



Social-Emotional Learning Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) ***Updated Summer 2023***

What is Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and why is it important?

We know that individuals who have self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills have improved academic success. In addition, these Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills foster sought-after workplace competencies such as effective communication and collaboration. This year with changes in the learning environment due to the pandemic and fewer opportunities for typical peer interaction, social emotional needs have been even greater. Those who are interested in learning more about social-emotional learning and its importance for students can see more [HERE](#).

What are the CASEL Competency areas and how are they connected to student learning?

The Collaborative for Academic Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a reputable collaborative that (in part) reviews research and evidence-based practices related to social-emotional learning. The 5 key competency areas championed by CASEL include: *self-awareness*, *self-management*, *social awareness*, *relationship skills*, and *responsible decision-making*. The CASEL competency areas are also aligned with ISBE state standards, which we are charged with teaching as a district. Those who are interested in learning more about CASEL competency areas can see more [HERE](#); those who are interested in viewing information about ISBE state SEL standards can see more [HERE](#).

How will my child be learning SEL skills this school year?

Students in grades K-8 receive direct instruction in SEL competency areas using the Second Step curricular lessons. Second Step teaches students key social-emotional learning skills - including emotional self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. Students will engage in a weekly lesson during the day at the elementary level, and on a department rotation at the middle school level.

At the high school level all students in grades 9-12 will be participating in quarterly lessons that align with a CASEL competency area - to be supplemented by practice and extension activities that align with the quarterly theme (i.e., self-management, relationship skills).

In addition, all students receive instruction in required units of instruction - which include anti-bullying lessons (related to relationship skills), sexual abuse prevention/awareness (related

to self-awareness and relationship skills), and requisite depression and suicide awareness and prevention (related to self-management skills). More information on required units of instruction can be found [HERE](#) (under Suicide, Sexual Abuse, and Anti-bullying Training Information).

How can I help my student (or myself!) practice self-management?

Students who are experiencing dysregulation might be experiencing increased levels of stress or anxiety, frustration, or may have their focus impacted (as a few examples). Our brains are not functioning “at their best” during these times. Students who are not regulated are not fully available for learning, for interacting with family members or peers, or for participating in whatever task is at hand. One way students can practice self-management is by selecting an activity of their choosing from our Virtual Calming Rooms. Check out the link for the elementary room [HERE](#); check out the link for grades 6-12 [HERE](#).

What is the difference between Social-emotional Learning (SEL) and social-emotional supports?

Social-emotional Learning (SEL), as defined by CASEL, 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. Information about the Forward 95 strategic goal involving establishing SEL opportunities for ALL students can be found [HERE](#).

Schools additionally need to have systems in place for identifying student needs AND for responding to student needs when they require support beyond universal teaching and practice opportunities. This has been even more true during the pandemic. A list of additional resources across the District can be found [HERE](#). Families are also encouraged to reach out to building-based teams with student-specific concerns for additional support.