly (electives, J-term courses).
- Explore the connections between project-based learning and SEL.
- Work with faculty to embed SEL into their classroom routines (e.g., check-ins, mindful minute, opportunities for feedback).

# High School Recommendations

## **Structures and Practices**

- Address overall stress created by the volume and timing of homework and assessments.
- Explore options that support better sleep habits for students.
- Provide training and support for Restorative Justice initiatives.

## **Building Use**

- Create spaces and programming for students to unwind, practice wellness activities and develop SEL competencies.

# **High School Recommendations**



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*Research by the respected Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) in the U.S. found that the primary causes of executive derailment involve deficiencies in emotional competence. Each year, CCL serves more than 20,000 individuals and 2,000 organizations, including more than 80 of the Fortune 100 companies. It says the three main reasons for failure are difficulty in handling change, inability to work well in a team, and poor interpersonal relations.*

-Harvey Deutschendorf (“Why Emotionally Intelligent People Are More Successful.” *FastCompany*. June 22, 2015)