



EQUITY  
ASSISTANCE  
CENTER -  
SOUTH AT SEF

# How to Improve Student Social-Emotional Well-Being



## BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL -EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Implementing SEL offers a wide range of benefits for the entire school community.

- Enhanced Academic and Social and Emotional Skills
- Positive School Environment
- Improved Student Wellness
- Increased Student Performance

## WHAT IS SEL?

SEL is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which individuals acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, show empathy, build supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

## WHY DOES SEL MATTER IN SCHOOLS?

SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation. SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities. SEL is crucial for developing well-rounded, resilient students who are prepared for life's challenges. Investing in SEL equips students with the skills they need to succeed both academically and personally. (definition based on the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL]).

## SOCIAL - EMOTIONAL GOALS FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

- **Skills and Confidence:** Empower students to build the necessary skills and confidence to advocate effectively for themselves and others in various contexts.
- **Critical Thinking Skills:** Support students in cultivating stronger critical thinking skills from diverse perspectives, which enhances their ability to think independently and make well-informed decisions.
- **Empathy:** Encourage students to develop empathy and understanding towards the experiences and viewpoints of others.
- **Inclusivity:** Motivate students to build meaningful relationships across cultural, linguistic, and social boundaries.
- **College, Career, and Life:** Provide students with cultural competence and interpersonal skills that prepare them for success in a globalized society, enhancing their readiness for higher education, careers, and personal endeavors.

For help with implementing these strategies, contact the Equity Assistance Center – South  
The Southern Education Foundation at: [eacsouth@southerneducation.org](mailto:eacsouth@southerneducation.org)

## STUDENT SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING PRACTICES

Districts and schools may consider the following recommendations:

### **Data-Informed Decision Making:**

Examine group differences for emotional and behavioral supports, including specific curricular programs, school climate, before- and after programs, and onsite counseling.

**Equitable, Welcoming, and Affirming Environments:** Establish equitable learning environments and coordinate practices across key settings including classrooms, schools, families, and communities to enhance students' social, emotional, and academic learning. Include families and communities in partnership to address and enhance student well-being.

**High Quality Learning Experiences:** SEL instruction should be explicit and seamlessly part of everyday lessons; incorporate developmentally-appropriate tasks and culturally responsive learning opportunities to build trust and safety; engage collaborative inquiry based on student's prior knowledge; and



provide individualized supports that include multi-tiered systems of support.

**Educator Well-Being:** Invest in the well-being of the education staff through teacher SEL programs to ultimately improve teacher well-being, reduce educator shortages, and boost student outcomes.

**Professional Learning:** Enhance the effectiveness of educators by providing targeted training and development opportunities that focus on innovative teaching strategies, culturally responsive practices, and ongoing support for implementing social-emotional learning in the classroom.

## COMMON SCHOOL CHALLENGES MITIGATED BY SEL

Schools neglecting SEL integration into classrooms and school culture face significant disadvantages:

- **Learning Loss:** Students may experience academic difficulties.
- **Chronic Absenteeism:** Chronic absenteeism leads to disengagement among students, significantly impacting their academic progress and overall success.
- **Mental Health Struggles:** Both students and educators may experience increased anxiety, stress and depression.
- **Safety Concerns:** Neglecting SEL can lead to safety issues related to student behavior and school climate.
- **Educator Burnout:** Without SEL tools and training, educators may exhibit less job satisfaction and increased burnout (i.e., decreased teacher retention).

For additional details and resources,  
please scan the QR code.



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For more information about the webinar visit <https://eacsouth.org>.

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