

Key Features of High-Quality Policies and Guidelines to Support Social and Emotional Learning

Recommendations and Examples for the Collaborating States Initiative (CSI)

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The current document serves two purposes. First, it provides an overview of six key features of a high-quality, comprehensive package of policies and guidance to support student social and emotional learning (SEL). These features are based on Collaborative for Academic Social, and Emotional Learning's (CASEL's) review of the research literature on learning standards and SEL as summarized in Dusenbury et al. (2015).¹ The six key features represent policies and guidance that are comprehensive and robust in that they are culturally and linguistically sensitive and developmentally appropriate, as well as connected to positive learning environments and professional development (Figure 1 gives an overview of the six key features). Second, this document provides examples from other states and districts that illustrate each of the key features of high-quality policies and guidance for SEL.

How to Use This Document

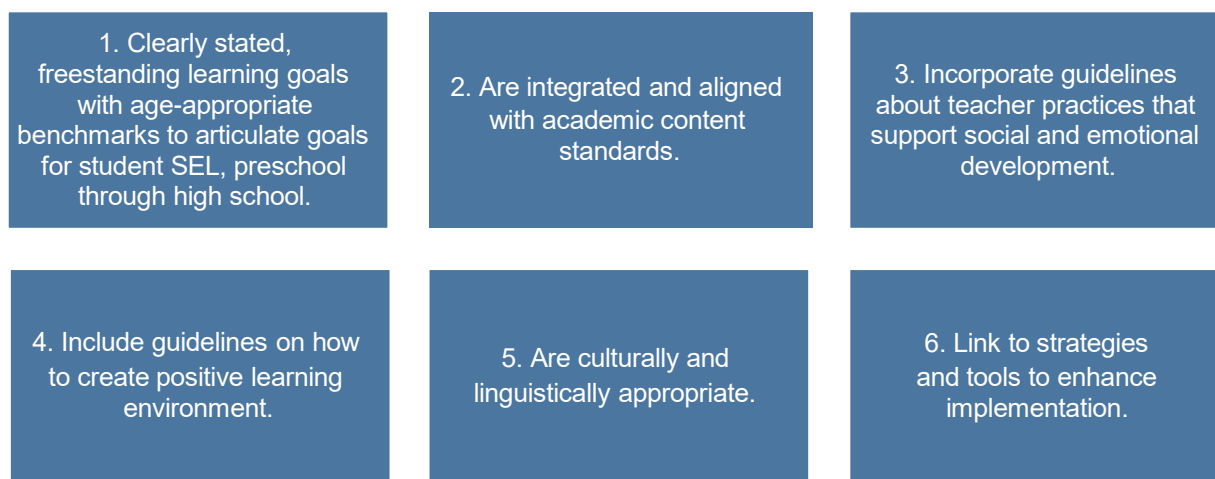
This document is intended for state education agencies (SEAs) that want to implement high-quality policies and guidelines for SEL. This document is intended to help SEAs identify the key features of SEL policies and guidelines, as well as associated example resources from other states or districts that 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*).

Contact consultants at CASEL or AIR for further information and support.

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¹ Dusenbury, L., Zadrazil, J., Weissberg, R. P., Goren, P., Domitrovich, C., & Mart, A. (2015). Developing a blueprint for education in social and emotional learning, preschool through high school: The case for state learning standards. In J. A. Durlak, C. E. Domitrovich, R. P. Weissberg, & T. P. Gullotta (Eds.), *Handbook of social and emotional learning: Research and practice*. New York, NY: Guilford.

Figure 1. Key Features of High-Quality Policies and Guidelines for SEL



1. Clearly stated, freestanding learning goals with age-appropriate benchmarks for student SEL, preschool through high school. To support student development, it is important to have a clear definition of the competencies and skills students should develop across grade levels. One approach is to first begin by defining clear, freestanding, and comprehensive, learning goals for student social and emotional competencies. Identifying these learning goals (sometimes called “competencies” or “standards” in state and district policy) is important because they establish social and emotional development as a clear priority in education, aligned with but distinct from academic and subject matter goals (i.e., freestanding). Comprehensive learning goals for SEL include developmental benchmarks across five social and emotional competency domains (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills). High-quality, freestanding SEL goals or competencies provide concise, consistent statements, grounded in research, about what students should know and be able to do socially and emotionally.

SEL Standards Examples	Link
Anchorage School District K–12 SEL Standards and Indicators	http://www.asdk12.org/media/anchorage/globalmedia/documents/professionallearningdept/SELStandardsAppend.pdf
Austin Independent School District SEL Standards	https://www.austinsd.org/sites/default/files/dept/sel/images/A.I.S.D._SEL_Standards_-_Elementary_and_Secondary_9-11-12_0.pdf
Cleveland SEL Scope and Sequence	http://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/cms/lib05/OH01915844/Centricity/shared/districtfiles/departments/humanware/SEL%20Scope%20and%20Sequence1.pdf
Illinois Preschool Standards (start on page 93)	http://www.isbe.state.il.us/earlychi/pdf/early_learning_standards.pdf
Illinois K–12 SEL Standards and Performance Indicators	http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm
Kansas SECD Standards (SEL and Character Development)	http://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Career-Standards-and-Assessment-Services/Content-Area-M-Z/School-Counseling/Social-Emotional-and-Character-Development
West Virginia K–12 SEL Standards	http://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/ElectronicManual4373New.html#SelfawarenessandSelfmanagement

2. **Are integrated and aligned with academic content standards.** SEL competencies are similar to, but distinct from academic content standards. They are similar in that they provide learning goals for students across grade bands, and identify milestones for students to reach. However, they are different given that the development of social and emotional competencies are recursive in that we constantly relearn and apply these competences across the lifespan. In addition, an individuals' *use* of their social and emotional competencies can be dependent on the context in which he/she is in and the culture in which one is situated. Social and emotional competencies are about self development, related to academic achievement, enabling students to develop the *skills* they need to be successful in school, career, and life. Thus, social and emotional goals should be integrated and aligned with academic goals in support of each other in a young person's life.

Integrated Academic and Subject Area Examples	Link
Video on SEL and Common Core from Anchorage School District	http://view.earthchannel.com/PlayerController.aspx?PGD=anchsch&elD=55
Oakland Unified School District's alignment of SEL and Common Core	http://www.ousdsel.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Mapping-SEL-to-CCSS.pdf
Kansas Crosswalk to College and Career Readiness Standards	http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/CSAS/Content%20Area%20(M-Z)/School%20Counseling/Soc_Emot_Char_Dev/SECD%20Aligned%20to%20CCR%20Standards.pdf
West Virginia Crosswalk	http://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/Crosswalk.html
Idaho Crosswalk With Early Childhood	http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Children/InfantToddlerProgram/ELeG/CommonCore_ELeG.pdf

3. **Incorporate guidelines about teacher practices that support social and emotional development.** Educators can support student social and emotional development in many ways, through SEL programs as well as through the general instruction that occurs throughout the school day. To support implementation, states and districts should provide guidance on how adults can support student social and emotional development through teaching practices and ways in which administrators can support teachers in implementing those practices. It is also important to help teachers reflect upon and develop their own social and emotional competencies.

Adult Teaching Practices Examples	Link
Incorporating Social and Emotional Learning Into Classroom Instruction and Educator Effectiveness: A Toolkit for Tennessee Teachers and Administrators	https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/safe_sch_se_toolkit.pdf
Tennessee SEL Online Learning Modules	Forthcoming
Center on Great Teachers and Leaders SEL School	www.gtlcenter.org/sel-school
Center on Great Teachers and Leaders: Teaching the Whole Child	http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/TeachingtheWholeChild.pdf

Massachusetts Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice (UDL, SEL, and PBIS)	http://www.doe.mass.edu/eveval/guidebook/
Kansas Instructional Examples: Personal Development	http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/CSAS/Content%20Area%20(M-Z)/School%20Counseling/Soc_Emot_Char_Dev/PersonalDev_InstrExamples.pdf?ver=2014-01-10-143119-450
Kansas Instructional Examples: Social Development	http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/CSAS/Content%20Area%20(M-Z)/School%20Counseling/Soc_Emot_Char_Dev/Social%20Dev_InstrExamples.pdf?ver=2014-01-10-143230-243
CASEL Brief on Instruction and Teaching Practices to Support SEL	http://static1.squarespace.com/static/513f79f9e4b05ce7b70e9673/t/56374ac1e4b05d222e9b4dea/1446464193894/CASEL+Brief--What+Does+SEL+Look+Like+in+Practice--11-1-15.pdf
Act for Youth Center for Excellence: SEL Toolkit	http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/sel/

4. **Include guidelines on how to create a positive learning environment.** Positive learning environments are critically important to the development of student and adult social and emotional competencies. When *students learn* and *educators work* in an environment that is safe, supportive, and connected, students and adults are more likely to develop the social and emotional competencies they need to be successful. It is therefore critical to provide guidance on how SEL contributes to conditions for learning and conditions for teaching.

Development of a Positive School Climate Examples	Link
U.S. Department of Education’s School Climate Improvement Resource Package	https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/about
Ohio School Climate Guidelines	https://saferschools.ohio.gov/content/ohio_school_climate_guidelines
National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments	https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/
California Discussion of Well-Designed Environment (Preschool) (beginning on page 4)	http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/preschoolif.pdf
Illinois Example for Creating a Positive Learning Environment (K–12)	http://www.isbe.state.il.us/learningsupports/pdfs/learning-indicators/CL7.pdf

5. **Are culturally and linguistically appropriate.** Social and emotional behaviors are mediated through an individual’s social and cultural lens, including his or her cultural histories, practices found within his or her communities, and his or her person identities. It is thus important to recognize the influence culture has on ways in which we use our social and emotional competencies. When developing SEL guidelines and policies, states and districts should incorporate guidance on how to make SEL instruction and practice culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate—so that practices do not further contribute to or support stereotypes. It is important for educators to recognize their own cultural lens, and to also respect and support the cultural experience of their students. For example, cultures differ in their communication styles, making it important to consider the culture of students when helping them to develop communication skills that will be effective in different contexts.

Making Instruction Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Examples	Link
Alaska Discussion of “Supporting Individual Differences” (p. 54)	http://www.eed.state.ak.us/publications/EarlyLearningGuidelines.pdf
Critically Using SEL in Schools From the Great Lakes Equity Center	https://connect.iu.edu/p6xwhhmd03/?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=normal
SEL-Ted, Cultural Resiliency and Equity	http://www.seltedconsortium.com/sel-ted-cultural-resilience-equity.html
Restorative Schools Vision Project	http://restorativeschoolsproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Social-Emotional-Learning.pdf http://casonline.org/pdfs/events/conv15/W-35%20Cultural%20Competence%20SEL%202.pdf
How to Align SEL, PBIS, and RJ to Provide a Coherent Network of Support for Our Students	http://slidegur.com/doc/55072/aligning-sel--pbis-and-restorative-justice

6. **Link to strategies and tools to enhance implementation.** The primary goal of the development of social and emotional competencies is to develop educators’ skills in understanding the knowledge and abilities that students need to successfully navigate their own self management, interpersonal relationships, school and life choices. It is important, therefore, to link to tools that support high-quality implementation, including tools to support adult social and emotional well-being.

Tools that Support High Quality Implementation Examples	Link
CASEL Example of Evidence-Based PreK to 12 SEL Programs	http://www.casel.org/guide
Connecticut Example of Selecting Evidence-Based Program (page 4)	http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Early/EarlyChildhood_SRBI_Manual.pdf
Guidelines and Resources for Social and Emotional Development and Learning in New York State	http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/sedl/SEDLguidelines.pdf
Oakland Unified School District’s Social and Emotional Learning Policy	http://www.ousd.org/cms/lib07/CA01001176/Centricity/Domain/143/SEL%20Board%20Policy%20BP%205031.pdf
New Jersey discussion of Professional Development (and assessment) on pages 30-34	http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/guide/impguidelines.pdf
Georgia’s Title 20-Education Code 20-2 focus on professional learning on prosocial behaviors	http://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2006/20/20-2-145.html http://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2006/20/20-2-739.html
California Core Districts Index Report on Accountability Measures, which include SEL	http://coredistricts.org/indexreports/
CASEL Compendium of Assessment Measure for PreK to 5	http://static1.squarespace.com/static/513f79f9e4b05ce7b70e9673/t/527815bbe4b057bbfd8adb2e/1383601595064/compendium-of-preschool-through-elementary-school-social-emotional-learning-and-associated-assessment-measures.pdf

Tools that Support High Quality Implementation Examples	Link
Raikes Foundation Report on Social-Emotional Learning Assessment Measure for middle school	http://www.search-institute.org/sites/default/files/a/DAP-Raikes-Foundation-Review.pdf
American Institutes for Research Ready to Assess Suite of Tools for PreK to 12 SEL Measures	http://www.air.org/resource/are-you-ready-assess-social-and-emotional-development
Massachusetts Consortium for SEL in Teacher Ed	http://www.seltedconsortium.com/
Massachusetts includes development of SEL in their Professional Teaching Standards: Standard 2.e	http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/advisories/TeachersGuidelines.pdf