



An Invitation to apply for the position of
Research Associate: Continuous Improvement
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
Chicago, Illinois
September 2020

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning is seeking a Research Associate for Continuous Improvement. This position works with the champions of the SEL field and holds an important role in the organization that is working to ensure equitable education outcomes for every child.

Reporting to the Director of Research-Practice Partnerships, and working closely with the Vice President for Research, the Research Associate for Continuous Improvement will help with planning and be responsible for execution of continuous improvement technical assistance with collaborating districts partners, collecting and synthesizing learnings from partners' implementation process, and contributing to CASEL's broader efforts to improve our understanding of systemic SEL.

In this role, the Research Associate will collaborate 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 Research Associate will:

- Collaborate with district partners and CASEL content-expert coaches and colleagues to evaluate the strengths and needs of TA partners, make recommendations about assistance CASEL may provide related to assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement.
- Assist partner districts with developing or refining plans for program evaluation and continuous improvement.
- As dictated by district and school needs, develop and deliver trainings for district administrators, schools, and coaches on topics related to research, assessment, and continuous improvement.
- Gather critical 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.
- Participate in regular calls with third-party evaluators and other district partners to coordinate data collection and continuous improvement activities and maximize efficiency and support to partner cities.
- Travel to partner cities 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 identifying 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.

The ideal candidate for this position will have strong experience applying concepts and strategies from improvement science and program evaluation to support large scale implementation and foster systemic change. They will be broadly knowledgeable about SEL, positive youth development, and/or related forms of developmentally appropriate educational practice. They will be a gifted leader, project manager and communicator, one who thinks strategically, and inspires others to their best efforts.

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 working with or in a school district and/or collaborating with educators to develop and implement evaluation and tracking systems.
- 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.
- Bachelor's degree required; Graduate degree in a relevant field (education, public policy, psychology, human development, prevention science, sociology), preferably with a preK-12 education, youth development focus preferred.
- three or more years of experience conducting applied quantitative and qualitative research, with a focus on preK-12 education or youth development.
- 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.

CASEL seeks an individual who is highly motivated and committed to CASEL's mission, with a commitment to improving public education and providing low-income students from diverse backgrounds with excellent educational opportunities. This position requires adaptability, comfort working in dynamic contexts, flexibility, curiosity, excellent organizational skills, and a strongly collaborative spirit.

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.

To apply, please submit a cover letter and resume that includes references to careers@casel.org. Please include the position title in the subject line of your email, and in your cover letter, mention where you heard of this position.