

Instruction

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

The Board of Education (Board) believes that children's social and emotional development are essential underpinnings/foundations to school readiness and academic success. Therefore, the Board will incorporate social and emotional learning and development into the District's educational program.

The Board desires to create the safest and most productive learning environment for all students. The Board recognizes its role as partners with parents/guardians to teach respect and responsibility to children. Family and parental involvement in concert with District programs is crucial in the development of a child's sense of personal responsibility to others.

The Board desires the creation of a school climate that promotes the education of the whole child in which the social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual dimensions of learning are fostered. School climate, in this context, refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students', parents', and school personnels' experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.

The Board further recognizes that one of the most important functions of schools is to reflect and reinforce character and civic values of our society within the schools. Values such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, hard work and respect for others reflect the principles upon which the survival and vitality of our society and all individuals depend.

Definitions

1. **"School climate"** means the quality and character of school life based on patterns of students', parents', and school employees' experiences of school life, including norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.
2. **"Positive school climate"** is defined as a school climate in which:
 - a. norms, values, expectations, and beliefs are promoted that support feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe;
 - b. students, their parents and guardians, and school employees feel engaged and respected and work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision;
 - c. educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and
 - d. each person feels comfortable contributing to the school's operation and care of its physical environment.

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Definitions (continued)

3. **“Social and emotional learning”** means the process through which people achieve emotional intelligence through self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
4. **“Emotional intelligence”** means a person’s ability to:
 - a. perceive, recognize, understand, and manage his or her emotions and those of others;
 - b. use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including reasoning, problem solving, and interpersonal communication; and
 - c. understand and identify emotions.

The goals for addressing these student developmental needs through an educational program are to:

- Enhance student school readiness, academic success and use of good citizenship skills;
- Foster a safe, supportive learning environment where students feel respected and valued;
- Teach social and emotional skills to all students; and
- Promote student social and emotional well-being by partnering with families and communities.

Programming

In order to promote the social and emotional development of all students, the District will pursue program development in the following areas:

- A. **Classroom and School-Wide Programming:** Implement evidence-based, age and culturally appropriate classroom instruction and school-wide strategies that teach social and emotional skills, promote optimal mental health, and prevent risky behaviors for all students.
- B. **Staff Development and Training:** Provide staff development to all school personnel, including administrative, academic, pupil support and ancillary staff in age-appropriate social, emotional, and academic learning and ways to promote it in the classroom.
- C. **Parent and Family Involvement:** Provide parents and families with learning opportunities related to the importance of their children’s optimal social and emotional development, and ways to enhance it.

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Programming (continued)

- D. **Community Partnerships:** Establish partnerships with diverse community agencies and organizations to assure a coordinated approach to addressing children's mental health and social and emotional development.
- E. **Early Identification and Intervention:** Utilize existing protocols to screen, assess and provide early intervention for students who have significant risk factors for social, emotional, or mental health problems that impact learning.
- F. **Assessment and Intervention:** Build and strengthen referral and follow-up mechanisms for providing effective clinical services for children with social, emotional, and mental health issues that impact learning through student and family support services, school-based intervention, and school and community linked services and supports.

Services

Support services provided by the school nurse, school social worker, school psychologist, and behavior specialist shall be available for students with social and emotional difficulties that impact learning. Also, linkages and referrals will be available with collaborative partners when more extensive services are needed.

Protocols

The social and emotional learning (SEL) approach to be used in the District shall support the mission to achieve a school culture that supports academic achievement and social and emotional competence and well-being and is responsive to the diversity and needs of District students. Supporting the development of students' social and emotional competence is one of the foundation blocks of this District, inextricably tied to academic success. The Board believes that to succeed academically and become empathic, engaged, and ethical citizens, students need opportunities to develop social and emotional competence. The District's SEL approach shall foster resilience, responsibility, supportive relationships, and reflection and provide opportunities for students to develop and practice important social and emotional learning competencies.

The District will build a comprehensive, coordinated, and systematic web of services by collaborating with schools, communities, and families to align resources so that students are academically successful and socially and emotionally competent.

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Protocols (continued)

The District will incorporate SEL at a system level to build a foundation to support academic and lifelong achievement and to facilitate the social and emotional well-being of students in prekindergarten through grade 8 by working to:

- Engage all students with comprehensive SEL, encapsulating a common language and framework.
- Ensure that all students gain skills in the six competencies that researchers agree are essential to success in school and life. These competencies are self-management; self-awareness; responsible decision making; relationship skills; social awareness; and growth mindset.
- Support positive, equitable school environments in which all students learn the skills needed to be prepared for career, college and life.

Relationships between staff and students and students and students will be central to all strategies employed with the understanding that student choice and voice are necessary for successful implementation of the District SEL program.

The District's SEL program shall be a multi-tiered systems approach. An evidence-based approach to SEL, such as Responsive Classroom, the Choose Love Enrichment Program, or the Second Step Program shall be considered. The systems approach shall include professional development, curriculum development, tiered support, and selected targeted programming.

Strategies shall be implemented on a three-tiered system.

- Tier 1 SEL strategies are designed to be implemented for all students.
- Tier 2 strategies are designed to be implemented with targeted groups of students identified with minimal social and emotional challenges that interfere with academic participation and achievement, and
- Tier 3 strategies will be implemented with students identified as having significant social and emotional challenges needing significant interventions to ensure appropriate participation in school and academic achievement.

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(4131 – Staff Development)
(5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)
(5131 – Conduct)
(5131.21 – Violent and Aggressive Behavior)
(5131.911 – Bullying/Safe School Climate)
(5131.912 – Aggressive Behavior)
(5131.913 – Cyberbullying)
(5141.4 – Child Abuse and Neglect)
(5141.5 – Suicide Prevention/Intervention)
(5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
(5144.12 – Restorative Justice Approach to School Discipline)
(5144.5 – Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive School Behavior)
(5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)
(5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)
(5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)
(5145.511 – Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program)
(5145.52 – Harassment)
(5145.53 – Human Dignity)
(5145.54 – Civility)
(6114.7 – School Safety)
(6142.101 – Student Wellness)
(6142.11 – Human Relations Education)
(6164.2 – Guidance/Counseling Services)
(6164.3 – Psychological Services)
(6164.6 – Social Work Services)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 10-15b Access of parent or guardian to student's records. Inspection and
 subpoena of school or student records.
 10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rule(s), policies, and procedures
 10-222d Policy on bullying behavior as amended by PA 08-160, P.A. 11-
 232, P.A. 14-172, PA 18-15 and PA 19-166
 Public Act 19-166, An Act Concerning School Climates

Policy adopted: April 21, 2020

STERLING PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Sterling, Connecticut

Social and Emotional Learning Standards

SEL is a process for helping children and adults develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. SEL teaches the skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work, effectively and ethically.

Self-Awareness

Develop self-awareness competencies to:

- Identify one's emotions
- Maintain an accurate and positive self-concept
- Recognize individual strengths
- Experience a sense of self-efficacy

Indicators

- Demonstrate knowledge of one's emotions.
- Demonstrate knowledge of personal strengths, challenges and potential.
- Demonstrate a sense of self-efficacy.

Self-Management

Develop self-management competencies to:

- Regulate emotions
- Manage stress
- Monitor and achieve behaviors related to school and life success

Indicators

- Demonstrate ability to manage emotions.
- Demonstrate an understanding of honesty and integrity.
- Demonstrate ability to set and achieve goals for success.

Social Awareness

Develop social awareness competencies to:

- Exhibit empathy
- Appreciate diversity
- Understand social and ethical norms for behavior
- Recognize family, school, and community supports

Indicators

- Demonstrate awareness of other people's emotions and perspectives.
- Demonstrate an awareness of cultural factors and respect for individual differences.
- Demonstrate awareness of how to get help and support as needed.

Relationship Skills

Develop relationship competencies to:

- Build and maintain relationships with diverse groups & individuals
- Communicate clearly to express needs and resolve conflict

Indicators

- Use communication and social skills to positively interact with others.
- Develop constructive relationships with individuals of diverse backgrounds, abilities and lifestyles.
- Demonstrate the ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.

Responsible Decision Making

Develop responsible decision-making skills to:

- Problem solve effectively
- Maintain accountable behaviors in school, personal and community contexts

Indicators

- Consider ethical and societal factors when making decisions.
- Use a systematic approach to decision making.
- Apply problem-solving skills to responsibly address daily academic and social situations.
- Understand and demonstrate personal responsibility.
- Positively contribute to one's community.

