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SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 2020

Catalyzing Future Directions of Social and Emotional Learning Assessment

This summary report was prepared by a collaborative team of researchers, educational practitioners, and data scientists from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (YCEI) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

This report was developed as the culmination of the Catalyzing Future Directions of Social and Emotional Learning Assessment Project, led by Christina Cipriano and Jeremy Taylor, with generous partnership from colleagues Roger Weissberg, Dale Blyth, Clark McKown, and Robert Jagers. Rebecca Lectura and Linda Torv provided administrative management in executing the preconference convening, aided by numerous members of the CASEL community, including Pamela McVeagh-Lally, Kitty Rothschild, Colette Givens, and the YCEI community, including Marc Brackett, Nikki Elbertson, Danica Kelly, and Susan Riello. Thank you to Kay Augustine, Aaron Feuer, Maria Guzman-Rocha, Heather Hirsch, Paul LeBuffe, Ross Lipstein, Eric Moore, Libby Pier, Dana Stiles, and Lisa Xagas, who participated in a premeeting interview to inform the flow and scope of the day. Thank you to Meg Small, Damon Jones, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for their work in partnership with this project. Thank you to our convening facilitators, Education First, and to Craig Bailey, Jessica Hoffmann, and Michael Strambler for your small-group facilitation and leadership the day of the convening. Finally, thank you to our funders who made this work possible, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (2019-205063) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (INV-003683).

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Executive Summary

On October 2, 2019, 63 stakeholders reflecting the national social and emotional learning (SEL) assessment field participated in a full-day work session to build on the vision articulated by the Assessment Work Group's State of the Field Report (Assessment Work Group, 2019) and National Commission Report by generating ideas and forging partnerships to launch the most essential next phases of work related to SEL assessment. Through carefully facilitated discourse, five essential next phases of work were identified. In this report, we share the process and findings from the day and conclude with a plan for advancing these essential next steps as a collective through the development and sharing of introductory SEL assessment learning modules.

Significance. Early in 2019, the National Commission Report, From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope, highlighted the urgency for new paradigms of research to practice partnerships, engaging all stakeholders in contributing to the understanding and use of data to drive social, emotional, and academic learning. Additionally, the National Commission called for the explicit teaching of social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Rigorously evaluating SEL programming with assessments that are both ecologically and psychometrically valid is a pivotal pathway to these ends. When done well, assessments can empower teacher autonomous and authentic instruction, student voice, and the continuous improvement of school culture. Simultaneously, advancing assessment methodologies also promotes the sustainability of effective SEL practices throughout the school community. Assessments that accurately capture the impact of SEL for students, their teachers, parents, and the school community can drive systemic and sustainable change and have an enduring impact on both policy and practice.

In the past year, many new SEL assessments have emerged, numerous examples of promising research remains underway, and resources are increasingly becoming available to guide educators in choosing and using assessments (e.g., see briefs and guidance from CASEL's SEL AWG, and RAND Assessment Finder) and understanding the intersectionality of different SEL frameworks and standards (e.g., see EASEL Lab). These resources provide valuable and highly sought information to practitioners, but there is still work to be done. Questions remain about the best ways to fully support educators in understanding SEL assessment, knowing what assessments exist and choosing among them, implementing these assessments effectively, and interpreting and applying the data they provide as part of their larger school and district SEL implementation efforts.

With momentum building behind SEL assessment efforts, it is important to take stock of the progress that has been made and the work that remains. Toward this end, a collaborative reflection among stakeholders in the field was held in the form of a preconference at the inaugural SEL Exchange, bringing together researchers, practitioners, developers, and funders engaged in SEL assessment to share and reflect on their ongoing work, to align their respective efforts and avoid inefficiencies and duplication of effort and investment, to explore what future efforts in SEL assessments may prioritize, and to forge partnerships to tackle important questions that remain.

One hundred twenty-five individuals across the SEL assessment landscape were originally identified by members of the convening planning team and affiliated networks as invitees to the convening. Due to space constraints, invitations were extended to 75 individuals, and 63 attended the Chicago preconference convening (see Figure 1).

Breakdown of Participant Backgrounds

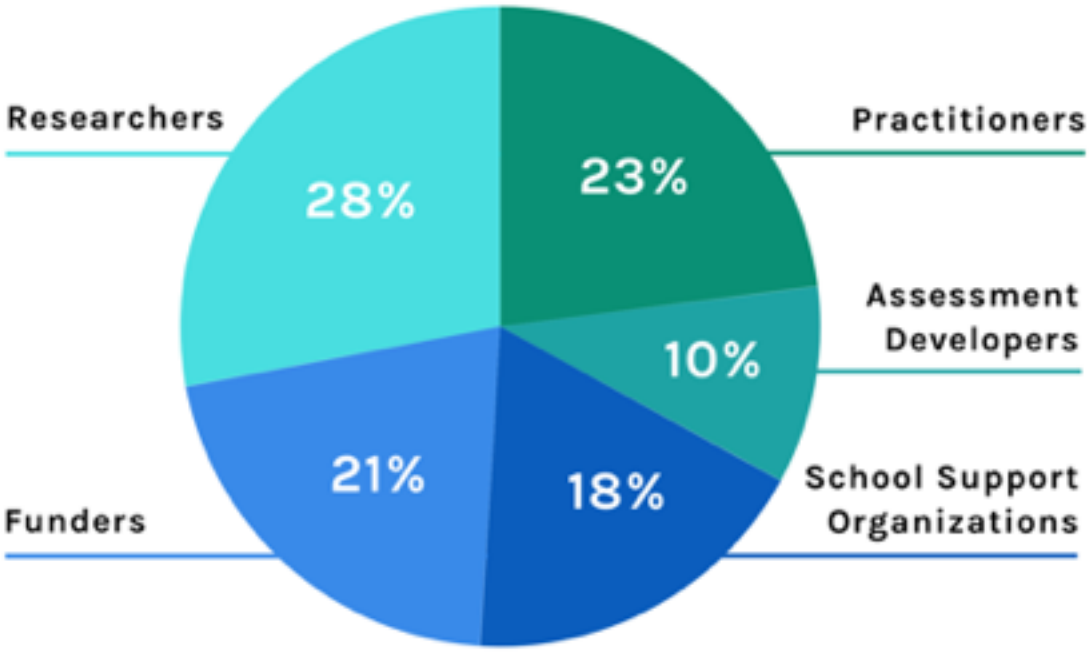


figure 1

Convening Objectives. The meeting had three objectives that were developed by the meeting planning committee.

Objective 1. Participants will engage in dialogue about the current state of the field, including discussion about the vision outlined in the State of the Field report and surfacing key opportunities and challenges.

Objective 2. Participants will make connections across the field to generate innovative approaches to supporting the practical use of SEL assessments and data in the field.

Objective 3. Participants will identify the key priorities, projects, and action steps that could be completed collaboratively in order to move the field forward.

Allowing data users to drive. To capture the needs and wants of SEL practitioners from across the country, and to refine and confirm the convening objectives for the day, ten in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with six practitioners and four applied researchers and developers steeped in this work at a local and national level. These conversations reinforced the need to build upon the current momentum in the field, and noted the fifth indicator of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as an opportunity for further SEL expansion. As for challenges to SEL assessment, interviewees identified two big-picture challenges related to the appropriate use of SEL measurement: (1) what measures to use and how and (2) appropriate data use in practice. Protecting SEL measurement from observer implicit bias, engaging parents and communities, and making assessment teacher-friendly were identified as specific challenges faced by data users within the field. Interview participants confirmed the proposed convening objectives. To drive a focused conversation, participants reported wanting to learn about what others are doing in the field of SEL assessment, uncovering any common challenges and successes across the field, and making connections to drive work forward as their main goals for the convening through a variety of small- and whole-group discussions. Lastly, participants requested readings with clear definitions of SEL and SEL assessment in order to guide the conversation.

With these findings as the drivers, a targeted and action-oriented day of discourse was carefully facilitated by Education First on Oct 2, 2019. In advance of the meeting participants received:

A. An agenda for the meeting and a digital bio book, containing profiles of every participant who would be attending

B. The following three pre-readings that highlight opportunities across research, policy, and practice to advance the state of the field, with instructions to set aside time to review in advance:
   - Report: Student Social and Emotional Competence Assessment: The Current State of the Field and a Vision for Its Future
   - Brief: Making Assessment Work: Ten Practitioner Beliefs
   - Report: Ready to Lead: A 2019 Update of Principals' Perspectives on How Social and Emotional Learning Can Prepare Children and Transform Schools – Executive Summary.

C. The following two questions to consider:
   - What do these three readings, along with your own experience, suggest about the core needs in the field?
   - Given what we know about the current state of the field, what is the most important thing we can do together—across policy, research and practice—to enhance the practical and beneficial use of measures and data to advance SEL over the next two to three years?

The Convening. The agenda began with welcomes and introductions as well as warm-up activities, followed by a presentation of the State of the Field Report by Clark McKown and the SEL Assessment Work Group (AWG) and a fishbowl dialogue discussion facilitated by Dale Blyth featuring Kay Augustine, Eric Moore, Laura Hamilton, Matt Atwell, Maria Guzman, and Clark McKown. The fishbowl format

was intentionally used to create a space for dialogue as participants reflected through conversation on two big questions:

1. Considering your unique perspectives and roles in the field of SEL, what has changed over the past few years—at the principal level, district level, state level—with research?

2. Given your experience and the moment we are in now, what would you list as the single most important priority on which we need to work together to move the field forward?

This conversation served as a springboard to small-group conversations, sparking connections and uniting diverse perspectives. For the remainder of the day, participants remained in a predetermined set of eight intentionally diverse small groups. The eight small groups were formed to include a representative group of stakeholders and participants based on answers they provided when completing their pre-meeting bio book information survey. Each table group's designated lead then facilitated small-group table activities to drive participants toward identifying essential areas for next steps. For the end of the day, each of the eight tables was tasked to develop a two-minute pitch to share ideas with others in the room. We called these CAT (Catalysts Acting Together) presentations to summarize the work (Blyth, 2019). A CAT presentation is a cross between a commercial, a public service announcement, and a TED talk. These CAT talks briefed the challenge or opportunity the group decided to tackle and then summarized a strategy for coming together collaboratively to address the challenge and maximize the opportunity.

After each CAT talk presentation, there was an opportunity for a few questions before the next CAT talk was presented. All the CAT talks were recorded. After all the talks were finished, participants ranked the priority level of the eight pitches in terms of their ability to advance the field of SEL assessment (1= highest priority, 8= lowest priority). To estimate priorities by the group, we calculated the percentage of top four votes (+ endorsements), the percentage of bottom four votes (- or low-ranking endorsements) and the difference between them for each CAT Talk. These were then used to order the eight CAT talk topics as presented in the following table. The three numbers for each are below the talk title in each row (%+, %-, % Difference). Together, these numbers provided a way to support the prioritization of essential next steps.

CAT Talk Session Descriptions Ranked by the Percentage of High Versus Low Rankings

DRIVE SEL: Data Roadmap to Inform & Visualize Equitable SEL (75%+, 25%-, +50 difference)	**DRIVE SEL** proposed as an online resource that guides users through the process of identifying, understanding, and using data in equitable ways to inspire high-quality SEL implementation and instruction. Built through strong collaborations with multiple stakeholders, this resource would include: 1. Features broken out by context, systems, and settings. 2. Specific examples of real data users going through the processes of identifying, understanding, and using assessment reports to drive implementation and instruction. 3. Tools for data visualization in order to communicate findings with diverse audiences and stakeholders. 4. Success stories and pitfalls to avoid. 5. Coaching and implementation resources designed to create a roadmap to drive SEL. This tool would be prototyped and tested for continuous improvement and would be created through participation from all stakeholders, including students, families, teachers, frontline staff, and community members.
Voice and Choice: From Missing Link to Valued Partner (56%+, 44%-,+8 difference)	Also proposed was the creation of an alliance of organizations dedicated to youth, educator, and researcher partnerships that work with a set of schools ready to bring students fully into their SEL process—from selection of goals and measurement tools to interpretation, needs assessments, and the allocation of resources. The alliance would support the development of a practical resource guide to enable authentic youth partnerships and the use of evidence-based practices to include youth alongside educators in the SEL assessment journey.
SELgate – A Conspiracy to Support the Holistic Development of All Children (53%+, 47%-,+6 difference)	In response to the need for a collaborative and iterative process that leverages data based on a shared understanding of adults and young people around healthy development, this proposed effort would develop two strands of work: • **Understanding, Alignment, Planning:** Relevant stakeholders would come together to brainstorm what aspect of a child's development is of most interest, and would provide frameworks, local and state standards, and human development literature that can be understood and aligned for community use. • **Monitoring and Execution of Plan:** These efforts would generate data and efforts to enhance data understanding in order to align and more fully use formative and summative assessment, as well as to provide feedback on the ongoing process.
1-800-Data-Lit (52%+, 48%-,+4 difference)	This easily accessed online resource would provide data literacy to all educators through training that includes: recognizing bias and identifying inequities in systems and structures; and providing a set of protocols for data discussions that include young people in ways that emphasize redistributing power so that educators and youth know why they are collecting or providing data and participate in the decision-making using that data.

CAT Talk Session Descriptions Ranked by the Percentage of High Versus Low Rankings

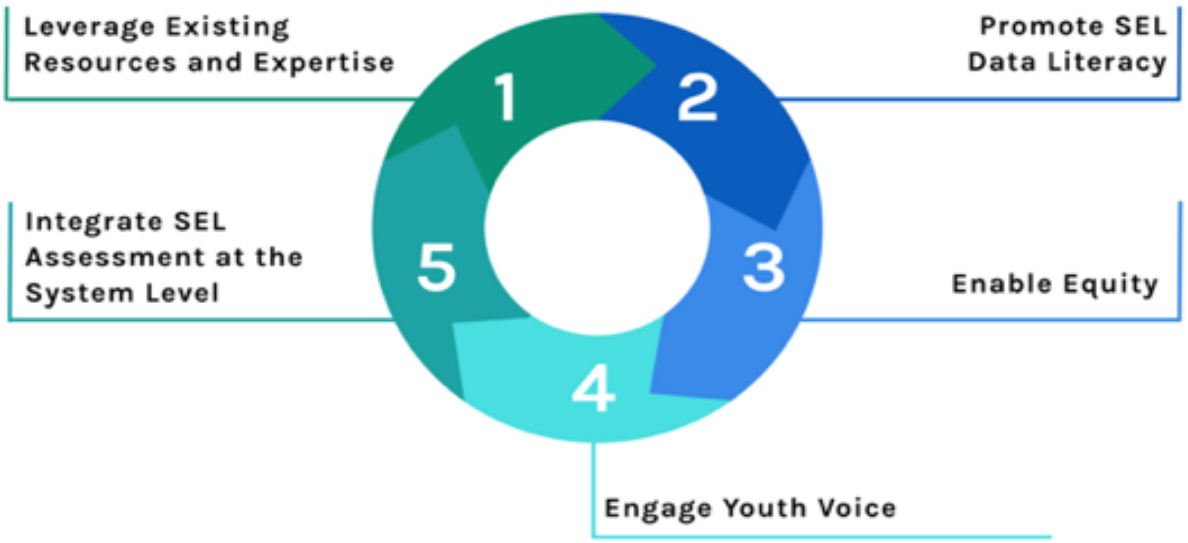
D-PASS: Dynamic Process Assessment Supporting SEL (51%+, 49%-,+2 difference)	The D-PASS would be an approach that starts by developing a framework for assessment that includes multiple components that create a shift in the conditions that enable healthy SEL development. D-PASS would be an assessment system that both captures process and demonstrates student and adult growth. The framework would prioritize the following characteristics: teacher-facilitated, student-driven/student engagement, growth oriented, developmentally appropriate, and culturally responsive. Specific actions to develop D-PASS include: 1. Wraparound curriculum for teachers for building community and targeted strategies for adults to use, with a specific assessment to understand how students are adults are doing. 2. Development of a system to triangulate data across multiple sources. 3. Student involvement, including building voices and sharing experiences. 4. Designing the "design process" (identifying who is involved in each stage of the assessment process, such as construct definition, implementation, and interpretation, and what family of measures will be used).
Whole Child-Whole Self (48%+, 52%-, -4 difference)	This proposed protocol would detail a systemwide process that would engage educators, school leaders, parents, and students to develop and then use a shared understanding and commitment to SEL in the context of the whole child and the enabling conditions needed for success at each level. This approach would be "studentcentric" and would facilitate two-way communication about how students work and feel, with flexibility to capture diverse SEL constructs and learning environments. Voice, goal-setting, self-assessment, education, and training at all levels from the individual to the classroom, school, district, and community would focus on the student in order to foster a continuous improvement cycle.
Students Co-Developing SEL Assessments (43%+, 57%-, -14 difference)	This project would use youth participatory action research (YPAR) to codevelop SEL assessments for use by schools. Ideally, one to three schools with diverse student populations and buy-in and/or experience with the process of doing a project-based learning unit with students would be recruited to codevelop an assessment. Participating classrooms would identify an SEL value to unpack through classroom conversation, in addition to surveying parents and community members in order to identify partners to construct a project-based learning unit from a range of different perspectives. Cross-functional groups of researchers, teachers, parents, and the community would work with students to codevelop assessment items, whether survey or observation-based. Toward the end of the school year, the assessment would be piloted in a different classroom than where it was developed. Somebody would capture how the process is working, including lessons learned to share with other schools. A multiyear roll out approach would be conducted as follows: Year 1: Identify partners and construct a project-based learning unit. Year 2: Implement units with students and pilot the assessments. Year 3: If an assessment is working, students will take the assessment in multiple classrooms over time.

CAT Talk Session Descriptions Ranked by the Percentage of High Versus Low Rankings	
Huh? What did you say? A Blueprint for Systemic Change (27%+, 73%-,-46 difference)	This digital tool would support district leaders in engaging in a blueprint for systemic change. The goal of the tool is to improve state, district, school, student, and family conversations and processes in order to create a blueprint for meaningful and useful SEL assessment across the system. The tool would walk participants through a process that includes (1) identifying all the stakeholders in the learning community, (2) how to conduct a needs assessment as it relates to SEL within the learning community, and (3) how to convene together and develop a case study to share with other state, districts, and schools to learn from these processes. The digital platform would also house a community resource where participants who go through the blueprint process at their school or district could post and share their case study and interact with other participants to support learning and continuous improvement.

The different projects and processes represented by the eight CAT talks developed at eight different tables demonstrate the wide range of approaches and topics around SEL assessment that a representative group of constituents from across the field of SEL assessment feel need to be addressed. From a strong emphasis on engaging students more fully to working to promote equity rather than support inequities, these discussions highlighted ways to bring stakeholders together and the creation of resources and tools that could then be shared to help others on their journeys. It is from these discussions and rich examples that the possible shape of the next phases of work emerged.

Next Phases of Work

We recommend five essential next phases of work for the field in order to provide a set of recommendations, guiding questions, and best practices so educators can more easily navigate the world of SEL and its assessment, we recommend five essential next phases of work for the field.



Leverage Resources and Expertise. Although discussion at the convening highlighted that much work remains to realize the full potential of SEL assessment and the effective use of data, it was also clear that much progress has been made. Attendees represented stakeholders connected to a wide range of ongoing efforts related to SEL assessment. Significant steps forward can be made by leveraging investments to build upon and improve the tools and resources emerging from many of those efforts, and by finding new ways to make connections among those tools and resources illustrated with a range of practical examples. Several opportunities to build on and connect current efforts and resources existed even within the work of convening attendees and invitees.

For example, developers of several complementary (and sometimes overlapping) resources were involved in our convening, including the AWG's MeasuringSEL *Suite of Resources*, the RAND *Assessment Finder*, AIR's *Ready to Assess*, the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments' *School Climate Survey Compendium*, and EASEL Lab's *Explore SEL* taxonomy tool. A focused effort to further develop, expand, and leverage such resources and connect and coordinate among all of them could help eliminate confusion in the field about their differential value and use, as well as contribute a more holistic view of how SEL assessment could be approached. Moreover, connecting these resources to other practice-focused implementation resources, such as CASEL's Program Guide, School Guide, and District Resource Center, could further support use of assessments and their data within a coordinated and aligned approach to systematic SEL implementation (i.e., programming, learning standards or guidelines, training, and assessment are all aligned). A future direction of this phase of work will include clear directions and supports to scaffold information access and usage for data users, through web-mediated and/or hands-on tutorials and quick-start guides. In addition, a brief focused specifically on SEL assessment will be released in the spring of 2020 as part of Penn State's Future Directions in SEL and Education Issue Brief Series (http://prevention.psu.edu/sel/).

Promote SEL Data Literacy. Despite recent nationally representative survey data showing near unanimous commitment to SEL (95%) among school principals, and even stronger agreement that SEL competencies are teachable (99%), less than half (37%) of principals report they were aware of what assessments of students' SEL competencies were available to use, and only a third (33%) believed that their teachers knew how to use data from these measures. These findings were echoed throughout the convening and corroborate existing reports that although educators lack no shortage of commitment to SEL, there is a need for more guidance and support related to SEL assessment. Practitioners requested and need clear, approachable guidance on how to leverage data they have, including identifying priorities ("What do you hope to change with SEL?"), clarifying expectations ("What are reasonable expectations around those things changing?"), operationalizing constructs ("What data do you already have access to that gets at these issues?"), and best practices of data collection and interpretation. Most of these questions require attention to data literacy geared at making use of data and extend beyond improving how assessment measures are developed and data is gathered. The next phase of work to support in data literacy will provide data users with stepwise guidance and parameters for decision-making to support in the identification of priorities, expectations, operationalizing of constructs, and best practices in data collection and interpretation. This introduction would lay the ground for deeper dives in each of these steps, building toward the intended goal of promoting the best possible use of data by and for the end user.

Enable Equity. The importance of proceeding with caution to ensure that SEL assessments promote equitable learning environments and experiences was also a prominent theme at the convening. This reflects a growing conversation in the field about the potential for SEL, including SEL assessment, to be a key lever for equity. For example, in their 2018 report, the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (NCSEAD) declared that "when done well, an integrated approach to social, emotional, and academic development benefits each and every child and can be part of achieving a more equitable society." As part of the AWG's SEL Framework Series, CASEL's Vice President of Research Dr. Robert Jagers explored the issue of SEL and equity in depth in a brief titled "Equity and Social-Emotional Learning: A Cultural Analysis," including a discussion of considerations for SEL assessment. There are important equity considerations at every phase of choosing and using an SEL assessment—from choosing a framework, to choosing a measurement tool or instrument, to using the resulting data. Considerations from each of these stages of the process are discussed in the AWG's practitioner guidance brief titled "Choosing and Using SEL Competency Assessments: What Schools and Districts Need to Know," and there are also a growing number of other resources available on the topic of SEL and equity from a variety of sources, such as The Great Lakes Equity Center. The next phase of work in advancing equity through SEL will include guiding questions from which to set parameters for enabling equity and reducing social and cultural stereotypes. This next phase of work will present up to four key questions and the corresponding impact the answers to those questions have when choosing and using SEL assessments toward the end of supporting equity and will draw from the newly formed CASEL Equity Work Group.

Engage Youth Voice. The need to elevate student voice in the whole process of SEL assessment was also an important theme at the convening. Educators can empower students in their own social-emotional development by involving them in the interpretation of assessment results and problem-solving. Involving students in this way gives them a sense of ownership of their own learning and increases their motivation, engagement, and sense of agency. Powerful examples of this work exist in districts prioritizing SEL across the nation. The stories of two such examples were told by the practitioners' themselves on the AWG's MeasuringSEL Blog, and have been featured in national publications such as Education Week. Ways of sharing their individual data with the student also has potential. The next phase of work in this area involves establishing clear expectations, sharing examples of how to engage students effectively, including prioritizing the data that students generate, how to generate meaningful data, and creating resources that can be used in doing so.

Integrate SEL Assessment at the System Level. The assessment of SEL does not occur in a vacuum. In the convening there was energy to more actively situate assessment in the larger and more integrated context of not just SEL but the broader social, emotional, and academic development of the whole student, classroom, teacher, and school. Participants agreed, and research confirms, that SEL done well is integrated in the fabric of the classroom and learning community—the greatest opportunity to realize the positive effects of SEL on students, classrooms, and teachers exists when SEL assessment practices can be embedded into larger systems. We note that districts face considerable challenges with integrating assessments into the already long priority lists and busy schedules of schools. The next phase of work in integrated SEL assessment will discuss best practices with examples of success stories—schools that have integrated SEL assessment well and how they executed the integration, including how to best fit assessment (inclusive of data collection, analysis, application) timelines into the school year, and how

to ensure school staff/faculty prioritize assessment through collectively understanding its value for the individual student, classroom, and the larger school community.

Where are we going from here? Catalyzing SEL Assessment Learning Modules

To support the transmission of the essential next phases of work identified during the convening to data users, the participants proposed to work together to build a set of online learning modules to share this information with a wide audience of stakeholders. To start, the five essential next phases of work for SEL assessment identified in this report will serve as the first five learning modules to be developed. Convening participants, colleagues, and partners were provided the opportunity to sign up to serve as content contributors/leaders for the modules. Five teams of diverse stakeholders from across research and practice have been identified to draw together initial content for the modules.

Why Learning Modules?

These 30-minute recorded webinars will instruct participants in understanding the elements of the essential next steps of SEL assessment outlined above. These lecture-based resources will also have an accompanying brief to allow for easy recording and dissemination. The learning modules are to serve as the *introductory resource* for each essential topic. Each learning module will also be accompanied by a set of recommended resources for participants to continue their learning on the topics. It is our hope that these learning modules can serve as a pilot for considering the building out of an indepth, interactive, resource library of learning modules for practitioners to hone their SEL assessment skills and ways of using data in implementation, possibly leading to credentialing and better ways for all stakeholders to share resources and best practices.

Who will write and host the Learning Modules?

We are currently recruiting colleagues/partners to develop the content for the modules. Each module will be recorded using a PowerPoint template and voice-over recording by the lead (and colleagues when applicable). The modules will be hosted and available for free in the Measuring SEL resource section of the CASEL website.

When will the Learning Modules be released?

The Catalyzing SEL Assessment Learning Modules, with recommendations, action steps, and resource guides will be released monthly (May-September) leading up to the 2nd Annual SEL Exchange, scheduled for October 2020.

When will the Learning Modules consist of?

Each 30-minute module will provide:

1. An introduction to the topic area of the phase of work (<5 mins), including conceptual definitions as necessary to set parameters for the topic.

2. Best practices and/or recommended resources for different stakeholders representing the SEL assessment landscape.
3. Essential questions. Each learning module will conclude with at least one essential question to ask to move the work forward, such as how to do this work at each level by stakeholder.

Each module will have an accompanying resource guide (to be developed by the contributing team) and public blog post hosted through Measuring SEL to drive participants to listen to the module.

We are all better, together. Are you interested in leaning in on a learning module? Reach out to christina.cipriano@yale.edu to learn more and join a content team! Continue to stay up to date with the release of the SEL Assessment Learning Modules by signing up here.

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listed in the order they appear

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