



**State Superintendent's Equity Stakeholder Council**  
Advancing Equity through  
Social Emotional Learning

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent

# About This Document



Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a critical and necessary component of a holistic learning experience and incorporating these skills is essential to ensuring all of Wisconsin's students are college and career ready. With social and emotional skills, students can effectively navigate social environments, acknowledge and manage their emotions, and develop and maintain supportive, healthy relationships. The effective and sustained implementation of an SEL plan is vital to advancing equity and ensuring all students are positioned for success. The Department of Public Instruction is committed to ensuring all of Wisconsin's students are safe and supported and have access to learning environments that promote the social, emotional, and physical well-being of each and every student.

**Wisconsin's State Superintendent's Equity Stakeholder Council (Council)** studied Social Emotional Learning through an equity lens from January to June of 2018. This Council, comprised of education and community leaders committed to equity in education, sees great promise in SEL as one strategy to help close the persistent achievement gaps that remain a part of Wisconsin's educational landscape.

After a deep examination of salient research, school visits, and conversations with national leaders, the Council recommends all districts and schools consider the following strategies to implement high quality SEL services and systems, keep equity at the forefront of their work, and maintain our shared commitment to disrupting systemic educational inequities across Wisconsin.

The strategies are organized into four domains—student experience, district and school engagement, coherence and alignment, and community partnerships—and include a general belief statement for each of the corresponding domains. There is also one final consideration posed to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) that captures what the Council believes is the DPI's role in supporting and advancing SEL as a critical strategy to achieving educational equity in Wisconsin.

# Strategies

The strategies are organized into four domains and include a general belief statement for each of the corresponding domains:

1. STUDENT EXPERIENCE
2. DISTRICT AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT
3. COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT
4. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Council's hope is that districts and schools use these strategies as they plan and work to improve the educational experiences for all students, remove barriers to student success, and ensure educational equity throughout all educational systems in Wisconsin.

## 1. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Council believes all students should attend schools where they consistently feel safe, supported, valued, respected, and have opportunities to thrive and learn the life skills they need to succeed after high school.

This means all districts:

- Provide teachers, staff, and administrators with the training they need to confront and address their implicit biases enabling them to talk and work with parents, families, and students free of stigma or judgement.
- Provide teachers, staff, and administrators with cultural competency training so they are able to establish positive relationships with their students based on a mutual understanding of their cultural backgrounds.
- Work to understand, address, and proactively meet the SEL needs of every student, especially those who are traditionally underserved.
- Identify, acknowledge, assess, and address the institutional barriers that may unintentionally impede students' success.



# Strategies (cont'd)

## 2. DISTRICT AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

The Council believes all teachers, staff, administrators, and policymakers should be engaged in the development of their district/school's SEL implementation strategy, and have access to the supports needed to meet their own SEL needs.

This means all districts:

- Provide all teachers, staff, and administrators with access to high-quality professional development to support effective SEL implementation in the school.
- Expect all teachers, staff, and administrators to model the behavior that is expected of all students by treating the adults and students in their school with respect and empathy and by demonstrating cultural competence.
- Provide teachers, staff, and administrators with the supports needed to address their own SEL needs.

## 3. COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT

The Council believes all schools and districts should embed SEL practice into their day-to-day ecosystem, instead of treating it as a separate program.

This means all districts:

- Adopt a research-based, accessible, culturally responsive set of SEL strategies that compliment Wisconsin's SEL Competencies to support the development of a healthy school community.
- Consistently communicate and regularly model that SEL is for everyone, not just some students, and reinforce that it is not meant to replace but to support classroom management.
- Pursue funding options, including a reprioritization of funds and/or grant opportunities, to augment existing budget allocation to support SEL.



- Engage with families and communities throughout strategy development and implementation to help them understand why SEL is a priority and how they can help in and outside of school.
- Reinforce the importance of SEL by removing barriers to effective implementation of chosen strategies.

# Strategies (cont'd)

## 4. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Council believes districts should partner with community groups and local organizations to find ways the partners can contribute to student success by using their expertise, members, and resources.

This means all districts:

- Form partnerships with local or regional institutions of higher education, educational associations, teacher preparation programs, and other sectors to provide access to the resources, training, and tools that schools and districts need to effectively implement SEL strategies.
- Identify local and regional like-minded partner organizations, understand the lens they identify with SEL (via workforce/career readiness, soft skills, 21st century skills, community organizing, etc.) and engage them in regular discussions about the roles they can play to help students succeed.
- Engage and leverage community organizations, non-profits, and other agencies to mitigate challenges and remove barriers families may experience outside of the school system.
- Champion and advocate for support of SEL within schools and develop a local advocacy team comprised of educators and community partners to ensure the importance of SEL remains at the forefront.



## DPI'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING SEL

To support high-quality district implementation, DPI should continue to work with SEL and equity experts, national leaders, and districts to promote a common, universal understanding of research-based, accessible, and culturally-responsive SEL strategies and implementation resources for districts to adopt that are grounded in the Wisconsin SEL Competencies. The DPI should also continue advocating at the state and national levels for funds to support SEL in Wisconsin's schools.

The Council firmly believes the promotion and advancement of SEL in Wisconsin's districts and schools is a critical strategy to advancing and ensuring educational equity for all students. Embracing the beliefs espoused by the Council and implementing the suggested strategies will enable and support positive systemic change necessary to ensuring the success of all Wisconsin's students.

# Council Members

**Carolyn Stanford Taylor, Council Chair  
and State Superintendent**  
Wisconsin Department of Public  
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Gary Albrecht, *Commissioner*  
CESA Statewide Network

\*Ruben Anthony, *President/CEO*  
Urban League of Greater Madison

John Ashley, *Executive Director*  
Wisconsin Association of School Boards

Jon Bales, *Executive Director*  
Wisconsin Association of School District  
Administrators

\*Derek Campbell, *Policy Advisor*  
Office of the Governor

Salvador Carranza, *Founder*  
Latino Education Council of Dane County

\*Tony Chambers, *Director of Equity,*  
Inclusion and Innovation  
UW-Madison Center for Healthy Minds

Heather DuBois Bourenane,  
*Executive Director*, Wisconsin Public  
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\*Phyllis Greenberger, *Lead Advocacy*  
*Specialist*, Disability Rights Wisconsin

Eve Hall, *President*, Milwaukee Urban  
League

Chris Her-Xiong, *Principal*  
Hmong American Peace Academy -  
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Brian Jackson, *President*  
Wisconsin Indian Education Association

\*Gregory Jones, *President*  
NAACP Dane County Branch #36AB

Kim Kohlhaas, *President*  
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*President*, Wisconsin Technical College  
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Wisconsin Council of Administrators of  
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Wisconsin Legislature

Sen. Luther Olsen (R)  
Wisconsin Legislature

Rep. Sody Pope (D)  
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\*Carleen Vande Zande, *Associate*  
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University of Wisconsin System  
Administration

Jerry Walters, *Administrator*  
Cooperative Educational  
Service Agency 11

Rolf Wegenke, *President*  
Wisconsin Association of Independent  
Colleges and Universities

\* *New to the Council in 2019*

# Resources

## MEMBERS WHO EXITED THE COUNCIL IN 2018-2019

*Michael Anton, Wisconsin PTA*

*Jim Bender, School Choice Wisconsin*

*Evan Bradtke, Office of Governor Scott Walker*

*Sally Flaschberger, Disability Rights Wisconsin*

*Fran Finco, WI Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*

*Frank Humphrey, Wisconsin NAACP*

*John Jacobs, Wisconsin eSchool Network*

*Brian Juchems, Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools*

*Woodrow Wiedenhoeft, WI Association of School Business Officials*

## RESOURCES

The Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development: [From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope: Recommendations from the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development](#)

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL): [The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning website](#)

CASEL: [The CASEL Guide to School wide Social and Emotional Learning](#)

CASEL: [District Resource Center](#)

Robert Wood Foundation: [Applying an Equity Lens to Social, Emotional, and Academic Development](#)

University of Wisconsin—Madison and University of Wisconsin Extension: [What Works Wisconsin – Effective Programs and Resources for Children, Youth, and Families](#)

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: [Social and Emotional Learning web page](#)

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: [Wisconsin Pre/K-Adult Social and Emotional Learning Competencies Spanish edition](#)



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