

Creating a Positive/Pro-Social School Climate: Social and Emotional Learning

What to Learn from Your State's ESSA Plan

ESSA requires states to look beyond test scores in their accountability systems, and to incorporate other factors that play into student success, such as social and emotional learning (SEL) and school climate. Use of these non-academic factors provide LEAs with an opportunity to look beyond instructional activities and address other issues facing students. Learn more about the indicators your state has chosen, including why, and how those indicators might change over time.

Guidance for School Improvement

Social and emotional learning (SEL) includes all strategies designed to support understanding and management of emotions, including goal-setting, collaborative work, empathy, positive relationship-building, and responsible decision-making.

While SEL is often an integrated part of district and school frameworks for learning, discrete programs or strategies to promote SEL include:

- school climate improvement efforts,
- access to comprehensive mental and behavioral health,
- nutrition and physical health access,
- positive behavioral supports, and professional development for leaders on cultural competencies (e.g. racial healing, language, public systems and services and their impact).

Additionally, schools that collect data around these strategies and their outcomes can embed research-based best practices into their curriculum and professional development for their school-based staff.

Professional Development

Title II, Part A allows for more investment to attract, train and retain school leaders. As LEAs examine district and school policies related to developing practices that support positive social, emotional and academic growth, they should also identify ways to incorporate these practices into school leader professional development. Title II, Part B also contains competitive grant programs that can be used to embed school leadership practices that facilitate SEL skills like self-management, social awareness and conflict resolution.

Find Support for this Strategy in ESSA

TITLE I, PART A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
TITLE II PART A: Supporting Effective Instruction
TITLE IV, PART B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Highlighted Resource CASEL Program Guides for Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs



The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has developed five SEL “Competency Clusters”:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making

Read the CASEL Program Guides at casel.org/guide.

Essential Stakeholders

- ✓ Students and families, including students with disabilities, English learners, system-involved youth, chronically absent students, students in the foster system or who are experiencing homelessness, students affected by trauma, and others.
- ✓ Educators and educator trainers (e.g. Teachers Unite)
- ✓ Youth development organizations and out-of-school time providers
- ✓ Alternative education programs
- ✓ Law enforcement
- ✓ Civil rights organizations and community-based organizations (CBOs) that promote the social and emotional welfare of young children and families
- ✓ National and local advocates (e.g. Healthy Schools Campaign, CASEL)

Ask the Experts

- ✓ [Navigating Social and Emotional Learning from the Inside Out: Looking Inside and Across 25 Leading SEL Programs: A Practical Resource for Schools and OST Providers](#) (Wallace Foundation)
- ✓ [SEL in Districts](#) (CASEL)
- ✓ [Social and Emotional Learning Under ESSA](#) (NIEER)

Spotlight on Colorado SEL & Data



Colorado has worked with partners and stakeholders to develop a suite of resources for school leaders, teachers, and families to support understanding about SEL and social skills, including specific metrics for gathering data and disaggregating according to student subgroups.

Check out their resources at colorado.gov/pacific/cssrc/social-emotional-learning.

Spotlight on the CORE Districts, CA: Schools and Districts Support SEL

Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) recently visited middle schools in the CORE districts to learn about the ways educators advance students' social-emotional learning.

Learn about their results in their Facts at a Glance document: [Enacting Social-Emotional Learning: Practices and Supports in CORE Districts and Schools](#).