Districtwide Indicators of SEL Implementation

When implemented systemically across a school district, high-quality SEL supports academic achievement, graduation, attendance, school climate, educational equity and other important outcomes. CASEL's District Framework identifies 16 key activities for districtwide SEL implementation. When these activities are fully implemented, districts infuse SEL into every aspect of students' educational experience -- across their classrooms, schools, homes and communities. While SEL implementation can take 3 to 5+ years to fully scale across a district, the indicators below provide evidence of high-quality implementation throughout the process.

Shared ownership for SEL

District and school staff, board members, students, families, and community partners feel shared ownership over the district's collaboratively developed vision for SEL and know their role in promoting SEL. District stakeholders use common language to describe SEL competencies and strategies, and explicitly call out SEL as essential to student success.

SEL embedded in district systems and structures

SEL is woven into district systems and structures, such as instructional frameworks, school improvement initiatives, and student support systems. District policies, including discipline, are aligned with SEL and promote equitable student outcomes.

Sustained commitment to SEL

District leaders prioritize SEL in long-term planning and decision-making, and ensure adequate resources to support high-quality implementation. School leaders prioritize and dedicate staff time to SEL implementation in their buildings. Staff at all levels have access to coaching, professional learning and other necessary resources to support their efforts.

Socially, emotionally, and culturally competent and collaborative staff

Staff at all levels feel supported and connected to their colleagues and engage in ongoing reflection and learning around their own social, emotional and cultural competence. School and district staff consistently model SEL in their interactions with students, staff, families, and community members.

Explicit SEL programs and approaches implemented with fidelity

To promote positive outcomes, evidence-based programs and approaches for explicit SEL instruction are implemented in schools and classrooms as designed, including following a program's scope, sequence, and frequency of lessons and activities. Staff responsible for implementation have access to necessary support and materials, and feel confident in their ability to facilitate SEL programs and practices.

Academic instruction and classroom climate support SEL

SEL language and practices are embedded throughout academic instruction and classroom routines. Teachers across the district foster equitable learning environments and use culturally-responsive, developmentally-appropriate SEL standards or guidelines in their instructional planning and decision-making.

Youth Voice and Engagement

The district honors and elevates a broad range of student perspectives and experiences by engaging students as leaders, problem solvers, and decision-makers.

Authentic family partnerships

Families have regular and meaningful opportunities to collaborate with district and school staff to support students' social, emotional, and academic development and guide the district's SEL plan.

Aligned community partnerships

The district leverages community partners and aligns on common language, strategies, and communication around all SEL-related efforts and initiatives, during school and out-of-school time.

District- and school-level systems for SEL continuous improvement

The district SEL team collects and regularly reflects on both implementation and outcome data, in order to monitor progress and continuously improve all SEL-related systems, practices, and policies. School teams engage regularly in reflecting on data, sharing learnings and strategies, and developing plans for improving quality of schoolwide SEL implementation.

For guidance and tools, visit CASEL's District Resource Center at drc.casel.org.