



CSI SPOTLIGHT

DEEPER *Insights*



How Six States Are Collaborating
with Local and Regional Educators
to Implement Academic, Social, and
Emotional Learning

Collaborating
States Initiative

SEPTEMBER 2018

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Introduction

Since CASEL launched the [Collaborating States Initiative \(CSI\)](#) to support social and emotional learning (SEL) in 2016, participation has grown dramatically. CASEL initially planned to work with five states. In the past two years, the CSI team and its partners have worked with 25, which collectively serve about 11,500 school districts, 58,000 schools, and 30 million students. The initiative is nonpartisan—with blue states, red states, and purple states working together and learning from one another. Leaders in these states all share CASEL’s commitment to help ensure that preschool to high school students are fully prepared—academically, socially, and emotionally—to succeed in school, at work, and in life.

The purpose of the CSI is to help state education agencies create statewide conditions that will encourage and equip educators at the district level to engage in the work of promoting integrated, equity-focused, academic, social, and emotional learning.

This report offers an in-depth look at some innovative efforts currently underway in six states to actively partner with and support districts. These states are using a variety of strategies to engage stakeholders, create a learning community, and help districts navigate the challenges of implementing high-quality SEL.

- **Delaware**, with CSI’s help, will develop grade-level SEL competencies/standards, building on work that 14 other [states](#) have completed. To do so, Delaware educators have done extensive investigation and reflection over the past two years and have learned, first and foremost, to let educators lead from the grassroots, with support from the state education department, community groups, and others.
- **Iowa** and **North Dakota** are building on existing structures and processes to advance SEL implementation—the former by using a process that drives the rollout of every new initiative, the latter by

CASEL District Theory of Action: Focus Areas And Key Activities (2018)

Build foundational support and plan

- Develop a shared vision and plan for SEL.
- Promote collaboration among school and district leaders around SEL, academics, and equity.
- Communicate SEL as a district priority.
- Align resources for SEL.

Strengthen adult SEL competencies and capacity

- Develop central office expertise.
- Design and implement a professional learning program for SEL.
- Strengthen adult social-emotional competence.
- Promote equitable learning environments.

Promote SEL for students

- Adopt and implement PreK-12 SEL competencies/standards or guidelines.
- Adopt and implement evidence-based programs and practices.
- Integrate SEL with academics, district priorities, and policies.
- Develop and strengthen family and community partnerships.

Use data for continuous improvement

- Plan for improvement (Plan).
- Document and assess (Do).
- Report and reflect (Study).
- Action plan and share (Act).

relying on its regional centers for training and providing technical assistance to districts.

- **Minnesota** has completed an extensive process to adopt SEL competencies/standards and guidance. It now is piloting those resources to learn how to best support broad and sustainable implementation.
- **Rhode Island** relies heavily on input from local practitioners, who are sharing information on what schools and districts are doing to implement and teach SEL skills, such as aligning SEL with the multitiered system of supports in wide use by districts across the state.
- **Wisconsin** is using multiple channels—from websites and webinars to conferences and coaching—to support implementation. A major focus has been to align SEL with the many other related initiatives and priorities already in place, from character education to digital literacy.

Although these efforts are at various stages on the implementation continuum, all states share a commitment to (1) work closely with multiple stakeholders and respond to their practical needs, (2) align SEL with existing frameworks and priorities so busy educators don't reject SEL as just "one more thing," and (3) take advantage of existing infrastructure (notably regional education service centers) to reach local districts and schools.

A companion report — [Innovation in Action: How States and School Districts Are Collaborating to Promote](#)

[Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) — provides an overview of the strategies states have used to connect with, support, and learn from districts, recognizing that many districts are leading the way.

As documented more fully in our June 2018 brief, [District Recommendations for How States Can Support SEL](#), districts want states to:

- Help communicate the importance of SEL.
- Show the clear alignment among SEL and other priorities, regulations, and requirements.
- Advance the work by providing frameworks that allow for flexibility.
- Learn from, and take advantage of, good work already happening in districts.
- Use districts' requests for support of SEL to drive the state's work.
- Facilitate bidirectional communication.
- Help connect districts.

The sidebar above describes the recently revised CASEL *District Theory of Action* (TOA). The TOA, along with the synthesis of 25 participating states' SEL journeys, is informing the development of a CASEL *State Theory of Action*. This emerging State Theory of Action will serve as a road map for other states across the country seeking to advance SEL in systemic ways by creating the conditions for success for local educators.



Getting Started on an Educator-led Movement

Although social and emotional learning (SEL) has been a part of Delaware education in numerous ways for a long time, having champions from the field is critical. For Sherlynn Aurelio, who has helped lead the state's effort to improve SEL, an early "a-ha moment" came during the 2010-11 school year. Serving as a literacy specialist working with the lowest-performing readers in the East Side Charter School in Wilmington, she was struggling to get her older students to apply the effort she felt they were capable of. During a break, she tracked each student's school history and found examples of when every student did well.

She shared the data with her students to remind them that at one time each was academically successful and could be again. After explaining what their current test scores meant, students could set their own goals and state what they had to do differently to achieve them. "Part of the deal was for them to suggest how I could also help them. Each fall, winter, and spring, students recorded their clear goals and then we'd each sign an agreement," Aurelio says. Performance improved. Key to this was students' learning self-management by setting and working toward their own goals, gaining self-confidence through small, incremental improvements, and supporting other students when they made progress.

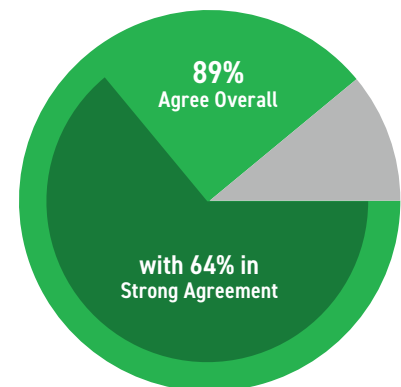
These same practices were occurring across the state. Many of the state's local districts and public charter schools were implementing SEL programs. Delaware's [Early Learning Foundations](#) include SEL expectations. School counselors were implementing the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Model Programs,

using [Mindset & Behavior Standards](#), which align with CASEL's work. Also, the state's ESSA plan identified the need for more focus on SEL. But efforts like these were not always consistent or coordinated.

Fast forward to the 2016–17 school year. Aurelio joined the [Rodel Teacher Council](#), convened in 2013 to elevate the voices of public school teachers on important issues affecting their work. She and her colleagues began researching issues such as bullying and student motivation. They discovered the CASEL [website](#) and [competencies wheel](#), which describes the five core SEL competencies. "When I saw the wheel, I said to myself that this is what it will take for urban education to change," says Aurelio.

The teacher council went on to conduct a statewide [survey](#) of teachers. The poll uncovered broad support for SEL, along with frustration that, despite multiple efforts in schools across the state, there was no common language for SEL, and student results remained unsatisfactory.

Nine of 10 educators agree that schools should place more emphasis on SEL





“Whatever we do has to be educator-led and grassroots.”

— SHERLYNN AURELIO

Seeking statewide support

Hoping to encourage action and now retired, Aurelio led a six-person Rodel Teacher Council SEL team that presented the survey results to the state school board in spring 2017. She and her colleagues had numerous conversations with others inside and outside the state, participated in CSI webinars, and conducted additional research.

Later that year, Aurelio and two colleagues shared the survey results and additional information with Secretary of Education Susan Bunting, who supported the creation of a plan for SEL. Dr. Bunting noted three primary conditions: (1) the effort must be educator-led from the grassroots; (2) it must align with work already underway in areas such as positive behavior supports and multitiered systems of supports; and (3) it must align with the state’s ESSA plan. The team then found Capital School District, in Dover, which had just begun its own SEL improvement work and was willing to be a pilot site.

The teachers’ plan, [*Creating a Common Language for Social and Emotional Learning in Delaware*](#), was the result of two years’ work. It defines SEL and shows how SEL connects to similar efforts in Delaware and nationally.

The Rodel Teacher Council and Capital School District conducted a two-hour interest workshop. From this, the Delaware SEL Collaborative was created, with representatives from several school districts, the department of education, and other partners such as the Rodel Foundation, a positive behavior support project, and a charter school network. The department of education has now formally applied to be part of the CSI. With support from the CSI, the Delaware Collaborative will focus on creating a two-year strategic plan that includes defining SEL competencies from the earliest learners through grade 12.

Aurelio says the commitment to grassroots action continues to be key—“Whatever we do has to be educator-led and grassroots.”

Using Existing Processes to Implement SEL for Sustainability

Whenever Iowa's education department launches and scales a new initiative, it uses implementation science to help ensure quality implementation at the front end and continuous improvement in the long term. Representatives from the department, school districts, and area education agencies meet to think through as many practical how-to questions as possible. "It's an intensive process," says Kay Augustine, an education consultant with the Bureau of Learner Strategies and Supports in the Iowa Department of Education. "It's always a joint rollout so that we're doing the initiative with practitioners and not to them."

Social and emotional learning (SEL) will benefit from this deliberate, thoughtful approach. In outlining the quality review process being used in developing SEL, department leaders anticipate that by fall 2019, districts and schools will begin piloting and refining the SEL materials being developed with extensive input from the field.

An initial stakeholder group worked throughout the summer of 2016. Then members shared their recommendations with a large and diverse stakeholder group during most of 2018 to identify competencies, learning targets, and developmental indicators. The department is now aligning these with other work being done across the agency.

The stakeholder work groups brought together a broad mix of voices from districts, regional area education

agencies, higher education institutions, school counselors, other state agencies, mental health professionals, youth, and nonprofit organizations. During the 2018-19 school year, stakeholders will assist in developing guidance and resources for schools to integrate SEL, along with behavior and mental wellness, within Iowa's multitiered systems of supports. This work is a component of [Iowa's School Climate Transformation Grant](#).

The department is using the Theory of Action developed through CASEL's [Collaborating Districts Initiative](#) to guide its work, in particular how to integrate SEL within academic instruction. "This allows conversations to happen throughout the existing curriculum, rather than separately at one specific time during the week," Augustine says.

A top priority is to encourage districts to base their strategies on data. Iowa has a strong and successful history with schools using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). This provides schools with a framework for building a multitiered system of supports for social-emotional-behavioral learning and mental health.

"Having good data and acting on it is key to internal sustainability," Augustine says, "We want data-based decision-making to be part of how districts operate, whether they are selecting an evidence-based practice

or monitoring progress in implementing.” Augustine also points to the annual school climate measure in Iowa’s ESSA plan “Conditions for Learning” survey, administered to students every spring, as well as data on behavior, attendance, and academics. The state has climate survey

“We want data-based decision-making to be part of how districts operate, whether they are selecting an evidence-based practice or monitoring progress in implementing.”

— KAY AUGUSTINE

data for grades 5-12 and will expand to grades 3 and 4, as well as develop teacher and parent versions in future years.

Throughout the process of integrating SEL into its schools, the state has actively engaged youth. “The first step is to get youth input on what SEL is and why they need it. This step took place through a series of focus groups across the state,” Augustine says. The next step is to hear their ideas on how to implement the desired practices.

“The students are brutally honest. For example, they know how important relationships are, but say they have no time in the day to develop them with their teachers.” She adds, “The youth have expertise, ideas, and energy. They deserve to be an authentic part of the process. It’s their lives, their school.”

Extensive engagement from multiple groups of stakeholders is time-consuming but necessary. “For us, slow is fast,” Augustine says.



Piloting Implementation Once Key Policy Resources Are in Place

The clock is ticking in Minnesota. By law, the state education agency's School Safety and Technical Assistance Center, where the social and emotional learning (SEL) work is housed, will close in a year. Having already developed SEL competencies and guidance on implementation, professional development, and assessment, school climate specialist Heather Hirsch and her colleagues are determined to use the highest-leverage strategies they can to ensure that the work spreads and deepens even if the center closes. The SEL work will continue regardless, though perhaps in a different department within the agency.

To that end, the state agency decided to conduct a pilot school program involving 10 districts: two in the Minneapolis metro area and the remainder in the more rural north. Participating districts are very low-performing under the state's accountability measures, and their discipline policies disproportionately affect students of color. Up to 30 schools will participate in a year of intensive professional development.

"We have the tools, guidance, resources, and technical assistance," Hirsch says. "We'll evaluate after a year and tweak them as needed." She adds that the pilot effort is being closely coordinated with other state agency departments, which are pooling funding streams and aligning requirements (see sidebar). "We're creating a network of support, a big tent."

Fostering Interagency Coordination

The Safety Center is working with multiple divisions within the state department of education, including the Divisions of School Support, Federal Programs, Special Education, Charter Schools, and the Offices of Equity and Opportunity and Indian Education. This pilot is giving all these divisions an opportunity to coordinate support and leverage each other's work to enhance school district outcomes.

For example, all have agreed that the districts' overarching goals of improving school climate and implementing SEL can be used as part of their school improvement plans, Title I and II plans, and relevant sections of their Achievement and Integration and Indian Education plans. "By coordinating at the agency level, we are reducing the need for districts to develop multiple, separate plans and acknowledging that SEL and school climate provide an overarching framework for school turnaround and improvement," Hirsch says. "Through this pilot, the agency is hoping to develop a model that better coordinates the support and technical assistance we provide to schools and districts."

The cornerstone of the pilot consists of four, full-day workshops:

- Day 1: School climate basics, including a self-assessment. Each participating district will decide whether to focus on implementing an SEL program or restorative practices, the two approaches on which the state has focused.
- Day 2: Choosing a framework and theory of action to organize the work.
- Day 3: Creating a three-to-five-year plan based on an analysis of the relevant climate data.
- Day 4: Developing a detailed communications, implementation, and evaluation plan for Year 1.

The workshops will be supplemented by bimonthly visits to each district and monthly coaching calls. In the north, the center will rely on staff support from the regional service centers to conduct the trainings. Center staff will handle training local Minneapolis teams.

“All districts are doing some K-3 SEL work,” Hirsch says. “All have some basic understanding. We want to tap into what they’re already doing and provide consistent experiences to help them strengthen their cultures and practices.”



“By coordinating at the agency level, we are reducing the need for districts to develop multiple, separate plans.”

— HEATHER HIRSCH

Leveraging Existing Systems to Support Implementation

In a mainly rural state like North Dakota, regional educational associations (REAs) can play an integral role in supporting educators across the state by delivering professional development for administrators and teachers, supporting school improvement, and providing data, technology services, and enhanced curricular offerings. When local educators expressed a need for more support with social and emotional learning (SEL), two of the state's eight REAs responded: the Mid-Dakota Educational Cooperative (MDEC) and the South East Educational Cooperative (SEEC).

"Each REA is responsible for meeting the needs of school districts in its own geographic area, but strong partnerships between REAs allow us to leverage our own niches to deliver high-quality services for our schools, regardless of geographic location," says Lyndsi Engstrom, program director at the MDEC. "MDEC and partner SEEC have taken the lead in developing the state's multitiered systems of supports as well as multiple health- and

wellness-related initiatives, so it made sense for the SEL work to live here."

One of the health-related initiatives in the state is a curriculum focused on trauma-sensitive schools, which has catalyzed increased awareness of SEL. Since January 2016, nearly half of the state's 174 school districts have engaged in the trauma-sensitive schools movement and routinely express the need for continued assistance. In response, a school leadership team has identified five core practices for schools to mitigate the effects of trauma and increase opportunities for learning for students with a trauma history:

- Promoting SEL
- Enhancing Psychological Safety through Relationships
- Engaging Families
- Collaborating with Community Partners
- Implementing and Maintaining Restorative (Alternative) Discipline Practices

"Each regional education association is responsible for meeting the needs of school districts in its own geographic area, but strong partnerships between REAs allow us to leverage our own niches to deliver high-quality services for our schools, regardless of geographic location."

— LYNDISI ENGSTROM

The student-friendly guides show how knowledge and skills advance as students grow older.

GRADE SPAN	STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO.....
K-2	1. Recognize and accurately label emotions, and identify situations that cause those emotions. 2. Differentiate between likes and dislikes. 3. Accept failure and demonstrate the ability to recover from perceived failures. 4. Identify and seek help when appropriate.
3-5	1. Describe a variety of emotions, and understand how emotions are linked to behavior. 2. Describe interests to pursue and skills to develop. 3. Develop a growth mindset for rigorous situations. 4. Describe an activity or task in which help is needed to be successful.



“We have been successful in developing a base of more than 200 trauma-sensitive schools trainers all across the state,” says Engstrom. “Since there is so much overlap with SEL, it made sense to align our work. The capacity-building model has been key in North Dakota, much more impactful than having a consultant visit for a day. It goes much farther to have boots on the ground.”

Along with Keely Ihry from SEEC and select leaders from the Department of Public Instruction, in September 2017 Engstrom convened an initial group of school personnel, including district-level coordinators, administrators, teachers, social workers, and school counselors to learn

more about SEL in the state and draft SEL learning goals during a one-day summit. Since then, the work group has developed and revised learning goals, using tools available from the Collaborating States Initiative, and translated them into student-friendly versions. North Dakota formally released the [guidelines](#) in June.

Next steps: In addition to developing implementation guidance and corresponding professional learning, REA leaders intend to develop the SEL work group into an SEL learning community similar to CASEL’s Collaborating States and Collaborating Districts Initiatives on a local scale—peers helping peers improve their know-how.

Building Educator Expertise through Professional Learning Communities

Social workers from across Rhode Island gave a standing ovation when state officials presented their voluntary social and emotional learning (SEL) standards at a meeting in November 2017. “They’d been rooting for years for something like this,” says David Sienko, director of the Office of Student, Community and Academic Supports at the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE).

The response reflected the state department’s ongoing efforts to address bottom-up demand from educators for help with SEL. “It started with our 2015 five-year strategic plan, which was based on surveys that included community members and educators across the state,” says Alice Woods, education specialist at RIDE. “SEL kept coming up as something people wanted. It was included in the strategic plan under global citizenship.”

A core advisory group of about 30 practitioners told the department that having voluntary SEL standards would help legitimize the work they were already doing to address children’s needs. Strong support from the field prompted Rhode Island to apply to join CASEL’s Collaborating States Initiative.

Today, the effort to help local educators implement the voluntary SEL competencies and accompanying guidance occurs mainly through a robust and growing community of practice. “We have between 350-400 people in the RIDE SEL listserv,” Woods says. “When we have a community

Community of Practice Topics

- Incorporating SEL strategies (Kingian nonviolence, mindfulness, restorative justice, and various SEL programs) at the middle school level in both urban and suburban settings.
- Sharing information on elementary schoolwide SEL programs (charter and suburban schools).
- Using data-based decision-making in SEL and developing appropriate goals for IEPs.
- Measuring SEL competencies.
- Integrating SEL within multitiered systems of support.
- Using the state’s SEL competencies/standards.

of practice meeting, we announce it to the listserv, and it's for anyone who wants to attend. We typically get about 80–100 people. The meetings happen after school. It's all voluntary, and there's no pay for attending. The people who come really want to be there. We usually have two to three a year, and this is our third year." Topics have ranged from integrating SEL into multitiered systems of supports to using data (see sidebar).

The sessions share promising practices about what districts already are doing. "We based it on the idea that success breeds success," Woods says. Every school is choosing its own path to address children's SEL needs. Some are purchasing evidence-based curriculum packages. Some are practicing restorative justice and mindfulness.

"We're saying, 'Yes, it all fits into the RIDE framework for SEL if it is evidence-based. Let's do it and let's share.' The more we've done that, the more the momentum has built," Woods says. "People are always eager to get more information about SEL and how others are implementing it. After every meeting we do an evaluation, and it's always 'more.' They want more training, more information, more of everything."

The extensive sharing has helped the state's educators develop "a level of maturity with the content that's really exciting," Sienko says. "We've moved from looking at

basic SEL programming to how you assess and measure SEL." State leaders are mapping the standards to grade-level or grade-span expectations as well as developing indicators for what that would look like at different age levels. "Eventually we'll develop resources and tools to help people provide instruction in those areas," Woods says.

RIDE is planning on offering another opportunity for districts to share their work. With the help of CASEL, RIDE will sponsor a one-day training on how to develop a districtwide vision and plan for SEL, and then bring districts together periodically to share their successes, barriers, and achievements.

Questions related to SEL have also been incorporated into SurveyWorks, the statewide survey administered to students, parents, teachers, and administrators. This provides data to schools and allows them to compare their results to other schools and the state as a whole.

The agency is strongly committed to SEL for the long term. Says State Education Commissioner Ken Wagner: "When students have these skills--when they are immersed in an environment that prioritizes social and emotional learning--they are better equipped to tackle challenges and be active and engaged partners in their education."

"After every meeting we do an evaluation, and it's always 'more.' They want more training, more information, more of everything."

— ALICE WOODS



Providing Multiple Training Options Responsive to Practitioners

Since the state adopted PreK-adulthood social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies earlier this year, Wisconsin leaders have been using multiple channels to share SEL information and best practices. A robust [website](#) features the competencies, along with related resources, guidance, videos, and case studies from participating districts.

An SEL conference attracted about 600 participants, a mix of counselors, teachers, specialists, psychologists, and administrators from urban, suburban, and rural districts that are at various stages of implementation. Presentations were deliberately kept to a minimum so practitioners could spend most of the time asking questions of peers who have experience implementing SEL. “They wanted to learn more about how they started, where they started, how they got buy-in, what kind of administrator support they receive, what were their biggest challenges, how they involved the community, and how they engaged teachers,” says Beth Herman, School Mental Health Training Consultant at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Monthly webinars will use the same strategy, with professional peers answering practical, everyday implementation questions from their colleagues. Monthly “office hours” will be an additional chance for the field to call in their questions.

Herman and her colleagues provide training to the 12 cooperative education service agencies and the Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Center, which will help deliver training to districts regionally. “The goal is to provide turnkey training to districts within the first year,” Herman says.

Aligning related efforts

A key challenge is to avoid making demands on districts with yet another program or intervention. “Schools are inundated with coaches,” says Herman. “Plus, we’re running out of people to provide the training. We’re trying to make this work manageable.”

To that end, the department is focusing on aligning SEL with existing efforts. For example, the website features links to related work in character education, out-of-school-time programs, trauma-sensitive schools, and resiliency programs. Herman and her colleagues are encouraging districts to make SEL part of their existing mental health frameworks, including alignment to the state’s well-received online training on trauma-sensitive schools.

American Institutes for Research’s Nick Yoder is helping to customize Washington State’s popular [online SEL training module](#) for Wisconsin. In addition, the department is working with the Midwest Comprehensive Center to align SEL with the state’s digital literacy efforts, promoting

Aligning SEL with Technology Standards

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PK–5th Grade) Understand and manage one's emotions		
CASEL Domain	PK-5K	1st-3rd
Self-Awareness	Learners will be able to demonstrate awareness of their emotions and how they may be the same or different from others. Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) Domain II A EL.1 PATHS Unit 2: Basic Feelings Unit 3: Basic Feelings II Unit 7: Intermediate Feelings Unit 8: Advanced Feelings	Learners will be able to recognize and label a variety of their own basic emotions. PATHS <u>Grade 1</u> Unit 1: Fostering Classroom Climate Unit 4: Basic Emotions Unit 5: Feelings and Self Control <u>Grade 2</u> Unit 1: Positive Classroom Environment Unit 3: Basic Feelings Unit 8: Feelings and Expectations Unit9: Feelings in School Unit10: Feelings in Relationships <u>Grade 3</u> Unit 1: Positive Class Environment Unit 3: Feelings are Important
	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, use verbal and nonverbal language to demonstrate a variety of emotions. WMELS Domain II A EL.1 PATHS Unit 1: Fostering Positive Classroom Climate Unit 2: Basic Feelings Unit 3: Basic Feelings II Unit 7: Intermediate Feelings Unit 8: Advanced Feelings	Learners will be able to use verbal and nonverbal language to demonstrate a variety of increasingly complex emotions. PATHS <u>Grade 1</u> Unit 1: Fostering Classroom Climate Unit 3: Improving Self-Control Unit 5: Feelings and Self-Control Unit6: Basic Problem Solving Unit 8: Feelings and Expectations <u>Grade 2</u> Unit 1: Positive Classroom Climate Unit 3: Basic Feelings Unit 8: Feelings and Expectations Unit 9: Feelings in School Unit 10: Feelings in Relationships <u>Grade 3</u> Unit 1: Positive Class Environment Unit 3: Feelings are important
	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, display age appropriate self-control. WMELS Domain II A EL.1 PATHS Unit 2: Basic Feelings Unit 4: Self-Control Unit 6: Basic Problem Solving	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, demonstrate a variety of strategies to manage strong emotions. PATHS <u>Grade 1</u> Unit 3: Improving Self-Control Unit 5: Feelings and Self-Control Unit 6: Basic Problem Solving Unit8: Feelings and Expectation <u>Grade 2</u> Unit 3: Basic Feelings Unit 5: Getting Along with Others I Unit 8: Feelings and Expectations Unit9: Feelings in Schools Unit 10: Feelings in Relationships <u>Grade 3</u> Unit 1: Positive Class Environment Unit 2: Self-Control & Problem Solving Unit 3: Feelings are Important

respectful online behavior (see sidebar for an excerpt). “SEL is a protective factor that can help students make good online choices,” Herman says.

With state support, districts are establishing regional SEL communities of practice. The department is planning to implement a virtual model in the northeast part of the state and a face-to-face model in the more populous southeast. It is providing training and technical assistance to four cohorts of districts that are focused on trauma-sensitive schools.

The department will also collaborate with professional associations to train all principals and assistant principals, as well as special education and pupil service administrators.

All the work benefits from stakeholder input. The SEL work group, which developed the state’s SEL competencies, continues to be an advisory body and provides access to local districts and practices that can be shared across the state. The state’s Superintendents Equity Council has been working on a guidance document to assist schools and districts in implementing SEL with an equity focus.

“The goal is to provide turnkey training to districts within the first year.”

— BETH HERMAN

Conclusion

Although these efforts are at various stages of implementation, all states share commitments to (1) work closely with multiple stakeholders and respond to their practical needs, (2) align social and emotional learning (SEL) with existing frameworks and priorities so busy educators don't reject it as just "one more thing," and (3) take advantage of existing infrastructure (notably regional education service centers) to reach local districts and schools.

States are also developing distinct approaches that build on their specific context. Customized planning is paramount. Every state begins at a different place influenced by existing priorities, sensitivities, resources, and needs. Every state team operates in a context and climate that has been shaped by the collective experiences of educators, policymakers, parents, and students. The paths may be different, but common across all Collaborating States Initiative (CSI) states is their commitment to respect the unique context in which the work is happening in order to ensure its success.

When state teams originally joined the CSI they submitted individualized goals for advancing SEL within their context. At this point, two years into the process, most state teams have begun to achieve at least some of their initial goals. This has usually included some combination of (1) articulating student competencies for SEL, (2) developing state guidance for SEL and sharing high-quality tools and resources statewide, (3) integrating SEL into existing programs and priorities, including academics, and (4) developing professional learning to support educators' implementation of SEL. (Our [Emerging Insights report](#) and [CSI Spotlight 1](#) showcase this work.)

As they complete goals, many state teams shift to a new phase of the work. They ask, "What do we need to do to make our goals successful in practice?" Implementation takes center stage because the answer involves active collaboration and partnerships with districts. In the next three years, CASEL plans to support states in deeper work to engage with districts, to learn, and to share what we've learned with other states on a similar journey.



Learn More, Help Build the Field

As part of CASEL's Collaborating States Initiative, states are sharing strategies like the ones highlighted in this publication to support their districts. We look forward to a significant increase in these efforts across all of the states in the coming years. State examples help to inspire other states. They suggest what is possible.

The CSI is currently connected to 25 states. For information about how your state can join, or to receive periodic updates on this work, please contact Linda Dusenbury (ldusenbury@casel.org).

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is the world's leading organization advancing one of the most important fields in education in decades: the practice of promoting integrated academic, social, and emotional learning for all children. The nonprofit, founded in 1994, provides a combination of research, practice, and policy to support high-quality social and emotional learning in districts and schools nationwide.

Thank you to CASEL's many critical collaborators — *our partner educators, researchers, policymakers, civic leaders, program providers, funders, and others* — for contributing to and supporting efforts to help make evidence-based social and emotional learning an integral part of education, preschool through high school.



COLLABORATIVE FOR ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING
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