



USING THE WSCC MODEL TO Integrate Social and Emotional Learning IN SCHOOLS

What is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)?

According to Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the “process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” Research links SEL to positive outcomes for everyone in the school community - students and adults. Furthermore, a systemic approach to SEL creates a more equitable and participatory environment where students can grow their social, emotional, and academic competencies.

Benefits of SEL in schools extend to everyone in the school community.

- **Students:** improved test scores, grades, and attendance; less emotional distress and disruption; increase in prosocial behavior with peer and adults; reduced conduct problems and risk-taking behavior; positive attitudes toward self and others
- **Classroom teachers:** increased strategies to manage challenging behaviors; reduction in classroom staff turnover; increased instructional time; fewer conduct/behavioral referrals; improved student-teacher relationships; additional resources to manage job stress
- **Parents/caregivers:** increased parental confidence; stronger interest in personal development and education; improved parent-student and parent-teacher relationships and communication; increased confidence and strategies to prepare a child for life’s challenges; additional resources for conflict resolution in the family

Well done!

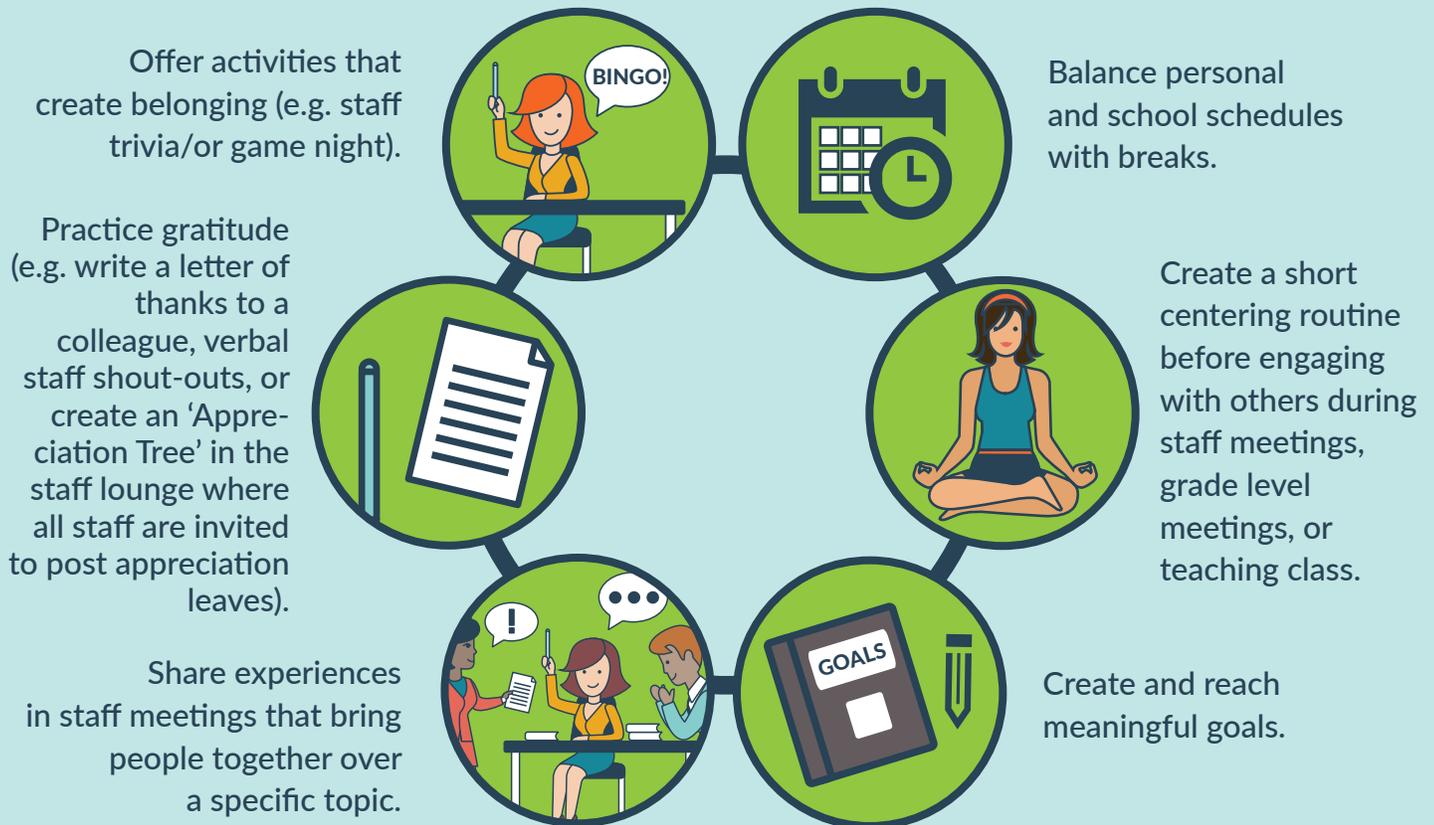


SEL: Tools for Managing Transition, Stress, and Trauma

SEL starts with the adults in the school community. Because students model what they see, the most important social emotional learning begins with educators. When school staff have the skills and

support to address their own social and emotional health, they are better prepared to support the social and emotional learning of their students. The following strategies can help adults

in the school community manage and support their own emotional health. These strategies are especially important in times of increased stress or trauma.



While SEL skills are foundational and should be integrated into the daily practices and instructional structures of a school, a concerted emphasis on SEL skills can be particularly beneficial for periods of increased stress, transition, and trauma for students, school personnel, and/

or the whole school community. Some of these events may be lifecycle events, such as transitioning into a new grade or school. However, other events may be more challenging such as returning to school after a natural disaster that damaged homes and buildings in the community or the death of a

family member or student in their school.

In these times of increased stress and trauma, focusing on age-appropriate SEL strategies can help students re-engage academically while supporting their emotional health.



Early Childhood Education:

Prompt conversation about change by reading stories with characters going through big changes and sharing their feelings. Students can practice how to communicate their feelings, needs, and wants to others.



Elementary Schools:

Facilitate an activity to create classroom norms where all students participate in generating the list. Students can share ways they feel physically and emotionally safe or unsafe, as well as how to treat others in order to establish and maintain positive relationships.



Middle Schools:

Create an activity that offers students closure on the past, such as a letter writing activity to their old self or a former teacher. Encourage students to reflect on the past, as well as focus on the future by highlighting what they are looking forward to and even setting goals for the future.



High Schools:

Provide students creative outlets and prompt them to create artwork or music based on how they feel. Create structured opportunities for students to share in small groups to learn about each other's experiences and feelings.



All Grade Levels:

- Create consistent classroom routines, such as a specific way to start and end class or a way to transition between activities.
- Design activities that create belonging (e.g. scavenger hunt, BINGO, or get-to-know you activities).
- Schedule daily check-ins or connections between every student and an adult in the building.
- Design activities that practice gratitude (e.g. journal entries, pictures, or verbal affirmations) and acts of kindness.
- Teach students how to identify an adult they can go to for help with strong/overwhelming challenges or feelings.
- Actively model, teach, and allow students to practice effective communication skills (Active Listening, Assertive Communication, Refusal, Collaboration, and Negotiation).

Addressing SEL through the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model



The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model, is a framework for addressing health in schools. The WSCC model is student-centered and emphasizes the role of the community in supporting the school, the connections between health and academic achievement, and the importance of evidence-based school policies and practices.

The WSCC model is built upon five tenets in green: **healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged**. These tenets are critical in supporting academic achievement and student health. The white band around the tenets emphasizes the collaboration needed among the school, health, and community sectors.

The 10 component areas in blue surrounding the child and tenets provide the full range of learning and health support systems available in a school to address any particular health issue. Lastly, the community,

represented by the outer yellow band, shows that the school remains a reflection of its community and requires community input, resources, and collaboration.

When schools use the WSCC model to promote student health and wellness, positive outcomes include: a decrease in risky behaviors, improved attendance and retention between grades, improved concentration, increased academic performance, increased quality interpersonal relationships with peers and caring adults, prosocial behavior, problem-solving, and a greater acceptance of multiple perspectives.

Furthermore, the WSCC model can help put policies in place that support students, staff, and families to be healthy and live healthy lifestyles. SEL can be implemented throughout the five tenets and all 10 components of the WSCC model and is a critical part of healthy programs and policies in a school.

Considerations for implementing SEL at your school:

1

SEL programs are most effective when they are implemented across the entire school, at all grade-levels. Many curriculum programs have content that is appropriate for different ages and is vertically aligned throughout the grade levels.

2

Align frameworks and approaches (e.g. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Justice approaches) to support SEL.

3

Integrate SEL content and skills practice across all content areas (e.g. integrate SEL into mathematics, science, language arts, or other subject matters).

4

Select SEL programs that are designed and proven to be effective with your school's demographics (race, ethnicity, gender identity, English Language Learners, SES) and are responsive to diverse identities and marginalized students.

5

Regularly assess perceptions of school climate and culture, and the safety of students, staff, and family. In addition, schools should utilize other data sources that are available to the school or district (e.g. Smart Source, Healthy Kids Colorado Survey).

WSCC Tenets

The five tenets focus on the individual child and provide a useful approach for assessing the programs, conditions, and relationships students need to thrive. All decisions that a school makes can and should ensure that students are *healthy, safe, supported, engaged, and challenged*. To fully support the whole child, schools should continually ask themselves whether their operations embody the WSCC model tenets. In regard to SEL, schools should ensure that their SEL approach prioritizes the health and safety of all students, provides opportunities for student engagement, supports the social emotional needs for all students, and challenges students to reach their full potential. Specifically, SEL and the WSCC tenets reinforce and complement each other in the following ways:

HEALTHY



SEL programs can support students to acquire and practice the skills they need to make **healthy** lifestyle choices. This can be done by integrating SEL into your school's ongoing activities, professional development, curriculum, and assessment practices. Furthermore, schools can set realistic, data-driven goals for student and staff physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of health.

SAFE



SEL programs can provide a foundation for schools to create an environment that is physically and emotionally **safe** for students and adults. This can be done by ensuring the school climate is safe, friendly, and student-centered, including maintaining the physical grounds and creating spaces where students feel cared for and motivated to learn. Additionally, schools can provide students, staff, and family members with regular opportunities for SEL activities and support in teaching students how to manage their own behavior, and reinforcing expectations, rules, and routines.

ENGAGED



SEL programs can increase **engagement** for students by providing connections to their school and broader community. Instructional practices of SEL programs should be designed to engage students in student-centered learning experiences. This can be done through cooperative learning and project-based learning. Additionally, schools can offer a range of opportunities for students to contribute to and learn within the community at large (e.g. service learning, internships, apprenticeships, volunteer projects, field trips, and/or outreach projects) to develop and strengthen student-to-student and adult-to-student interactions.

SUPPORTED



SEL's focus on building relationships can help students feel **supported** through strong relationships with qualified, caring adults. SEL programs should be grounded in instructional practices that support all students. This can be done by welcoming all school personnel and families as partners in each student's education and social emotional learning. Additionally, schools can use a variety of methods across languages and cultures to communicate with families and community members about the SEL goals of their school and help families understand available services to support their children's social and emotional learning, and model prosocial behavior.

CHALLENGED



When students' social and emotional needs are met, they can be **challenged** academically and be prepared for post-secondary success. This can be done by providing students opportunities to develop critical thinking and reasoning skills, and problem-solving competencies. Schools can develop students' global awareness for SEL and provide cross-curricular opportunities for learning SEL skills.

WSCC Components

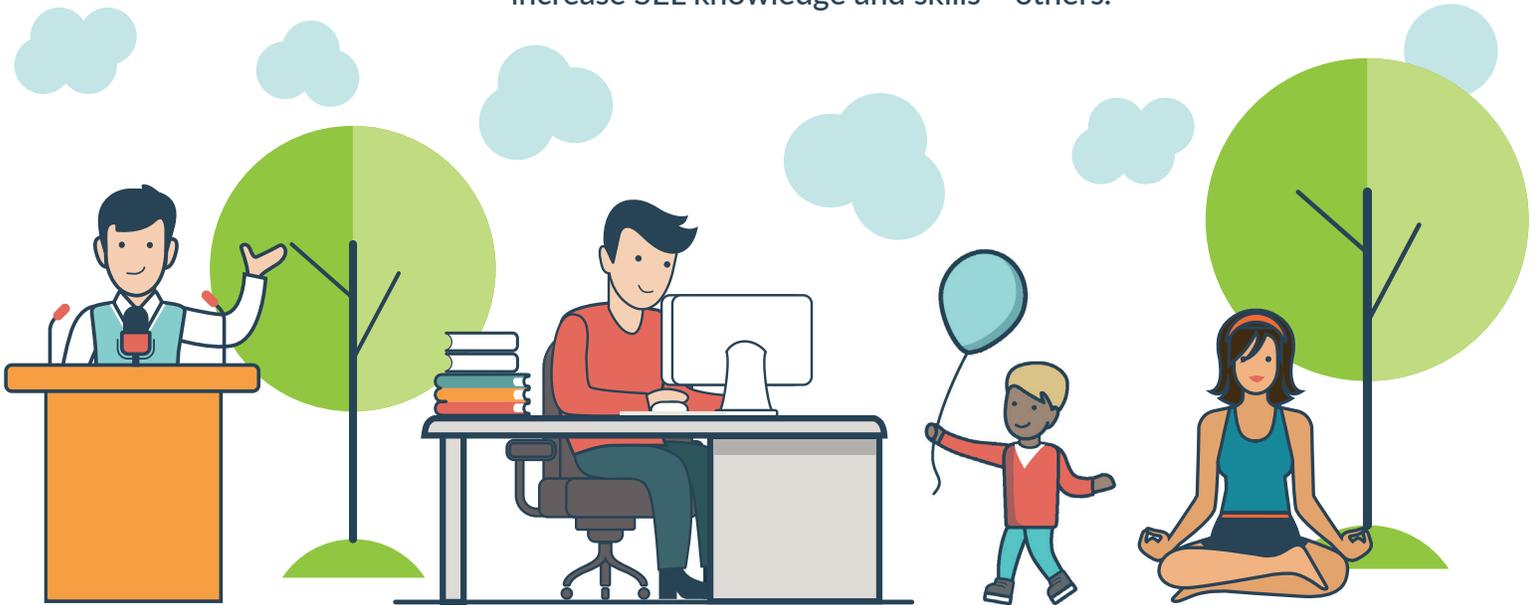
The 10 component areas illustrate all the different areas of a school community that can come together to support a student and uphold the five tenets. Each component area can implement SEL programs to promote the health of students. Moreover, coordination between the components can reinforce SEL and provide students with multiple opportunities to build and practice their SEL skills. Implementing SEL programs through each of the component

areas reinforces the importance of a school-wide approach to SEL and the need for all adults in the school community to model SEL.

The strategies below illustrate how your school can use the WSCC model to support the integration of SEL into the whole school community. These strategies may be integrated into the implementation of a broader framework or program in your school, or selected as part of a specific, concerted effort to increase SEL knowledge and skills

for a specific population or grade in your school.

Icons that correlate with the tenets are listed next to each strategy in order to foster greater connection and collaboration between the various facets of the WSCC model and your school community. While a school's efforts should incorporate all of the tenets, within any given component area, some tenets may be more prominent than others.



Health Education

- Teach students how to locate and utilize resources to support mental and emotional health (e.g. Safe2Tell, online support group). 🍏🔍⚡
- Empower students to identify their own emotions through structured learning activities in health class. 🍏
- Collaborate with teachers to create opportunities across all content areas and in all grades PreK-12 for students to model and practice social and emotional competencies (e.g. self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, analyzing influences, accessing information, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, and advocacy). 🍏👂💡





Physical Education & Physical Activity

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- Include games and activities that demonstrate leadership, teamwork, peer support, respect for self and others, persistence, and resilience in Physical Education classes. 🍎🔍💡
- Promote communication and collaboration skills through physical education and physical activity in the classroom. 🍎
- Model and provide time for students to practice physical activity-based stress management techniques. 🍎
- Provide clear expectations and hold students accountable for progress toward physical education and physical activity goals. 🔍⚡💡
- Recognize students' contributions for diverse skill performance. 🔍🧑🏻🧑🏻🧑🏻

Nutrition Environment & Services

Nutrition Environment & Services

- Replace school policies that use food as a reward or punishment with policies that highlight non-food rewards for prosocial behaviors. 🍎🔍
- Collaborate with a local nutrition professional to teach students about the benefits of a healthy diet for long-term emotional and physical wellbeing. 🍎
- Create a cafeteria environment that is bright, inviting, and encourages student interactions. 🍎🔍⚡
- Teach students about behavioral expectations in the cafeteria to create a physically and emotionally safe space. 🍎🔍
- Encourage students to explore a variety of nutritionally rich foods from different cultures and regions. 🍎🔍⚡
- Provide opportunities and structures to encourage student interaction with peers that they may not normally interact with. 🔍⚡💡



Health Services

Health Services

- Partner with the school's Counseling, Psychological & Social Services to implement a confidential reporting system for students to report bullying, victimization, and unsafe behavior in the school community. 🔍🧑🏻🧑🏻
- Perform mental and behavioral health screenings as a part of routine healthcare services. 🍎🧑🏻
- Provide training to all school personnel on how to identify possible signs and symptoms that a student may need mental health support. 🔍🧑🏻
- Develop a referral system with local, community-based Health Services providers and Counseling, Psychological & Social Services providers. 🔍🧑🏻🧑🏻





Counseling, Psychological & Social Services

- Form partnerships with community mental health providers and develop a referral process for students and school personnel. 🍎 🗣️
- Invite counseling and social services professionals into the classroom on a regular basis (e.g. each quarter) to increase visibility with students and school personnel and reduce the stigma surrounding these services. 🗣️ 🗣️
- Increase access to counseling and social services professionals during times of crisis or when a traumatic event has recently occurred in the world, nation, state, and/or your school community. 🗣️



Social & Emotional Climate

- Reinforce the school's academic and behavioral expectations in classroom lessons and student assemblies. 🍎 ⚡
- Gather student feedback on school climate, including their level of perceived support and safety. Use this information to develop or augment policies and practices that increase student supports and enhance school safety. 🗣️ ⚡
- Create opportunities for students to form healthy relationships with trusted adults in the school community (e.g. mentorship opportunities, rotating lunch with teachers/school personnel, after school programs). 🗣️ 🗣️
- Encourage students to form clubs and engage in peer-led out of school time activities to enhance prosocial opportunities. (e.g. peer tutoring, classroom cleanup, service learning). ⚡ 💡



Physical Environment

- Designate shared spaces on school property for students and school personnel to connect and build community (e.g. cozy nooks, bright spaces with benches, gathering/calming corners, staff and student lounges). 🗣️ ⚡
- Create a routine maintenance schedule and conduct regular audits to ensure that the school buildings and grounds are inviting and welcoming to students, families, and school personnel (e.g. change lightbulbs, clean debris and litter, remove graffiti, paint interior and exterior walls). 🗣️
- Post signage that promotes a positive school environment (e.g. non-violence, anti-bullying, anti-drug, anti-racism, anti-oppression, diversity and inclusion). 🗣️





Employee Wellness



- Provide social and emotional training to all school personnel that highlights healthy behaviors and habits, as well as the school's expectations for creating a healthy and safe work environment. 🗣️
- Include self-care and wellness programming in staff meetings to encourage school personnel to better manage their stress and prioritize their own wellbeing. 🎧🔍
- Survey school staff on at least an annual basis to collect feedback on working conditions and make adjustments based on the data. 📊⚡🗣️
- Provide trusted adult training for all school personnel to support the development of healthy and supportive adult-student relationships with students. 🗣️

Family Engagement

- Conduct an annual survey of parent/guardian perceptions of the school climate, including quantitative and qualitative data. 🔍
- Send resources and/or activities home on a regular basis with students for the entire family to participate in to build social and emotional skills together. 🍎💡
- Incorporate updates on each student's social and emotional skills into individual connections with families (e.g. school conferences, car pickup/drop off lane, phone calls home). 🗣️



Community Involvement



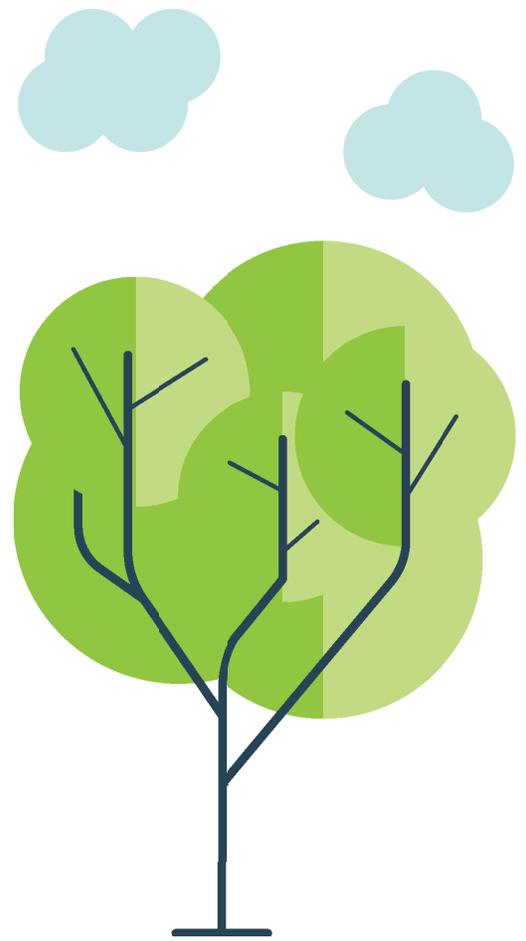
- Partner with local organizations for service-learning opportunities as a part of the curriculum (e.g. neighborhood park cleanup, classes volunteer at a local food pantry). ⚡💡
- Provide students and families with information on safe, low or no-cost, age-appropriate places for students to go after school hours (e.g. recreation center, volunteer opportunities, internships, job opportunities). ⚡💡
- Partner with behavioral and mental health community providers to offer social and emotional skill training to adults in the school community (e.g. families, parents, caregivers). 🔍🗣️

Final Considerations

The WSCC model provides a framework for implementing a comprehensive SEL approach in your school that supports the health and well-being of students and staff. By considering how each of the 10 component areas can work together to support students' SEL, students receive consistent messaging, reinforcement, and multiple opportunities to practice and master essential social and emotional skills.

Additionally, as your school determines SEL strategies to use, the WSCC model tenets provide the ultimate checklist for ensuring that your school's approach will support the whole

- child. Once your school identifies strategies, consider whether those strategies will ensure each student is/can:
- ✓ Enter school healthy and learn about and practice a healthy lifestyle.
 - ✓ Learn in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.
 - ✓ Actively engaged in learning and connected to the school and broader community.
 - ✓ Access personalized learning and be supported by qualified, caring adults.
 - ✓ Academically challenged and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.



- CASEL SEL Implementation Tools and Resources: <https://casel.org/resources-support/>
- CASEL Student Survey: <https://schoolguide.casel.org/resource/student-survey-how-i-feel-about-my-classroom-and-school/>
- CASEL Staff, Family, and Community Partnership Survey: <https://schoolguide.casel.org/resource/tool-staff-family-and-community-partner-survey-on-sel-implementation/>
- Colorado Hub for Healthy Schools and Reconnected Learning: <https://coloradohub.org/>

References

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