



**An Invitation to Apply for the Position of
Research Associate on the Continuous Improvement Team
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
Chicago, Illinois
January 2019**

Organizational Summary:

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a nonprofit organization based in Chicago, and a trusted source for knowledge about high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL). CASEL's mission is to help make evidence-based SEL an integral part of preschool through high school education across the country. We are transforming American education through SEL by collaborating with leading experts and supporting districts, schools, and states nationwide to drive research, guide practice, and inform policy. Together, we are enabling all young people in our diverse society to lead healthier, happier, more productive, and fulfilling lives.

With committed and growing philanthropic funding and a cohesive strategic plan, CASEL is endeavoring to:

- Support the implementation and document the impact of systemic SEL in large school districts and socio-demographically diverse school districts across this nation.
- Capture, refine, and test the learnings to advance the research base for the process of implementing systemic SEL and share that knowledge broadly.
- Identify and evaluate interventions and assessment tools to accelerate high-quality implementation of SEL nationwide.
- Partner with SEL program providers, colleges of education, professional organizations, school districts, and researchers to support scaling of SEL.
- Promote federal and state policies that encourage academic, social, and emotional learning.
- Strategically communicate to foster widespread demand for SEL as an essential part of students' education at the classroom, school, district, state, and national level.

CASEL is overseen by a distinguished 10-member Board of Directors. They include Timothy P. Shriver (Chair), Ann S. Nerad (Vice Chair), Roger P. Weissberg (Vice Chair), Larry Aber, Stephen D. Arnold, Catherine Bradshaw, Deborah Delisle, Paul Goren, Kim Schonert-Reichl, and Andrea Wishom.

Position Description:

This Research Associate will report to the Assistant Director of Continuous Improvement and the Director of Assessment and Continuous Improvement, and work closely with other members of the research and practice teams. As part of the Continuous Improvement team, this Research Associate will help with planning and providing technical assistance (TA) to collaborating district partners, collecting and synthesizing learnings from implementation processes, and contributing to CASEL's broader efforts to improve our understanding of systemic SEL.

In this role, the Research Associate will collaborate closely with CASEL coaches and district teams to ensure that continuous improvement methods and protocols are used to improve implementation efforts over time and ultimately improve outcomes. Tasks may include analyzing data and preparing and presenting findings; collaborating with both internal and external research partners; working closely with district leadership, Research & Evaluation teams, and out-of-school time program providers; cultivating and facilitating learning communities focused on continuously improving SEL; and extracting, synthesizing and presenting learnings across communities and partners.

The ideal candidate for this Research Associate position will have significant experience applying concepts and strategies from improvement science to support implementation and foster systemic change. They will be broadly knowledgeable about SEL, positive youth development, and/or related forms of developmentally appropriate educational practice. The Research Associate should be able to think strategically and creatively to meet the varied and shifting circumstances and needs of partnering districts.

Responsibilities include:

- Collaborate with district partners and CASEL coaches to evaluate the strengths and needs of TA partners, make recommendations about assistance related to continuous improvement and evaluation that CASEL should provide.
- Develop and deliver necessary trainings for district administrators, schools, and coaches on topics related to research, assessment, and continuous improvement.
- Gather relevant information about implementation progress and outcome improvement from districts and OST partners.
- Collaborate with districts, schools, and relevant partners on execution of continuous improvement systems that drive successful SEL implementation and outcome improvement.
- Coordinate third-party evaluators, partner district teams, and other district partners with data collection and continuous improvement activities.
- Travel to partner districts to establish relationships with district teams and local partners, and to collaborate with the SEL and Research & Evaluation teams (up to twice a year).
- Work with district partners, OST providers, and external evaluator to plan and facilitate professional learning communities focused on learning from data and improving implementation through shared learnings within each city.

- Draft and disseminate practice briefs and webinars based on project learnings and best practices, as needed.
- Collaborate with other members of the CASEL research team to finalize and disseminate key grant deliverables and draft annual grant reports, according to funder requirements.
- Collaborate with the CASEL colleagues to use a variety of data sources to pro-actively identify opportunities for implementation and/or TA improvement.
- Collaborate with CASEL colleagues to facilitate the collection of feedback data from users of CASEL's tools, in order to inform ongoing tool improvement and development.
- Perform other related duties and participate in special projects as assigned.

Qualifications

Although no one candidate may embody all of the desired qualities, the successful candidate will bring many of the following qualifications and personal attributes:

- Experience with and enthusiasm for using improvement science methods and strategies, ideally in the context of working with schools or districts on large scale implementation and systemic change
- Graduate degree in a relevant field (education, public policy, psychology, human development, prevention science, sociology), preferably with a preK-12 education, youth development focus
- Five or more years of experience conducting applied quantitative and qualitative research, with a focus on preK-12 education or youth development
- Experience working in a school district and/or collaborating with educators to develop and implement evaluation and tracking systems
- Experience working to translate research findings into products appropriate and appealing for practice and nonprofessional audiences (e.g., developing consumers' guides, high quality videos, online professional development courses, webinars)
- Excellent interpersonal and communications skills, including the ability to connect in culturally competent ways with local stakeholders from a wide variety of backgrounds
- Passion for social and emotional learning, and for CASEL's mission

Personal Characteristics

- Commitment to improving public education and providing low-income students from diverse backgrounds with excellent educational opportunities.
- Adaptable, thinks well on feet; comfort working in a dynamic context in which strategies and priorities may need revision over time based on changing conditions on the ground and learnings throughout the year.
- Excellent strategic thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as advanced skills in managing and executing multiple projects according to organizational priorities.
- Cultural competence and enjoyment working with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Integrity, resilience, and stamina; grace in dealing with a broad spectrum of personalities; good humor in leading the day-to-day work of the organization.

Compensation

CASEL seeks to maintain compensation packages competitive within the nonprofit and education sectors, commensurate with experience.

To Apply

Please email a **thoughtful cover letter and resume** outlining how your skills and experience meet the qualifications of the position and stating how you heard about this opportunity to careers@casel.org. Please include the position title in the subject line of your email message. We regret that we will not be able to respond to phone inquiries about this position.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning is an equal opportunity employer. CASEL evaluates applicants for employment on the basis of qualifications, merit and work-related criteria without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, mental or physical disabilities, pregnancy, medical condition, marital status or any other characteristic protected by law. CASEL employs and values a diverse work environment.