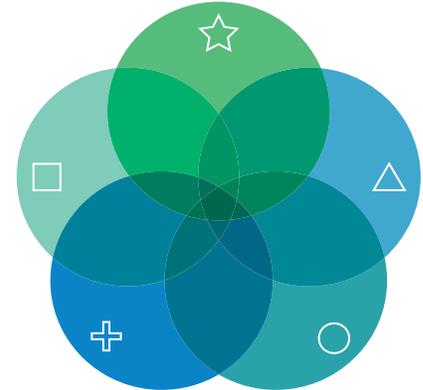




What is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)?

Social and Emotional Learning refers to five interrelated competency areas as identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). These five areas are:

- ★ **Self Awareness:** to identify and label one's own feelings
- **Social Awareness:** to empathize with others, show respect, and appreciate diversity
- ▲ **Self-Management:** to complete difficult tasks, self-motivate, ask for help when needed, and focus attention
- + **Relationships:** to participate in a group, communicate effectively, work toward common goals, and peacefully resolve conflicts
- **Responsible Decision Making:** to analyze situations, make responsible decisions, and problem solve in challenging circumstances



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Social and Emotional Skills

Strong social and emotional skills are critical to being a successful student, upstanding citizen, and productive worker. Integrated, multi-year efforts to develop students' social and emotional skills can prevent or reduce:

- Drug use
- Violence
- Bullying
- Dropping out of school

Students can be taught strong social and emotional skills through:

- Direct classroom instruction in SEL
- Student engagement in positive activities
- Parent and community involvement

The SEL Connection to Academics and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Social and emotional skills are implicitly embedded in the CCSS, but are sometimes not obvious to teachers, administrators, and policy makers. Social and emotional competencies are vital foundational skills for students to be successful in meeting the standards.



The CCSS require students to master complex text and use critical thinking skills. In order to be successful, students need to have the corresponding SEL skills such as the ability to:

- Persevere through challenging tasks
- Understand and manage emotions
- Set and achieve goals
- Demonstrate empathy
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with peers and teachers
- Make responsible decisions

The Importance of Social and Emotional Learning

Research shows that students with strong SEL skills display:

- ✓ Better academic performance: *Students who receive SEL instruction scored an average of 11 percentile points higher on achievement tests*
- ✓ Improved attitudes and behaviors
- ✓ Fewer negative behaviors
- ✓ Reduced emotional distress

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The importance of Social and Emotional Learning is recognized in the *RI Basic Educational Plan (BEP)* and the *RI Model of Teacher Evaluation and Support System*. They both call for creating an environment of respect for teachers and students that builds positive relationships, promotes school engagement, academic success, and student pride.

www.ride.ri.gov

Many students exhibit behavioral challenges that are rooted in a lack of social and emotional skills. These skills **can** be taught. Just as school wide approaches in literacy support all students, including those with literacy needs, school wide approaches in SEL support all students, including those with behavioral challenges. *Research shows we should provide instruction, not punishment, to children with social and emotional needs.*

Social and Emotional Learning in Rhode Island Schools

SEL Skills are Needed to be College and Career Ready

Social and emotional skills are vitally important for success in college, work, and in building positive relationships with others. Without SEL, many youngsters struggle in school, and later as adults in the workforce and in society.

Bringing SEL to the Classroom

There exists with some, a belief that our students come to school equipped with well developed social and emotional skills. This is not always the case, and it often falls on educators to teach these extremely valuable life skills. But where do we begin? CASEL has produced the *2013 Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Programs*, which is available on their website at www.casel.org. The guide is intended to help schools and teachers identify programs that will best meet their needs, by providing an independent and objective review and rating of evidence-based SEL curricula.

South Kingstown School District

South Kingstown has begun implementing a district-wide plan to systemically incorporate Social and Emotional Learning into its curriculum for all students. This culturally responsive system of support has identified various evidence-based practices for use at different levels from K-12.

"Students are taught the 'Zones of Regulation', which is a tool to help them calm down if they are agitated. Four colors (Green, Yellow, Blue, Red) help us recognize and understand our feelings and the feelings of others. This consistent practice that comes from the elementary schools to the middle school has made the de-escalation of some students easier and faster, which results in fewer disciplinary referrals. These skills can be used in all areas of our lives, and the terminology is becoming common language in the schools in South Kingstown."

—Kathy Egan, Principal, Broad Rock Middle School, South Kingstown

Kupers, L.M. Zones of Regulation

Sherman School, Warwick, RI

One teacher reported that "Yoga has helped tremendously. It really works and empowers my students to calm themselves and be open to learning."

Sherman Elementary School is a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) school where adults teach and model expected behaviors. With support from an outside agency, they teach mindfulness and yoga to all students in all classes. Teachers participate in these activities and help students generalize the skills. Their behavioral data shows less office referrals on the days yoga occurs.

The International Charter School

The International Charter School is a diverse, dual language K-5 elementary school with 326 students located in Pawtucket, RI. This school uses several complementary programs and strategies to create a comprehensive and systematic way to provide explicit instruction in social and emotional skills. These universal strategies are embedded throughout every classroom and are a vital and consistent part of the school day. Teachers describe the social and emotional learning component as a proactive, student-centered, community-building approach to classroom management.

As one member of the school community describes it, "Social and emotional learning strengthens classroom instruction by teaching skills that improve students' ability to learn."



RIDE Rhode Island Department of Education

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