



# DELAWARE

## Partnerships Integrate SEL With Career and Workforce Development to Define a New Generation of Learners

The Coalition for Career Development Center is committed to highlighting research-based career development activities for diverse audiences. This case study is one of three describing the development and implementation of social and emotional learning (SEL) integrated with career and workforce development efforts in Delaware, Kansas, and Wisconsin.



Coalition for  
Career Development  
Center



Delaware  
Department of Education

Authors: Coalition for Career Development Center (Gregg Curtis, V. Scott Solberg, and Robin Kroyer-Kubicek); CASEL (Caitlin M. Dermody, Dana Godek, Linda Dusenbury, Mark Greenberg, and Ruth Cross); Delaware Department of Education (Teri Lawler and Lisa Stoner-Torbet)

**“It is imperative that educators, families, community members, and employers work together to help our children build resilience through enhanced social competence and strong relationships both within and outside of the classroom.”**

~ Dr. Susan Bunting,  
Former Delaware Secretary of Education.



For more than a decade, strong partnerships in Delaware between educational stakeholders, community-based organizations, and philanthropic groups have been intentionally promoting, designing, and implementing strategies that leverage social and emotional learning (SEL). These strategies function as a mechanism for increasing educational achievement, positive mental and behavioral health, and postsecondary success for every student.

Organizations such as Rodel, United Way of Delaware, The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), The Vision Coalition, and others joined The Delaware Department of Education (DDoE) to invest human and financial capital in efforts that have changed how Delaware’s children experience learning in the state’s public, vocational, and charter schools. Their efforts have not only promoted SEL for children, but also supported the development of social and emotional competencies in adults. This work positively impacts youth resilience and promotes a holistic approach to education by aligning work across families, schools, and communities.

Through the passionate vision, dedication, and focus of many individuals, in addition to the DDoE’s gentle philosophy of a shared responsibility for the work, Delaware has engaged in an intentional, comprehensive grassroots movement to assure that every student graduates with the knowledge, skills, and options to ensure postsecondary success.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

**Definition:** SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. SEL addresses five core competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020).

**Connections to Career and Workforce Development:** A meta-analysis of SEL interventions verified the positive impact of developing social and emotional skills on a range of academic outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011), including navigating and negotiating interpersonal activities in ways that help students achieve positive life outcomes (Taylor et al., 2017).

Social and emotional skills also serve as “deeper human skills” (Lim-Lange & Lim-Lange, 2019; Yoder, et al., 2020) that are critical to successfully engaging in occupations affected by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2017). Cappelli and Tavis (2018) argue that in order to become prepared to successfully enter this new world of work, children and youth need to develop a combination of strong “human skills” (i.e., social and emotional learning skills, resiliency, etc.), technical and computational skills, and career management skills (i.e., learning how to align learning to pursue future goals). Moreover, an analysis of employer surveys and job listings revealed that the skills employers cited as the most in-demand are directly underpinned by SEL competencies (Yoder et al., 2020).

According to the Coalition for Career Development Center, career development is “a process that informs individuals about career opportunities, helps them identify their talent, become aware of how their talent transfers into a wide range of occupational opportunities, and enables them to make effective decisions on the academic and postsecondary pathways that will enable them to pursue their career and life goals” (Coalition for Career Development Center, 2021). Adopting this definition, CASEL and this publication use the term “career and workforce development” to capture the diversity of taxonomies employed by states to describe this process and the efforts that support it.

Delaware’s commitment to SEL began as a grassroots, educator-led effort that supported both SEL and career and workforce development. The state’s SEL work was initiated by a group of teachers participating in the educational innovation movement funded by Rodel, a community-based, nonprofit organization targeting SEL and postsecondary student success as two of four areas of improvement. Across the years, the Delaware Social and Emotional Learning Collaborative’s sustained commitment to SEL led to the state’s participation in the [CASEL’s Collaborating States Initiative](#) (CSI).

Launched in 2016 and continuing to evolve to this day, the CSI works with states and school districts to help create policy conditions that ensure that preschool to high school students are fully prepared—academically, socially, and emotionally—to succeed in school, at work, and in life.

The early days of the state’s commitment to SEL saw a unique collaboration between stakeholders in the K-12 education field. Groups such as the Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project, those supporting Compassionate Schools, the Delaware Social Emotional Learning Collaborative, and the Delaware School Counselor Association worked together to develop common language, construct a framework for implementing SEL instruction, and create student competencies for SEL. As the journey progressed, in 2018, the DDoE deepened its commitment to SEL through its full participation in the CSI and its investment in a full-time position dedicated to trauma-informed practices and SEL. In 2020, the DDoE further committed to examining the relationship of SEL and postsecondary success through its involvement in CASEL’s CSI SEL and Workforce Development Community of Practice, which explored the ways SEL could be integrated into K-12 workforce development involving personalized academic and career plans, career and technical education (CTE), and early college credit (**Table 1**).

Demonstrating efforts to establish true collaborative ‘partnerships’ in support of SEL, DDoE has initiated opportunities for these groups to either provide early input (as stakeholders) or provide resources and participation in an ongoing way (as collaborators).

Stakeholders in the Process	Collaborators in the Process
Delaware Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)/Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)/Response to Intervention (RtI)	CASEL Rodel
Compassionate Schools Learning Collaborative	United Way of Delaware
Delaware School Counselors	Delaware Department of Education
Delaware SEL Collaborative	Delaware SEL Core Team
Delaware Pathways	Delaware Health and Social Services
Vision Coalition	Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
	Delaware Department of Labor
	Delaware Technical Community College
	Delaware Local Education Agencies
	Community Members
	Students

**Table 1. Delaware Stakeholders and Collaborators**

The input of this diverse group of stakeholders and the ongoing work of the vast number of collaborators has dramatically enhanced the DDoE’s ability to support SEL work in Delaware. In the process of gathering input from these various collaborators, it became clear to the members that the vision they shared for the work was missing an important voice: that of students. To raise up youth voices, the DDoE welcomed students—nominated by their teachers on the basis of their personal strengths—to represent their peers in these conversations.

The workgroup held preparation meetings and listening sessions with students and incorporated their perspectives into all of its work. As we know from studies on educational pedagogy, student ownership of their learning increases achievement, whether in academic development or skills connected to SEL and workplace readiness (Conley & French, 2013). Investing in a shared power structure with students at the heart, the DDoE supports systemic change of the way schools do business—a common priority for the agency, community-based organizations, families, and students.

Owing to the work from those early collaborators, the DDoE published the state's SEL Competencies in 2020. Originating from a perspective that SEL is everyone's responsibility, not just a school counselor's or social worker's, the Delaware competencies represented a shift in the state's paradigm for SEL. Addressing the CASEL five competency areas (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making), the Delaware SEL Competencies publication is designed for use in a variety of contexts both in and out of school. An additional goal of the Delaware SEL Competencies is to ensure all adults who are in students' lives create physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe and supportive environments.

Strategically developed using the guiding principles of alignment, integration, and framework guidance, the Delaware SEL Competencies seek to cut across all educational coursework in developmentally appropriate ways, connect with activities already happening in schools and communities, and allow for local choice and creativity in their implementation.



This holistic approach to SEL not only meets the needs of students, but also provides foundational support for the systemic use of the CDC's Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model (WSCC) in Delaware. The WSCC model places the student at the center of a system, which emphasizes the importance of healthy psychosocial, emotional, and physical environments as well as the increasing roles that community agencies and families play in improving childhood health behaviors and development. The WSCC

model prioritizes the use of evidence-based practices in the instruction and assessment of academic and social and emotional skills. This global approach allows students and the adults around them to build their SEL competence through real-world applications.

In addition to the support for the WSCC Model, Delaware's SEL Competencies ground other ongoing work. The competencies are inextricably linked to the state's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework as SEL is leveraged

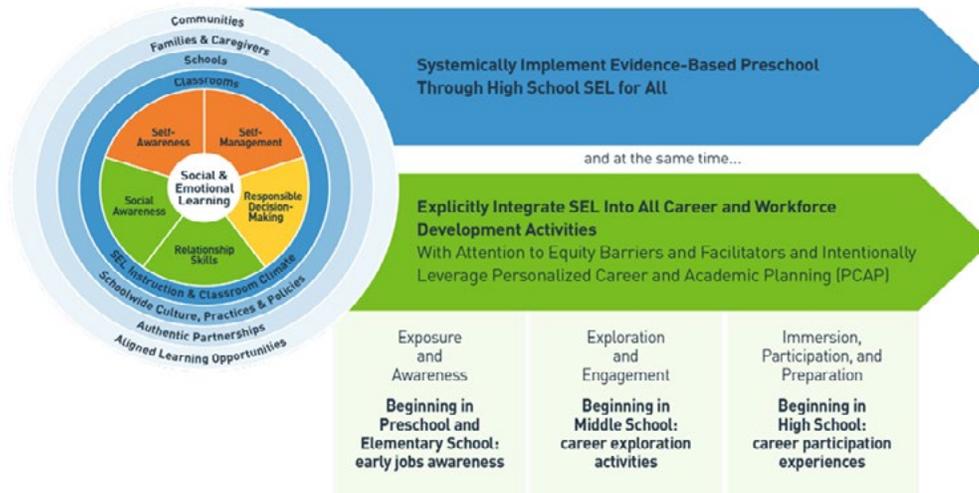
as a universal strategy for behavior and well-being. Further, the implementation of SEL Competencies bolsters student achievement and mastery of K-12 academic standards and assists in the transition from Pre-Kindergarten and Early Learning Centers to K-12 education. Finally, the Delaware SEL Competencies allow adults to advance their own SEL competence and respectfully engage students in a positive, powerful way that recognizes and expresses appreciation of differences and similarities. This growth transforms the traditional student/teacher relationship into more equitable interpersonal connections with room for disagreement, discussion, and the examination of inequity. As described above, SEL is being leveraged to support multiple initiatives within the state, including the DDoE's focus on implementing SEL schoolwide to advance students' postsecondary success.

Delaware has strong support for evidence-based SEL in preschool through high school, a key element in CASEL's Developmental Framework for Integration of SEL and Career and Workforce Development (**Figure 1**). Based on this solid foundation, Delaware has been able to advance its commitment to leveraging SEL to promote postsecondary success, and in recent years has advanced these efforts as part of the CASEL's CSI SEL and Workforce Development Community of Practice.



As part of this CSI initiative, the state launched Delaware's BRIDGE Project, another shining example of collaborative efforts paying big dividends in the state. The overarching goal of the project was to develop integrated supports that combine career and workforce development experiences with SEL competencies and strategies. A broad cross section of stakeholders comprised the BRIDGE workgroup, including state policymakers, community-based organizations, school district leaders, practitioners, and youth. The collective workgroup developed multiple resources and tools to advance integrated efforts.

# Framework for SEL integration with career and workforce development



**Figure 1:** CASEL CSI Developmental Framework for Integration of SEL and Career and Workforce Development

The CASEL CSI Developmental Framework for Integration of SEL and Career and Workforce Development (**Figure 1**) aims to assist all states seeking to systemically integrate evidence-based SEL with career and workforce development efforts. CASEL, the Coalition for Career Development, and CIVIC collaborated with eight states (Delaware, Kansas, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, Wisconsin) to create this framework such that states can support districts and schools in their efforts to prepare students for postsecondary success.

Consistent with the CASEL framework for SEL (2020), the foundation of the framework is the systemic implementation of SEL for all students and adults with evidence-based SEL programs and practices at the foundation (blue arrow).

Grounded by this systemic implementation, the framework recommends that SEL be explicitly and comprehensively integrated into all

career and workforce development efforts (green arrow).

Moreover, the framework recommends that those integrating SEL into career and workforce development efforts address obstacles that create disparities (e.g., equity barriers), employ strategies that foster access (e.g., equity facilitators), be culturally responsive, and customize student experiences (e.g., existing or emerging systems of Personalized Career and Academic Planning [PCAP]). This framework is informed by the three developmental stages of occupational identity formation (light green boxes): exposure and awareness; exploration and engagement; and immersion, participation, and preparation (Callahan et al., 2019).

*More information on this framework can be found in CASEL's brief on [the Developmental Framework](#) (Dermody et al., 2022). To continue to support the integration of SEL and CWD, visit the [Additional Tools and Resources](#) section on [CASEL's SEL and Career and Workforce Development Initiative Page](#).*

The BRIDGE workgroup created the [SEL/Work-Based Learning Standards Crosswalk](#). This tool matches Delaware's SEL Competencies with work-based learning standards to identify and explore the intersection of social and emotional skills and employability skills in Delaware, a second key element of CASEL's CSI Developmental Framework (**Figure 1**). Further connections across academic disciplines will occur with the completion of a crosswalk of SEL competencies with academic standards.

In addition, DDoE's collaboration with CASEL has resulted in a toolkit for local education agencies (LEAs) to incorporate SEL knowledge and skill-building into career and workforce development activities. Structured by four primary areas of focus: (i) partnerships, (ii) pathways, (iii) evidence-based practice identification, and (iv) continuous improvement, the toolkit serves as a field guide for practitioners in a variety of settings for best practices for SEL and career and workforce development integration. Specifically, academic content areas use project-based learning strategies, which allow students hands-on oppor-

tunities to learn about, practice, and develop social and emotional skills.

These resources, which support postsecondary success, can be used in multiple ways. First and foremost, they are meant to increase practitioner's familiarity with the state's SEL Competencies and their application through the CA-



SEL's SEL framework. They are also designed to acquaint practitioners with the types of activities and supportive efforts that encourage the development of social and emotional skills in work-based learning environments (Devaney et. al. 2006). Further, they enable practitioners to enhance their understanding of SEL integration and participate in a broader conversation in local and statewide contexts, while continuously improving and reflecting on practices that leverage SEL in multiple settings.

The Delaware SEL competencies provide a framework for LEAs to identify curriculum and strategies for cultivating a culture of care in school communities. Though school counselors provide leadership and coordination for SEL installation and implementation efforts, the competencies are designed to be utilized in any way LEAs deem acceptable and by all adults that interact with students. The DDoE has openly advocated that these are skills that all community members 'own.' That said, adults in and outside of schools are modeling and seizing natural opportunities to hone SEL competencies throughout the day. Many schools have embraced the advisory structure, using small group time during the school day, and it is not uncommon for an advisory group to be facilitated by a variety of school adults. Similarly, the Student Success Planning (SSP) leadership and documentation might originate with a counselor or case manager, but goal setting and progress monitoring is team-based. Team members join forces to wrap support around all students, recognizing that every interaction is an opportunity for instruction or intervention.

As one of the first state education agencies to create a position dedicated to SEL work, Delaware positioned itself to be an SEL leader from the outset. Hired in 2018 to implement trauma-informed practices in all state agencies, Dr. Teri Lawler, educational associate for trauma-informed practices and SEL, was

charged with creating the strategic plan for scaling the work across the state and guided the crafting of a two-year work plan for statewide SEL implementation. The implementation process began with the mapping of the then-current professional learning content, simulations, and book studies across the state's [Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed Practices \(TIP\)](#). Capacity-building and professional development were also included in that plan.

In 2019, the SEL Core Team completed the K-12 competency guidance and released it for public comment. The goals outlined for the 2021-2022 school year included crosswalking the SEL competency guidance with the academic content standards and curating resources to support their implementation. That work wrapped up in June 2021, and the public comment period ended in September of that year. More recently, the work has included inventorying all of the DDoE's whole child initiatives and aligned the TIP-SEL work within the state's new [Multi-Tiered System of Supports \(MTSS\) regulation](#) in the state code, which launched July 1, 2021.



In addition, tools and resources developed through the Delaware BRIDGE project (including the SEL and Workforce toolkit) are being tested, improved, and enhanced through a pilot study across the 2021-22 school year prior to broad, statewide implementation. This pilot will also be used to determine whether tools, resources, and activities can be implemented as intended, as well as noting the modifications and additional resources needed to ensure full support and improved experiences for students during career and workforce development activities. This pilot will also inform the development of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities to be offered in the summer of 2022. Two school districts and three community-based organizations are participating in the pilot study.

In sum, a critical key to Delaware's success in building collaborative coalitions around this work has been the gentle philosophy of sharing the power among diverse collaborators. Rather than take a highly authoritative stance, the DDoE

has empowered its partners to share ownership and build a common language. This philosophy has allowed everyone to be on the same page, develop a shared vision, and create the type of cohesion rarely generated by a hierarchical approach. This holistic, empowering position set the tone for genuine investment in a systematic approach to integrating SEL into career and workforce development.



## SEL Resources

- [Delaware Social and Emotional Learning Competencies](#) provide benchmarks and learning goals for developing social and emotional skills for Kindergartens to Adults in the state.
- [Delaware's Social and Emotional Learning Toolkits](#) provide a starting point for educators, school staff, and community members to integrate SEL into their practices and interactions with students. The subject-specific toolkits include initial strategies and resources to improve students' social, emotional, and behavioral health.
- [Delaware's Multi-Tiered System of Support](#) provides a whole child framework for all students to reach their full potential in a positive, inclusive, and equitable learning environment.
- Delaware and CASEL Collaborative SEL to Workforce toolkit is available by contacting Dr. Teri Lawler at the DDoE ([teri.lawler@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:teri.lawler@doe.k12.de.us)).
- [CASEL CSI Developmental Framework](#) for Integration of SEL and Career and Workforce Development provides a structure and justification for supporting these two key initiatives through aligned efforts.

# Personalized Career and Academic Plans (PCAP)

## Definition:

PCAPs also generically referred to as individualized learning plans (ILPs), are both a document and a process students use to learn about themselves, explore the world of work, and identify their career goals. PCAPs inform decisions about students' courses and activities throughout school and help them create postsecondary plans. Supportive adults, such as school counselors, teachers, parents, and community members, participate in the process, offering feedback and guiding students through the process (Solberg et al., 2018).

Connections to Career and Workforce Development and SEL: Many states have adopted their own terms for these plans and processes and created policies to guide schools in the implementation of the PCAP process; some even require all middle and/or high school students to develop and maintain PCAPs in order to make schools more personalized and improve student outcomes.

When integrated with SEL, the PCAP process supports youth in understanding a set of career and workforce opportunities (social awareness), determining their own talents and interests (self-awareness), planning for and setting goals (self-management), pursuing steps to experience career and workforce opportunities (responsible decision-making), and seeking help from others and establishing relationships with mentors to advance goals (relationship-management) (CASEL, 2020; Coalition for Career Development Center, 2021).

The CASEL CSI Developmental Framework (**Figure 1**) recommends customizing student's experiences of SEL within career and workforce development experiences functionally and organizationally through PCAPs— both to provide students with an opportunity to practice their social and emotional skills and to ensure the integration of SEL into all activities across the developmental continuum.



[Section 507 of Title 14 of the Delaware Regulations Administrative Code](#) mandated PCAPs for students in grades 8-12 in 2019. These PCAPs, entitled the [Delaware Student Success Plans \(SSP\)](#), are the model used to assist middle school and high school students in customizing their educational trajectories. The SSPs are designed to focus on exploration and tasks appropriate for the various developmental levels. Each series of activities is intentionally created as a checklist for students, educators, and families to use in the journey through middle school and high school. Developing the SSP is central to the SEL core competency of responsible decision-making, and leveraging PCAPs is central to the CASEL CSI Developmental Framework for Integration of SEL and Career and Workforce Development (**Figure 1**). Thus, Delaware SSPs offer an important opportunity to explicitly support SEL.

**SSPs provide a strong foundation on which opportunities for the teaching and practicing of social and emotional skills can be structured.**



The Delaware SSP process begins in 7th grade with the “[Start Early](#)” section of the model, or the Exploration and Engagement Stage in the CASEL CSI Developmental Framework for Integration of SEL and Career and Workforce Development (**Figure 1**). Middle-schoolers are provided opportunities and resources to excel academically, explore career paths, and plan ahead. As they progress into 8th grade, students formalize their work into an SSP, which follows them through 12th grade and the Immersion, Participation, and Preparation phase in the CASEL CSI Developmental Framework (**Figure 1**).

Entering high school, 9th and 10th graders are encouraged to “[Plan Ahead](#).” They continue to develop academically and explore career paths, while also thinking about postsecondary possibilities, how to finance postsecondary education and training, and how to strategize for the postsecondary application processes—all important opportunities to explicitly connect to and reinforce SEL skills.

During their junior year, students continue to plan and explore as they “[Focus on Goals](#).” They engage in goal-setting and organizational activities intended to help prepare for their postsecondary transition—again, important SEL skills. Finally, as seniors, monthly checklists help students to “[Stay on Track](#)” for a smooth graduation and life after high school.

In addition to the SSPs for students, [Section 507 of Title 14 of the Delaware Regulations Administrative Code](#) also requires school districts and charter schools to create a Postsecondary Advisement Plan (PSAP), a templated document that captures the activities, supports, and resources districts are implementing to enable students to create and revise their SSPs. Annually, districts and charters must submit a progress report to the DDoE that describes how the benchmarks included on the PSAP have been met, how the plans have been updated to reflect best practices, and any changes districts made to their plan based on their LEA’s postsecondary data.

While the Delaware Administrative Code dictates the “what” of SSPs, the state’s districts and charters are creatively constructing the “how.” As in the case for SEL, once again, grassroots organization and partnerships are at the center of progress in Delaware and are the key leaders in conceptualizing SSPs. Started in 2006 and supported by Rodel, [The Vision Coalition of Delaware](#) is a public-private partnership composed of a broad range of Delawareans who work together to improve the state’s public education. Central to the coalition’s [Student Success 2025 Plan](#), the [North Star \(Figure 2\)](#) is a graphic model bringing together academic core knowledge with four characteristics the coalition believes are central to student success: Passion for Learning, Commitment to Community, Multi-Level Communicator, and Entrepreneurial Spirit. Each of these is composed of multiple aspects connected with SEL (empathy, persistence, adaptability, emotional intelligence, etc.).

The North Star model illustrates Delaware’s approach to “how” to enable every student to become college- and career-ready. It shows areas of students’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for success. The model mirrors a whole child approach to career development. Students need access to opportunities for obtaining core academic knowledge to provide a foundation for learning. Yet they will also need opportunities to learn and practice non-technical skills and attributes that go beyond academics. This North Star serves as the beacon for Delaware’s vision to improve public schools for every student and corresponds with the recommendations of the CASEL CSI Framework ([Figure 1](#)).



**Figure 2.** The North Star

Congruent with that approach, and in the spirit of continuous improvement, the collaborators and DDoE are now looking to purposely integrate SEL with career advisement starting in middle school. Engaging younger grades can stretch and strengthen the connection of SEL and intentional, systemic career development, while also building protective factors that enhance emotional and behavioral health and improve school climate.



### Student Success Plan Resources:

- 7th and 8th grade checklists: [Delaware Student Success Plan: Start Early](#)
- 9th and 10th grade checklists: [Delaware Student Success Plan: Plan Ahead](#)
- Checklist for 11th graders: [Delaware Student Success Plan: Focus on Goals](#)
- Checklist for 12th graders: [Delaware Student Success Plan: Stay on Track](#)
- [The Vision Coalition of Delaware](#) is a public-private partnership group in educational innovation.
- [Student Success 2025](#) is the theoretical shared vision for Delaware’s students.
- [North Star](#) is the model central to the vision in Student Success 2025.
- [Delaware Pathways](#) is an overarching web platform guiding students through the SSP process and providing resources for educators and community-based partners to enhance student career and workforce development.

# Work-Based Learning (WBL) and Early College Access

## **Definition:**

WBL is defined as “sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings ... or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field” (Perkins V). In general, schools refer to WBL as a wide variety of school-supervised, career and workforce development activities that range from career fairs and job shadows to paid internships and apprenticeships.

## **Connections to Career and Workforce Development and SEL:**

WBL is essential for student’s occupational identity formation, including their awareness of different types of careers, their engagement in exploring those careers, and their active immersion in activities associated with those careers (Callahan et al., 2019). This experiential learning provides students with a firsthand look at how school-based learning is relevant to a variety of career options.

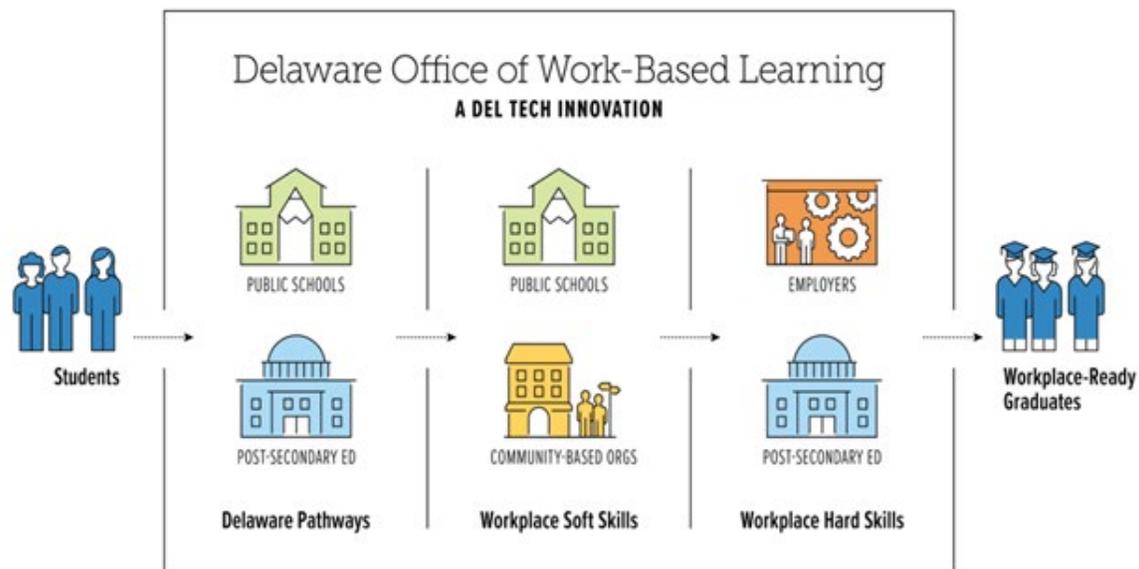
In addition, WBL allows students to practice and apply social and emotional skills (e.g., social awareness and relationships skills) developed in K-12 classroom settings in new environments, at a workplace, or in partnership with business mentors. WBL opportunities can also be harnessed as a method of teaching social and emotional skills within the environment of a specific career. This practice contextualizes how social and emotional skills are critical for success in the world of work.

For all career and workforce activities, including WBL, the CASEL CSI Developmental Framework (**Figure 1**) recommends that social and emotional skills be integrated through (1) the organization of direct SEL instruction during these activities and (2) the utilization of these experiences as opportunities for practicing emerging social and emotional skills. In addition, the framework recommends the use of PCAPs to help youth identify future goals and explore the WBL opportunities that will help them pursue those goals.

Like the state’s progress on SEL and PCAPs, Delaware’s approach to WBL and Early College Access has been grounded in partnerships. Multiple agencies and organizations are involved in the work, and while a few have taken on the role of housing the access points or information, all are heavily involved in the process. Once again, practicing shared power and strength-based contributions provided the foundation for successful collaboration.

Created through the intermediary [Delaware Technical Community College](#) in 2016, the [Office of Work-Based Learning](#) (**Figure 3**) has assumed primary responsibility of coordinating educational WBL experiences and integrating SEL into them. The office provides critical program management support by working closely with schools to understand student needs, arranging events like mock interviews and job shadows to build student competency, and developing work experiences with local employers. The office fosters relationships with employers and community-based organizations to design and provide three types of student experiences: [awareness](#) experiences (e.g., guest speakers and career fairs), [exploration](#) experiences (e.g., job shadows and informational interviews), and [immersion](#) experiences (e.g., Cooperative Education (Co-Op) experiences and school-based enterprises), as represented in the CASEL CSI Developmental Framework (**Figure 1**).

Visual representing Delaware’s Office of Work-Based Learning’s vision of students’ career development and skill acquisition.



**Figure 3.** Delaware Office of Work-Based Learning

In addition to overseeing educational career and workforce development experiences through the Office of Work-Based Learning, DelTech also offers access to early college credit with Delaware Pathways. This program provides students who have completed an approved CTE program of study in one of the 16 career clusters the chance to earn college credit and get an early start in their postsecondary education.



### WBL and Early College Access Resources:

- This [video](#) from the Vision Coalition illustrates the intersection of SEL and WBL.
- Hosted by DDoE intermediary Delaware Technical Community College, the [Delaware Office of Work-Based Learning's](#) role is to ensure that schools have access to vetted WBL opportunities to support the Delaware Pathways curriculum.
- Delaware Early College Access is implemented through the [Delaware Pathways](#) piece of the Delaware Career Pathways system.

## Career pathways

### Definition:

A career pathway is “a sequence of learning experiences that span secondary and postsecondary systems, blend rigorous core academic and career technical instruction, offer focused career guidance and advisement systems, include high-quality WBL experiences, and culminate in postsecondary or industry credentials of value” (Advance CTE). In general, a career pathway outlines the on- and off-ramps from education, training, and certifications to successive occupations in a career ladder.

## **Connections to Career and Workforce Development and SEL:**

A career pathway is for ALL students; not just students enrolled in formal CTE programs. Accessing a career pathway allows students to follow their career interests (uncovered through a quality K-12 PCAP process) and explore and prepare for adult transitions while still in high school.

When intentionally integrated with SEL, the 'pathway' approach sets students on an informed trajectory to accomplish personal career goals. In this process, students develop and engage their social and emotional skills (e.g., self-awareness and responsible decision-making) to reflect upon their career interests and actively pursue those careers. Career pathways encourage students to take advantage of dual college credit and WBL opportunities, earning industry-recognized credentials as they continue to develop the social and emotional skills valued in workplace settings.

The CASEL CSI Developmental Framework (**Figure 1**) aligns with the structure defined by career pathways in a way that fosters seamless SEL integration. Supported by the PCAP process, the CSI framework advances the social and emotional skills (e.g., self-awareness and responsible decision-making) that help students experience the opportunities offered by a pathways approach in a meaningful way.



The DDoE also supports the [Delaware Career Pathways](#), an exemplary system that serves as a model to other states across the nation. Growing out of work from the mid-2010s, Career Pathways is a collaborative workforce development partnership, which a 2016 [gubernatorial executive order](#) instilled with an official multi-stakeholder steering committee. Career Pathways works to create a fluid relationship between the Delaware public education system’s postsecondary

education, nonprofit, and employer communities to ensure that the pathway to college and a well-paying job is accessible for every Delawarean (Nagen-gast, 2020). It further seeks to help the state fulfill the “[Delaware Promise](#)” of ensuring that 65 percent of the workforce earns a college degree or professional certificate by 2025. The program has been evaluated and upheld as a quality system by leading scholars (Rothman, 2019).

### **The steering committee created a plan to address five overarching goals:**

1. Build career pathways connections and support transitions from middle school to high school and into a postsecondary education through the [Student Success Plan](#) advisement system.
2. Create the [Office of Work-Based Learning](#) through [Delaware Technical Community College](#) (DelTech) to be funded by private, grant, and state dollars. DelTech serves as the employer-facing intermediary making the connection of education and workforce systems. It is the only technical college in the state and serves students through multiple, statewide campuses.
3. Focus on data systems and collaborate with [National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity](#) (NAPE) to research and support work to close gaps and mitigate barriers for special populations, including students with disabilities, leveraging vocational rehabilitation services, developmental services, and public policy.
4. Improve communications across the state regarding Delaware Career Pathways and its impact.
5. Develop sustainable funding support by braiding private and public dollars.

The completion of these five goals is essential for creating a successful future for the state. According to the steering committee, “It is our responsibility to provide Delawareans with the bridge to the life they want—workforce training for people who want to upgrade their skills, education that aligns with the knowledge they need in the new economy, and a more responsive government that supports their drive to succeed. Let’s ensure that all of our youth and adult learners are on a path to fulfill their educational goals and career aspirations.”

This aspiration can be aided by further integration of SEL into the Career Pathways system. Neatly aligned with the CASEL CSI Developmental Career and Workforce Developmental Framework (**Figure 1**), Career Pathways could potentially reinforce efforts of the BRIDGE project.

The DDoE CTE web presence provides educator supports for CTE through the provision of numerous resources in a variety of areas. Foundationally, there is information about the legislation and regulations around CTE. More specifically, information and resources for educators are provided around Programs of Study in the 16 Career Clusters, and professional learning for CTE is available that includes both general learning and career cluster-specific learning opportunities. These resources enhance educators’ understanding of the variety of options available to students and foster opportunities for career conversations.

In addition, tools are provided to use in the implementation of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) within CTE. Further, the web presence provides information regarding federal Innovation Grant funds that districts can use with their Perkins V plan and resources for CTE Educators (including state-model programs of study).



### Career Pathway Resources:

- Access to the tremendous Delaware [Department of Education CTE web presence](#) can be found here.
- [Delaware Career Pathways](#) link education and workforce development efforts for youth and provide opportunities for youth to gain work experiences aligned with their career goals through a series of high-quality education programs that link to postsecondary education and careers.

## Integration Highlights

Delaware has made tremendous strides since its initial commitment to SEL, and, in the true spirit of continuous improvement, pursues growth and opportunities to explicitly integrate SEL with career and workforce development.

As indicated above, the state's rich investments in SEL and career and workforce development efforts have provided many opportunities for integration. A few examples include:



### SEL Framework and Competencies

- Delaware's participation in CASEL's CSI provided an opportunity to cross-walk the state's [SEL Competencies](#) with WBL standards. The resulting [BRIDGE Report](#) gives students, schools, and employers clear expectations for SEL in K-12 education and anticipated workplace non-technical skills.
- SEL is poised to be critical for the next phase of Delaware Career Pathways 2.0. Following the pilot process set for the 2021-2022 school year, stakeholders will be able to have access to the revised DDoE and CASEL collaborative toolkit containing resources and activities for direct SEL work in 2022. To obtain the current version of the toolkit, contact [Dr. Teri Lawler](#).

### SEL and Academic and Career Planning

- [Delaware's Student Success Plan](#) is the model used to assist middle school and high school students in customizing their educational trajectories. Their personalized career and academic plan is designed to focus on exploration and tasks appropriate for the various developmental levels. Each series of activities is a checklist for students, educators, and families to use in the journey through middle school and high school. Student Success Plans provide a strong foundation on which opportunities for the teaching and practicing of social and emotional skills can be structured.

### SEL, WBL, and Early College

- [Delaware Pathways](#) links education and workforce development efforts for youth and provides opportunities for students to gain work experiences and social and emotional skills aligned with their career goals through

high-quality education programs that connect both WBL and early college access to postsecondary education and careers.

## **SEL, Academic Success, and Career and Workforce Development**

- DDoE's continued relationship with the [National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity](#) (NAPE) will allow for an examination of existing and future DDoE resources on SEL and career and workforce development to identify and correct any biased language.
- Central to Delaware's successful collaborations and sharing of power is the intentional inclusion of student voice. As this work developed, it became clear that systemic change in education isn't something that can be done "to" students; rather, success comes when the work is done "with" students. The DDoE made the strategic decision to include students in everything from language-building to tool/resource design.
- Further, Delaware has fostered a genuine sense of community, building real examples of school-to-community-to-workplace connections. Hands-on learning through CTE and project-based learning brings SEL to life beyond just academic and technical skills. Bringing schools into the community creates experiences for students to be met where they are. This innovative approach, in line with the WSCC Model of comprehensive education, has led to a growing interest in providing holistic educational experiences for all students, unique to their talents and interests.

## **Delaware Educational Funding**

While funding earmarked specifically for the systematic integration of SEL into career and workforce development is scarce, Delaware has creatively braided funding and other forms of capital from several sources to support comprehensive integration efforts. The success Delaware has seen is proof that there need not be unlimited funding from deep pockets for progress to be made in this work.

### **Federal (ESSA, WIOA, Perkins, REL, Comprehensive Centers, ESSER) funds:**

- The state uses a variety of federal funding sources to support their work. The DDoE committed Title IV support for the 2019/2020 school year. In August 2019, the state was also awarded a trauma-recovery demonstration project grant by the U.S. Department of Education. The project plan included \$100K for a multidisciplinary training institute, which allowed the state to basically match the Title IV funds. Those allocations remained the

same for 2020/2021. In addition, ESSER funding has assured some sustainability in programming for the next two school years (2021-2023). A funding stream from Title I is used to fund a portion of the education consultant for trauma-informed practice and SEL position.

- Perkins Improvement grants have required sections for addressing ILP, WBL, and Career Pathways; SEL is embedded within core technical instruction within each course and aligned with employability skills for WBL. There will be a major push this year through the State Perkins grant to fund a contract with NAPE focusing on Access and Equity—specifically, special populations strategies will have a required update for Perkins applications relative to special populations for fiscal year 2023.

### **State General Funds:**

- Consistent with Delaware’s belief in whole child development, the state has committed state monies for the creation and maintenance of a position supporting educators in trauma-informed practices and SEL implementation. This commitment evinces the priority DDoE gives to the integration of SEL into career and workforce development.
- Further, DDoE has partnered extensively with the statewide Delaware Technical Community College for assistance in housing technologies and access to higher education opportunities for high school students. While not necessarily “financial” funding, this type of partnership has increased the state’s capacity to improve equitable academic, technical, and career development opportunities for Delaware students.

### **Philanthropic Organizations:**

- Major support has come from community-based or philanthropic organizations. The foundation for Delaware’s work was supported by Rodel, a nonprofit organization that partners with states and educational innovators from around the world to transform public education. In Delaware, Rodel has been a strong partner in the work toward both postsecondary success for all students and the integration of SEL into career and workforce development. Rodel has been a catalyst in securing funding, conducting research, and connecting Delaware’s needs with appropriate resources.
- The United Way of Delaware has been another key contributor to this work. Their support of College and Career Success has included a tremendous investment in the systemic implementation of SEL across both educational and community environments and the recognition of the importance of having “all hands on deck” to support students in their social and emotional growth.

# Delaware Recommendations

**Delaware's journey offers inspiration for other states looking to do this work. By creatively braiding capital support and engaging collaborative problem-solving, it is possible to recognize and overcome barriers to systemic change:**

- 1. Delaware's commitment to collaboration, coalition-building, and empowerment is the foundation of their progress.** Being a small state brings advantages to building a common vision and language amongst stakeholders, establishing effective internal and external communication, sharing responsibility for the work and logistics, and aligning work across multiple initiatives. The state leaders facilitating this work have been dedicated and passionate about guiding the journey, while remaining steadfast in their belief of collaboration and support of grassroots efforts. These leaders know that more hands both lighten the load for all and raise the work to a higher level. Larger states with more levels of bureaucracy may encounter more resistance and diminished returns as a result of a stricter hierarchical structure, a lowered ability to build consensus and share the power, and/or the perception that this work must remain siloed in the wheelhouse of a few 'experts' rather than in the hands of many.
- 2. Delaware's pursuit of diverse leaders' involvement in this work is critical to their strong foundational efforts related to SEL and career and workforce development.** Committing state-level personnel to SEL work has also helped forge Delaware's path. Through this leadership, the intentional integration of SEL and WBL into the SSP process continues to gain traction and be recognized as not 'for some students,' but rather 'for all students.' Moreover, listening to leaders from business and industry and community-based organizations while involving them in the collaborative efforts to address the educational and non-technical skill shortcomings they encounter has been fundamental in guiding DDoE's position. Ongoing relationships between education and workforce leaders, spurred on by the philosophy of shared responsibility, will continue into the foreseeable future and should be a vital ingredient for other states' plans to integrate SEL into workforce preparation.
- 3. Finally, Delaware is a prime example of the adage "Go slow to go far."** Being more focused on creating quality SEL integration with career and workforce development efforts, rather than trying to do it quickly, has allowed consistent progress from their earliest involvement in CASEL's CSI to the most recent rollout of the toolkits. Their intentional, systemic commitment to the integration of SEL and career and workforce development is a beacon for other states to follow.

## Resources

Below is a summary of the resources for the integration of the SEL, PCAP, WBL, and career pathways guidelines and standards in Delaware.

### 1. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

- [Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project](#)
- Delaware's [SEL Competencies](#)
- [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model](#)
- Delaware BRIDGE Project: [SEL/WBL Standards Crosswalk](#)
- [Delaware SEL Collaborative Presentation](#)
- [Delaware SEL Competencies](#)
- [Delaware SEL Toolkits](#)
- [Delaware MTSS webpage](#)
- SEL to Workforce toolkit is available by contacting Teri Lawler at the DDoE. ([teri.lawler@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:teri.lawler@doe.k12.de.us))
- [CASEL CSI Developmental Framework for the Integration of SEL and Career and Workforce Development](#)

### 2. Personalized Career and Academic Plans (PCAPs)

- 7th and 8th grade checklists:  
[Delaware Student Success Plan: Start Early](#)
- 9th and 10th grade checklists:  
[Delaware Student Success Plan: Plan Ahead](#)
- Checklist for 11th graders:  
[Delaware Student Success Plan: Focus on Goals](#)
- Checklist for 12th graders:  
[Delaware Student Success Plan: Stay on Track](#)
- [The Vision Coalition of Delaware](#) public-private partnership group
- [Student Success 2025](#) shared vision for Delaware's students
- [North Star](#)
- [Delaware Pathways](#)

### 3. Work-based Learning (WBL) and Early College Access

- [Video from the Vision Coalition](#) illustrating the intersection of SEL and Work-Based Learning
- [Office of Work-Based Learning](#); hosted by DDoE intermediary Delaware Technical Community College.
- Delaware Early College Access through [Delaware Pathways](#)

### 4. Career Pathway Resources

- [Delaware Department of Education: CTE](#)
- [Delaware Career Pathways](#)

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