

## APPENDIX D

## Frequently Asked Questions about Universal Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Screening

The following are commonly asked questions about social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) screening, which is sometimes referred to as universal or school-wide social-emotional, mental/behavioral health, or social emotional learning (SEL) screening. This document provides responses based on ethical and legal guidelines and requirements, SEB screening research, and expert consensus. Please note these are general responses to commonly asked questions. When schools implement SEB screening, information that addresses the questions below as it applies to the specific school's context and screening procedures should be clearly communicated to parents, students, and stakeholders.

### What is universal SEB screening?

How students engage socially and emotionally with their peers, educators, and their school impacts learning and long-term success in life. Schools are teaching and creating contexts that promote social and emotional skills and wellness for all students. Across all content areas, educators use assessments to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their students so they can plan how to best teach and support their students. Just as students participate in screenings for vision, physical health, reading, and other academic areas, SEB screening provides an indicator of whether a student's SEB health is on track or if there might be a problem. Screening is a proactive approach in that it provides important information to ensure help is provided before little problems become big ones. Universal screening data is typically collected two to three times per year and involves either teachers, parents, and/or students rating a short list of items, which typically takes a few minutes to complete.

- ***Universal SEB screening provides educators with an indicator of how well all students are doing and if some students are in need of additional SEB supports and services. Universal screening data are intended to inform decisions about how educators can better support the SEB wellness of the students they are charged with teaching. Educators collaborate closely with and inform parents throughout the SEB screening process.***

In a typical school at any given point in time, approximately one in five students has SEB needs; that is, they are experiencing challenges that interfere with their daily SEB functioning. Most students with SEB needs are facing common stressors and social-emotional problems that can be improved when supports are provided in a timely manner. Regardless of an individual student's need, all students (and educators) benefit from warm, caring learning environments and knowledge of SEB skills that support their wellbeing. Schools committed to SEB development gather universal screening data to assess the SEB skills, strengths, and challenges of their students and use the information to help determine how staff can best support students.

### Who is in charge of universal SEB screening?

Universal screening is part of a larger effort to promote the SEB wellbeing of students and their learning community. A school team usually oversees the SEB screening process and is responsible for establishing procedures and routines for SEB screening data collection, interpretation, and use. This team typically includes administrators, teachers, support staff with mental health and behavioral expertise, and, ideally, family and youth leadership. This school team will also consult with other content experts when needed or their legal or Information Technology departments.

### What does a universal SEB screener measure?

There are many different SEB screeners available for schools to use. Some screeners measure SEB strengths, some measure SEB problems, and some measure both strengths and problems. It is important to note that universal SEB screening data provides only a general estimate of a student's functioning. SEB screeners are developed to cast a wide net to detect all students that could possibly be in need of additional support. Screeners are NOT intended to make diagnoses or determine each student's highly specific needs. The most widely supported SEB screeners focus on social, emotional, and behavioral indicators that are reliable (consistent), valid (accurate and applicable), and associated with SEB wellness and academic success. Gathering meaningful SEB screening data requires schools to: 1) prioritize equitable SEB outcomes, 2) partner with youth and families, 3) select a screener that fits their purpose and context, and 4) adhere