EAB

Social-Emotional Support Services for Secondary Students

District Leadership Forum

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1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL) practices into school culture to provide academic and social support for secondary students. SEL practices have unique benefits for secondary students, who face an especially critical social and emotional development period. Experts note that helping students develop core SEL competencies prepares them for careers and college, improves relationships with their peers, reduces bullying, and improves absorption of academic content.[1]

Use advisory group programs to build relationships between teachers and students and to facilitate SEL content delivery. Administrators at **District E** explain that, in addition to covering topics from career readiness to social media and bullying, advisory groups provide academic accountability for students. Advisory group teachers meet weekly with students and rely on personal relationships with students to drive meaningful conversations about grades and missing assignments. Administrators credit their advisory group program with improved attendance, decreased disciplinary referrals, and increased academic performance.

Implement restorative disciplinary practices to build SEL competencies related to conflict resolution and behavior management. District leadership at **District F** replaced exclusionary disciplinary consequences (e.g., detentions, out-of-school suspensions) with corrective disciplinary interventions (e.g., learning centers, restorative conferences) at secondary schools in the district. Students at one district school opt into learning centers as an alternative to out-of-school suspensions. Through these restorative practices, administrators teach students problem-solving skills and behavior management. Furthermore, teachers at the district's opt-in learning center provide students with tutoring on their academic core content. Since introducing the learning center, administrators have seen significant decreases in repeat suspensions for their secondary students.

Build district- and school-level administrator support for SEL by training school leaders on adult SEL competencies. Administrators at **District F** lead monthly SEL training sessions for their school-level administrators (e.g., principals, deans of students). These sessions cover topics such as building relationships with students and making academic content interactive. District-level administrators leverage these relationships with school leaders to foster support for SEL practice implementation at the school level. Specifically, district-level administrators emphasize that teachers respond more positively to SEL practice implementation when school-level administrators prioritize these efforts themselves.

Present evidence behind SEL programs' value to increase teacher support. Administrators at **District E** conducted a year-long action research project with their student body to measure the value of SEL practices. Students receiving SEL supports saw improved attendance, behavioral outcomes, and academic outcomes. Administrators presented results from this project at a faculty-wide meeting about implementing SEL practices to gain support for these new initiatives.

[1] *SEL for Secondary Students*. CASEL. http://secondaryguide.casel.org/#Importance

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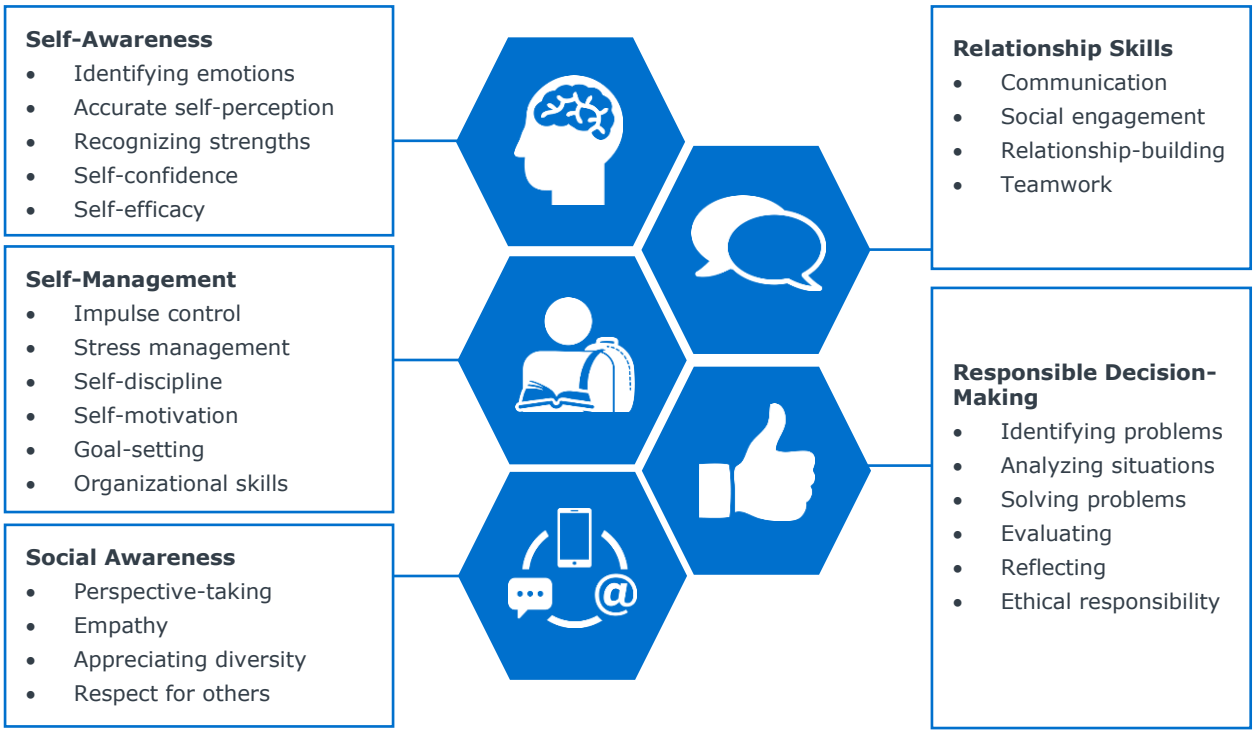
2) Effective Social-Emotional Learning Practices

Background

Develop Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies to Benefit Students Both Inside and Outside the Classroom

Incorporating SEL practices at the secondary level provides specific benefits for secondary students entering a critical development period. SEL competencies help students in this age group navigate increasingly complex relationships, both with their friends and with themselves.[2] Secondary-aged students engage in riskier behavior and navigate increasingly complex social challenges (e.g., peer pressure, exposure to social media). In a survey of secondary students conducted by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the majority believed that SEL practices prepare them for careers and college, improve relationships with peers, reduce bullying, and improve absorption of academic content.[3]

Sample Five Core SEL Competencies from CASEL[4]



Research shows that students participating in SEL programs benefit academically, compared to students who do not participate.[5] A 2011 meta-analysis of 213 studies involving 270,000 students (ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade) found that students participating in evidence-based SEL programs saw an 11 percentile-point increase in academic achievement.[6] Across grade levels, students participating in SEL

[2] *SEL for Secondary Students*. CASEL. http://secondaryguide.casel.org/#Importance
[3] *Perspectives of Youth on High School & Social and Emotional Learning*. CASEL. https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Respected.pdf
[4] "Core SEL Competencies". CASEL. https://casel.org/core-competencies/
[5] "SEL Impact". CASEL. https://casel.org/impact/
[6] *The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning*. Joseph Durlak, Roger Weissberg, Allison Dymnicki, Rebecca Taylor, and Kriston Schellinger. Child Development. https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/meta-analysis-child-development-1.pdf

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programs also show improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school.[7]

SEL programs provide benefits far beyond the classroom as well. Building SEL competencies for students prepares them for college, professional life, and future relationships.[8] Administrators at **District B** explain that colleges and universities express increasing concern with the emotional stability and resilience of incoming students. By focusing on building SEL competencies in secondary students, the district prides itself on developing students that are both academically and socio-emotionally prepared for postsecondary education.

Contacts at **District D** surveyed local employers to identify the top ten characteristics and skills desired for future employees. By conducting this survey, administrators aimed to discover areas where students were unprepared for future employment. To further highlight the demand for SEL development, of the top ten skills named by employers, five were non-academic SEL competencies (e.g., problem-solving, self-regulation).

Incorporate SEL Competencies and Content into Core Academic Curriculum

Ideally, experts recommend infusing SEL into core academic content as much as possible.[9] However, contacts at some profiled districts note difficulties with integrating academics and SEL early on, due to lack of support from resistant teachers. Administrators at most profiled districts provide a framework for SEL support outside the classroom, with the goal of incorporating SEL into every facet of school life including core academic content. Administrators at **District F** note that they want each classroom lesson to include both an academic learning objective and a SEL learning objective.

Mental Health Support Services

Include Mental Health Interventions to Provide a Well-Rounded SEL Program

While many SEL programs focus on developing competencies around communication and relationships, students cannot begin to develop this critical skillset if they suffer from mental health concerns. Administrators at **District C** and **District D** provide mental health interventions to support at-risk students.

EAB's report on **Creating a Culture of Resilience and Wellness to Prevent Suicide** explores in greater depth how districts develop initiatives and programs to improve student resilience.

District C faces state-wide challenges around mental health (e.g., rising suicide rates). In response to this, district administrators implemented two programs designed to identify mental health risks in the community and build resilience among both faculty and students. By providing a solid foundation for student mental health, district leaders allow students to turn their attention to both academic and SEL content in the classroom.

Administrators at District C explain that the Youth Mental Health First Aid program trains adults in the school community to recognize signs of stress and indicators of mental health issues in students, specifically youth between the ages of 12 and 18. In addition, this program teaches a five-step action plan (using the acronym ALGEE) that adults can take to address these issues once they are identified.

[7] "SEL Impact". CASEL. https://casel.org/impact/
[8] Ibid.
[9] *SXSW EDU 2019: How to infuse SEL into core curriculum subjects*. Roger Riddell. EducationDive. https://www.educationdive.com/news/sxsw-edu-2019-how-to-infuse-sel-into-core-curriculum-subjects/549836/

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Five-Step Action Plan for Youth Mental Health First Aid[10]

A Assess for suicide or risk of harm.

L Listen non-judgmentally.

G Give reassurance and information.

E Encourage appropriate professional help.

E Encourage self-help and other support strategies.

All counselors, psychologists, and nurses at District C have completed this training. Typically, teachers complete this training during the school day, either with substitutes providing classroom coverage or on days when students are out of school. Schools provide this training voluntarily to teachers, though the district is considering mandatory participation. Contacts note that the district must train 125 people a year as a condition of a grant funding this program.

District administrators at District C credit their Sources of Strength program with further supporting student mental health within the district's larger SEL development efforts. The program works with peer leaders to positively impact the school community by building a support network and raising awareness about risk factors for suicide. During implementation, teachers nominate a diverse group of students for peer leader roles, but after the first year, the recruitment and nomination process is often led by the peer leaders from the previous year.[11]

Sources of Strength builds programming around eight core areas of support (the Sources of Strength) that students can lean on during difficult periods. Peer leaders introduce students to the eight Sources of Strength through social media campaigns, encouraging them to share stories about one source of strength in their life.[12] At District C, the program culminates in a week-long, school-wide advocacy and awareness campaign.

[10] "Overview". Youth Mental Health First Aid. https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Youth-Mental-Health-First-Aid-Overview.pdf
[11] "Peer Leaders". Sources of Strength. https://sourcesofstrength.org/peer-leaders/
[12] Ibid.

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The Eight Sources of Strength[13]

Identify At-Risk Students for Targeted SEL Interventions

At **District D**, the district received a grant to hire a mindfulness coach, who helps at-risk students develop mindfulness practices (e.g., stress management, mindful listening). At the beginning of the school year, administrators identify at-risk students using teacher recommendations and data on disciplinary referrals, attendance, and safety referrals. Secondary students can self-identify and request support as well. Students receiving mindfulness coaching see social benefits such as increased ability to self-advocate within the school community. For participating students, attendance rates increased and disciplinary referral rates decreased.

Administrators at **District A** use the Devereux Students Strengths Assessment (DESSA), a standardized strength-based measure of social and emotional competencies, to identify at-risk students for SEL interventions. Teachers assess each student during eighth grade using the short eight-question DESSA screening. If students identify as potentially at-risk, teachers conduct a full 72 question assessment to determine interventions required. In addition, contacts consider student history and teacher recommendations to provide targeted interventions. At the secondary school level, administrators use small group or individual instruction led by counselors and social workers for students who require additional SEL support outside the classroom. District A operates on an 8th–12th grade secondary school model, and administrators currently only use the DESSA screening tool with their eighth-grade students. However, administrators may expand use to additional grades now that DESSA released a screening tool for 9th–12th grade students.

[13] "Strength Specific Campaigns". Sources of Strength. https://sourcesofstrength.org/strength-specific-campaigns/

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Advisory Groups

Prioritize Building Teacher-Student Relationships through Advisory Group Models to Gain Student Support for SEL

Administrators at **District C** and **District E** leverage advisory group models to build relationships between teachers and students and to incorporate SEL into the curriculum. At District C, teachers lead skill-based elective courses during advisory group periods. These courses help students develop relationships with educators outside the academic classroom. Administrators explain that building these relationships with trusted adults outside the classroom creates a support network for students who might be struggling. Advisory groups at District E provide an accountability system for students, which administrators credit for increased attendance and improved academic performance.

District C operates an advisory group program (in addition to a separate homeroom program) to develop SEL competencies and other tangible skills outside the classroom. Administrators explain that the advisory group program provides students with options to build a variety of skills and competencies. Schools reserve a 20-minute block at the same time every day for students to participate. Within this block, teachers provide mandatory SEL lessons (e.g., suicide awareness, social media, bullying) once weekly. For the other four days each week, teachers offer tutoring and academic support, or lead classes on topics of interest to them personally (i.e., cooking, yoga, fencing). Students can choose to receive additional academic support or participate in these courses, which they sign up for on a monthly basis. Contacts note that these elective courses provide opportunities for students and teachers to build relationships around areas of common interest, outside the academic classroom.

Administrators at District E decided to implement an advisory group program after budget cuts eliminated many extracurricular programs. Research shows that extracurriculars increase students' self-esteem, improve social skills, and boost academic performance.[14] In addition, extracurriculars build relationships between students and trusted adults (e.g., a coach or director). The district's new advisory group program served as a replacement vehicle for many of the SEL-related benefits of extracurriculars.

[14] "Activities for Teens: Developing Strong Behavioral Health". Family First Adolescent Services. https://familyfirstas.com/extracurricular-activities-for-teens/

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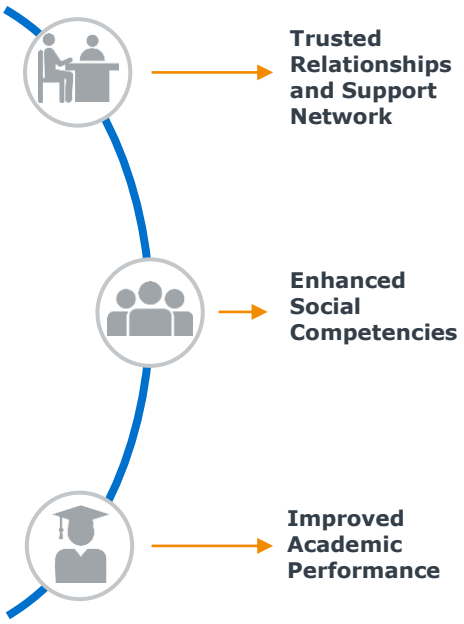
Benefits of the Advisory Group Program at *District E*



Trusted Relationships and Support Network

Administrators note the importance of providing each student with a trusted adult with whom they can build a relationship. In addition, students build a support network among their peers in an advisory group model through group celebrations and social time.

Enhanced Social Competencies

Administrators explain that the SEL lessons mandated during advisory group periods teach students the skills needed to navigate today's increasingly complex social climate. Students acquire the language and tools needed to discuss social justice issues such as racism.

Improved Academic Performance

Advisory group teachers provide accountability for students. Administrators explain that teachers leverage their relationships with students to ensure students complete missing assignments and seek needed academic support.

Teachers at District E run advisory groups of around 20 students, which meet daily for 30 minutes between fourth and fifth period. Administrators recommend scheduling advisory periods for the middle of the day to accommodate students needing to leave school early or arrive late due to external obligations (e.g., school athletics, medical appointments).

Example Week of Advisory Group Curriculum at *District E*

Example Week of Advisory Group Curriculum		
	Plan:	**Goal:**
Monday	*SEL Lesson*	Teachers present a lesson covering a core SEL competency (e.g., relationship skills, responsible decision-making).
Tuesday	*Discussion on SEL Lesson*	Students break into groups and discuss the prior day's SEL lesson. Teachers moderate these group discussions.
Wednesday	*Grade Reports*	Teachers hand out grades from academic core content classes and meet with students who have missing work.
Thursday	*Academic Growth*	Students work on self-management skills. They use this time to check in with core content teachers and complete overdue assignments.
Friday	*Community Building*	Teachers plan a celebration or social activity for students, such as a birthday celebration. This builds community among advisory students.

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Administrators at **District A** hired a social-emotional and academic development (SEAD) coach for the district's secondary school. The SEAD coach helps teachers develop SEL curricula for their advisory group program through professional learning communities.

Schools at District E use the first week of classes as an intensive introduction to the advisory group model for students. During this week, students discuss the purpose of the advisory group, conduct team-building exercises, and outline goals for the year. Students receive additional time in their advisory groups during this week (compared to during the rest of the school year) to meet with teachers and conduct administrative tasks such as finalizing course registration and course schedules. By illustrating the function of advisory groups during the first week of class, students understand the goals of the advisory group model, increasing the likelihood of academic success.

The advisory group program at **District A** currently serves eighth and ninth grades students, though administrators plan to expand the program through 12th grade. In eighth grade, these lessons come from the Second Step curriculum. In ninth grade, the curriculum modifies SEL content from Second Step as well as pulling from other external sources.

Disciplinary Programs

Incorporate SEL Practices into Disciplinary Programs to Provide Support for Students with Behavioral Issues

Research shows that traditional disciplinary practices tend to prove ineffective.[15] Removing students from the classroom disrupts learning unnecessarily without providing behavior-reducing interventions. To reduce recidivism, some districts incorporate SEL practices into their disciplinary processes.

District leadership at **District F** replaced exclusionary disciplinary consequences (e.g., detentions, out-of-school suspensions) with corrective disciplinary interventions (e.g., restorative justice and restorative conferences) at some secondary schools in the district. Through this shift, the district aims to reduce recidivism among suspended students.

An example of a restorative disciplinary practice, restorative conferences serve as a conflict-management technique for students, faculty, or staff.[16] These conferences function as an opportunity for key stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, parents) to discuss the incident together, with the goal of repairing the harm caused and improving future behavior.

[15] "Getting SEL-Informed Discipline Policies Right". Education First. https://education-first.com/getting-sel-informed-discipline-policies-right/
[16] *Implementation and Administration of Elemiddle Schools*. EAB. https://www.eab.com/research-and-insights/superintendent-leadership-forum/custom/2019/implementation-and-administration-of-elemiddle-schools

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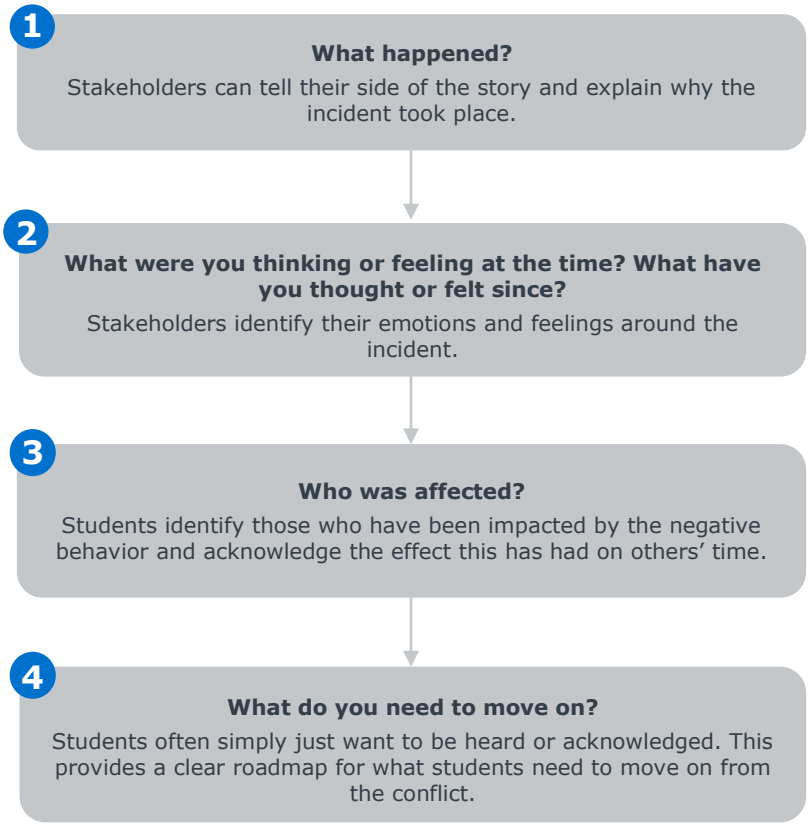
Framework for Restorative Conferences[17]



At one secondary school at District F, in the event of a serious disciplinary infraction, students have the option to attend an in-school learning center instead of receiving an out-of-school suspension. At the learning center, students receive coaching on problem-solving skills and behavior management, as well as tutoring on core academic content. One teacher runs the learning center, but core content teachers also rotate in throughout the day to provide further academic assistance. Contacts note that students typically choose to attend the center over suspension. Teachers originally resisted this new option, believing students did not receive adequate punishment for their misbehavior. However, administrators explain that reduced behavioral issues and increased academic performance for students attending the center have convinced teachers of the value of this new disciplinary practice.

Since implementing these broader disciplinary changes, contacts at District F have seen significant decreases in repeat suspensions for their secondary students.

[17] *Implementation and Administration of Elemiddle Schools*. EAB. https://www.eab.com/research-and-insights/superintendent-leadership-forum/custom/2019/implementation-and-administration-of-elemiddle-schools

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3) Training Stakeholders on Social-Emotional Learning Practices

Administrative Support

Illustrate the Importance of SEL to All Staff Members to Infuse SEL into the School-Wide Culture and Increase Adoption of SEL Practices

Administrators at all profiled districts emphasize the importance of making SEL a critical part of district identity to gain support from resistant teachers. Contacts emphasize the importance of setting a clear precedent that all teachers, administrators, and staff must adopt SEL practices.

Administrators at **District E** used an illustrative exercise at schools when first introducing SEL practices in the classroom. To convey the value of SEL practices, administrators posted sticky notes on the school walls, with each note listing the name of one student. Administrators then had teachers pull the names of students they felt they knew personally. Out of a student body of 1,200 students, almost 400 student names remained on the wall. Administrators explain this one exercise helped teachers understand how many students lacked a trusted adult at school, assisting the district-wide mindset shift towards accepting the need for SEL.

Rely on Student Voices to Communicate the Value of SEL Practices to Parents

Administrators at profiled school districts rely on school-level leaders and students to convey information about the implementation of SEL practices to families and parents. For example, at **District E**, parents learn about advisory group programs through the principal's newsletters. Contacts at **District D** explain that parents in their district inherently appreciate the value of SEL for teaching soft skills and providing a character education for students.

Develop SEL Competencies for District-Level and School-Level Administrators First to Enable a Student-Focused SEL Practice Implementation

Administrators at **District B** and **District F** highlight the importance of building adult SEL competencies before implementing student-centered SEL practices. CASEL emphasizes the need for adults to develop SEL competencies to manage their own emotions, stress, and job satisfaction. Then, they can appropriately model positive social and emotional skills for students.[18] In addition, by personally seeing the value of SEL, teachers are more likely to support growing student-centered SEL programs.

Leadership at District B signed an agreement with CASEL to implement SEL practices across the district. District administrators sent two to four school leaders each year for four years to train with CASEL on SEL practices. Contacts credit CASEL with highlighting the importance of building adult competencies for SEL before integrating them into curriculum for students.

For more information on building SEL competencies for school and district leaders, please see EAB's report on **Emotional Intelligence in District Leadership**.

[18] "Adult SEL Resources". CASEL. https://casel.org/adult-sel/

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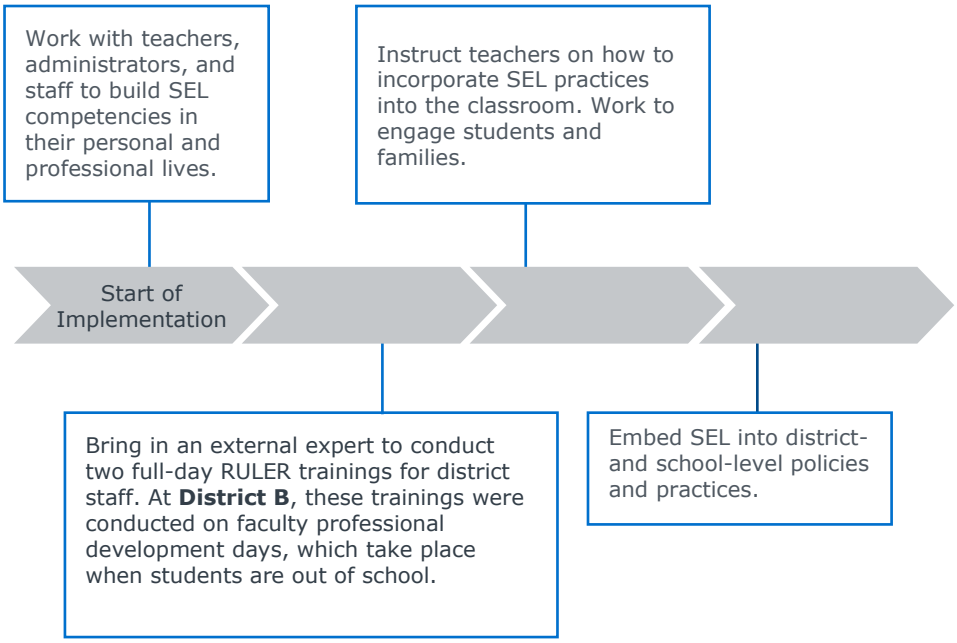
RULER is an approach to SEL created by the **Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.** It supports positive emotional climates and the development of these skills in both students and the adults in their lives.

Administrators at District B also recommend the RULER approach to SEL. RULER stands for Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, and Regulating emotions.[19] This approach begins with staff building SEL competencies in their personal and professional lives, continues with classroom instruction and family engagement, and then embeds SEL into school-wide policies and practices.[20]

RULER Approach to SEL at *District B*



Administrators at District F lead monthly training sessions for secondary school administrators to provide additional SEL support on topics such as building relationships with students and making academic content interactive. District-level administrators rely on relationships with school leaders to foster support for SEL implementation. Contacts explain that teachers respond more positively to SEL practice implementation when building-level administrators model these efforts themselves. Through the professional development training sessions, district administrators provide resources for school leaders to bring SEL practices back to their faculty and staff. In instances where school-level administrators resist SEL implementation, contacts at District F work closely with the district's teaching and learning department to help independently motivated teachers integrate SEL practices into their classrooms.

Include Support Staff when Implementing SEL Practices

Administrators at **District C** explain that building SEL competencies for support staff can help mitigate conflict between support staff and students. In addition, this creates a cohesive approach to SEL among all adult faculty and staff in the school. The district implemented Life Space Crisis Intervention training and fetal alcohol spectrum support training for their support staff (e.g., paraprofessionals, bus drivers). These mandatory trainings take place on in-service days when students are not in school. Since implementing these trainings, the district noted significant decreases in suspensions and behavioral problems for students, especially for students with special needs who require more sensitive conflict intervention methods from staff.

[19] "RULER FAQ". Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. http://ei.yale.edu/ruler/faq/
[20] Ibid.

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Emphasize the Importance of SEL During Interviews and Orientation to Ensure New Teachers Support SEL Practices

Administrators at **District E** and **District F** build SEL into their recruitment and onboarding efforts to ensure new teachers at the district understand that they must teach both social-emotional and academic content. Contacts explain that to achieve this district-level mindset shift, teachers need to understand the value of SEL from the outset of their employment.

Administrators at District E incorporate questions about their SEL practices into the interview process for prospective teachers. Contacts recommend asking teacher candidates questions to gauge their investment in teaching the "whole child" rather than simply teaching content. For example, administrators at District E ask prospective teachers how they view their responsibility when helping students make decisions about their future and when helping them overcome challenges. In addition, because the advisory group program is a critical part of their district's identity, administrators ask about teacher experience with this model during interviews. By including these questions during teacher recruitment, administrators set the expectation that teachers at their district will understand the importance of SEL and support teaching SEL content to their students. Incorporating these questions into the initial screening process also allows administrators to avoid hiring teachers who might undermine district efforts to implement SEL practices.

During the new teacher onboarding process, administrators at **District F** provide training on SEL practices for their novice teachers during summer bootcamp sessions.

SEL Training for New Teachers at *District F*

Summer Bootcamp Trainings

These trainings cover the foundations of SEL practices and convey the importance of implementing SEL practices in the classroom. After the summer bootcamps, these new teachers receive mentors to ensure smooth day-to-day incorporation of SEL practices into the classroom.

Mentorships

Teacher mentors provide academic and SEL coaching through co-teaching lessons and providing feedback on classroom delivery. Administrators explain that mentors provide an accountability system to ensure that new teachers incorporate SEL into their lessons after the initial training process.

Leverage Familiar Course Structures to Ease Teachers' Transitions Toward SEL Practices

Contacts at **District E** report that teachers support SEL most readily when new practices operate similarly to existing academic practices that they already understand. This way, teachers do not have to learn both new practices and new structures.

When implementing an advisory group model, administrators at District E adopted course structures like those used for academic courses to help teachers adjust to teaching SEL content in addition to academic content. For example, contacts built graded SEL standards into the advisory group curriculum to provide a way for

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teachers to assess student progress. In addition, district-level administrators provide a curriculum and framework to help teachers implement in-classroom SEL practices.

Similar to how teachers receive coaching on best practices in delivering academic content, district administrators at **District B** hired five secondary school teachers to serve as SEL coaches for their peers.

SEL Coaching Model at *District B*

Hiring Process

- School administrators nominate early adopter teachers to serve as coaches.
- The district hired five coaches, who receive training from RULER on SEL best practices.
- Hired coaches receive stipends as additional compensation for their work.

Working with Peers

- Teachers request training on SEL practices and meet with SEL coaches during free periods.
- SEL coaches teach faculty strategies to implement SEL in the classroom.
- School administrators arrange coaches' schedules so that at least one coach is available during each free period.
- Administrators recommend designating at least one department head as an SEL coach, as they often have greater schedule flexibility than typical classroom teachers.

Additional Responsibilities

- Coaches conduct weekly professional development events around SEL that teachers voluntarily attend.
- The five SEL coaches meet weekly with district administrators and serve as a leadership team for district-level SEL efforts.

Resistant Stakeholders

Mitigate Resistance to SEL Practices by Leveraging Early-Adopter Peers and Supportive Administrators

Administrators at **District E** and **District F** use relationships with supportive administrators and early adopter peers to push resistant teachers to adopt SEL practices.

Contacts at District E leverage early-adopter peers to mitigate pushback from resistant teachers. Schools host mandatory monthly faculty meetings to discuss the advisory group model and to provide SEL lessons for teachers to use in their advisory group classrooms. When resistant teachers voice concerns or apprehension with the model, supportive peers offer advice and shared ideas for collaboration. Contacts note that these meetings build grassroots support for SEL practices through the shared learning community. Administrators caution that providing too rigid of a structure for SEL lesson delivery can frustrate early adopter teachers, who desire independence and flexibility to modify coursework to the needs of their students. To maximize teacher support for new SEL practices, consider providing options for SEL curricula without mandating that teachers use any single framework.

Administrators at **District E** explain these meetings also provide direct benefits to students, as they support teachers in building the skills needed to effectively deliver SEL lessons. Administrators credit the monthly staff meetings with improving students' SEL-related outcomes.

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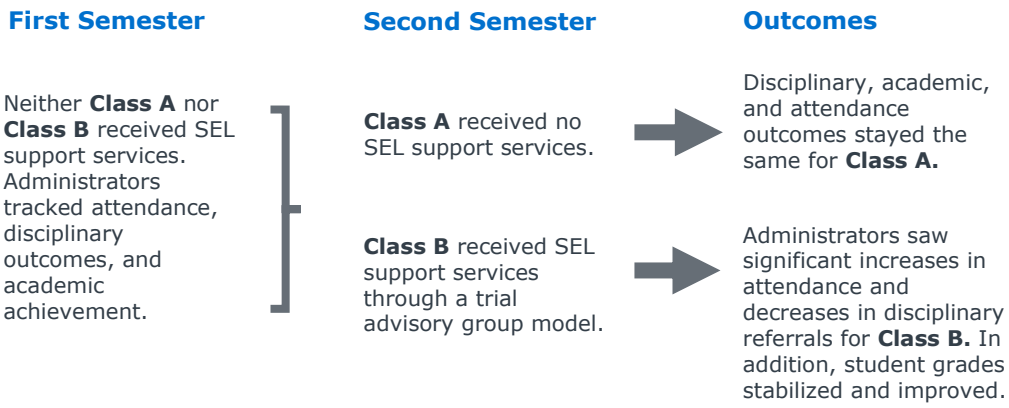
Administrators at District F note that faculty challenged the shift to restorative disciplinary practices, contending that these new disciplinary consequences did not adequately punish students. To ease the transition toward restorative practices, school leaders met one-on-one with resistant teachers and explained the purpose of the shift. School leaders communicated that teachers retain the autonomy to determine the disciplinary consequences for students within the classroom. However, once students require interventions outside the classroom, administrators emphasize their authority to make final decisions regarding disciplinary consequences.

Data and Outcomes

Communicate the Value of SEL Programs using Data to Drive Teacher Adoption

Prior to implementing the advisory group program, administrators at **District E** conducted a year-long research project with their student body to measure the value of SEL practices. Contacts used their two core support classes (which are composed of students who fail two or more core content classes) to gauge the value of an advisory group program. Students in one core support class received SEL support services during their second semester, while the students in the other class did not. Administrators designed this project to illustrate the impact of implementing SEL practices on student outcomes (e.g., attendance rates, academic achievement).

Advisory Group Research Process used at *District E*



Contacts shared the outcomes of this research with teachers at the end of the school year during a faculty-wide meeting explaining the new advisory model. Offering evidence of the program's value provided a clear rationale behind the practice and helped increase teacher acceptance of the new model.

Administrators at District E also leverage data assessing their advisory group program to provide continued evidence about the importance of teacher support for SEL. Contacts gathered feedback on their advisory group program through end-of-year student exit surveys.

This information provides an accountability system for teachers, allowing school administrators to present tangible evidence of how teachers support or detract from student achievement through their classroom leadership. Contacts explain that consistent negative feedback shows resistant teachers that refusing to adopt SEL practices impedes student achievement. After administrators present negative survey results to resistant teachers, their following years' results improve significantly.

Administrators at **District C** credit transparency about district data on student mental health outcomes with increasing teacher support for SEL programs. During school

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board and faculty meetings, the district communicates data on the number of students referred to the Office of Child Services (OCS) and the number of suicide risk assessments conducted. This reporting contributes to a district-wide sense of responsibility to provide mental health services to students.

In addition, since implementing SEL practices in the district, administrators at District C have seen increases in graduation rates and attendance rates for all students (including for traditionally at-risk groups such as special education students and native students).

Since implementing suicide prevention programs and mental health awareness training, administrators at **District C** have seen decreases in the number of suicides in their district.

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4) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member institution approached the Forum with the following questions:

- What SEL practices have contact districts implemented at the high school level?
- What steps did contact districts take to implement these SEL practices successfully?
- What was the implementation timeline at contact districts?
- How did administrators at contact districts communicate these new practices to students? How did administrators at contact districts communicate these new practices to students' families?
- What are some challenges contact districts faced when implementing SEL practices? How did contact schools overcome these challenges?
- What resources or training did contact districts provide for teachers and administrators during implementation of SEL practices?
- What ongoing professional development opportunities do administrators at contact districts offer after initial implementation to ensure continued success of SEL programs?
- How has the implementation of SEL practices impacted staffing needs and roles at contact districts?
- What strategies have administrators at contact districts used to maximize faculty and staff support for chosen SEL practices?
- Have contact districts faced resistance from teachers when implementing SEL practices? If so, how have administrators at contact districts reacted to this resistance?
- How do teachers at contact districts balance teaching academic content with delivering SEL-related content?
- What effect have SEL practices had on students' academic achievement at contact districts?
- What social benefits do administrators at contact districts attribute to the implementation of high school-specific SEL practices?
- What effect have SEL practices had on disciplinary processes at contact districts? Have contact districts measured or observed any quantitative change in disciplinary outcomes?

Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- EAB's internal and online research libraries (eab.com)
- The Chronicle of Higher Education (http://chronicle.com)
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (http://nces.ed.gov/)

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Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed district-level administrators who oversee SEL at secondary schools in middle-income suburban or rural districts.

A Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Brief

Institution	Location	Approximate Enrollment
District A	Northeast	5,000
District B	Midwest	4,280
District C	Pacific West	9,010
District D	Midwest	320
District E	Pacific West	3,870
District F	South	38,630

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