



WASHINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Social and Emotional Learning Plan

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District Website/Parent Resource
Version

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), as defined by the not-for-profit Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), is *“the **process** whereby children and adults develop essential social and emotional skills, knowledge and attitudes”* related to the core areas of social and emotional competency:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making

According to CASEL, research has shown that SEL has a wide variety of benefits for students. It supports and boosts academic achievement and provides the foundation for improved social, health and behavioral outcomes. SEL promotes key competencies through instruction and modeling, as well as through the creation of learning environments where students feel safe, cared for and engaged in learning.

SEL is the process, not a program through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Social-emotional skills are essential for school, work and life.

Why is Washington School District focusing on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)?

In Washington School District, we cultivate learners who are engaged in pursuing a productive academic and social path. Washington School District’s learning community achieves progress by empowering members to reach their full potential. As a learning community, our district focuses on preparing each and every student to achieve high levels of success. It is the district’s responsibility to support each and every student and focus on improving their social, emotional, academic and learning environment. As a community of learners and educators, our goal is to individualize learning opportunities for all students.

Through a yearlong discussion around student safety, connections with school, and student voice, our district found a need to focus our attention on building positive and supportive relationships with students in our schools and allow more opportunities for students to have a voice in their education. We found evidence based upon school data, observations, surveys including the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS), and student and staff perception data that there is a need to continue to build positive relationships with all learners in our district and create a more positive school culture through concerted and focused school-wide strategies. As we begin this process, it is vital that the adults in our organization are mindful of the ways that we communicate with and react to students in our daily interactions. It is also our responsibility to assure students are mindful of their actions, their strengths and weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Washington School District has provided a number of Social and Emotional Learning opportunities for students over the years; however, this framework is a concerted effort to create and align a systematic focus and approach in grades K-12. Our continued goal is to provide our learners with lifelong tools to navigate a course toward growth and advancement. Additionally, we will focus efforts on Social and Emotional Learning to support higher levels of student achievement.

CASEL FRAMEWORK

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCIES

SELF-AWARENESS

The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitations, with a wellgrounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”

- Identifying emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy

SELF-MANAGEMENT

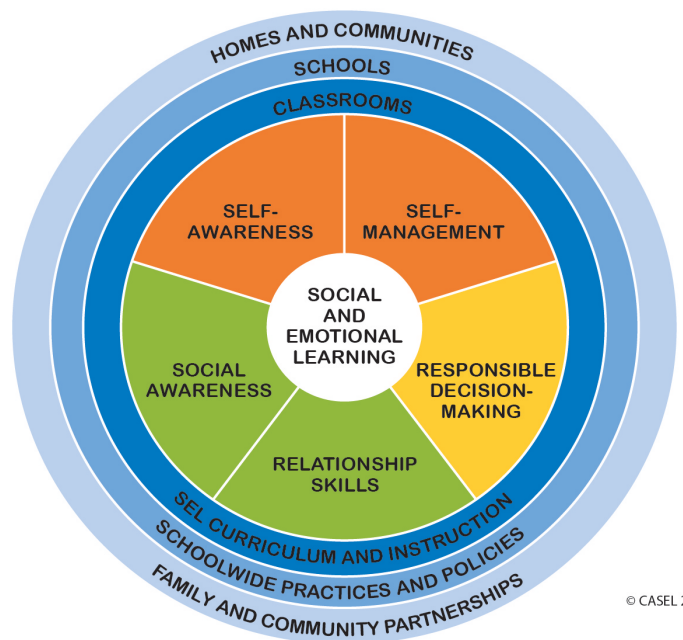
The ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- Impulse control
- Stress management
- Self-discipline
- Self-motivation
- Goal setting
- Organizational skills

SOCIAL AWARENESS

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- Perspective-taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others



RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- Communication
- Social engagement
- Relationship building
- Teamwork

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the wellbeing of oneself and others.

- Identifying problems
- Analyzing situations
- Solving problems
- Evaluating
- Reflecting
- Ethical responsibility

Research to support Social and Emotional Learning: SEL is a Necessity

With SEL, students perform better *academically*, and the educational community is more *nourishing* and *vital*. Lack of SEL can result in students *bringing disruption* and *anxiety* to educational and social encounters, and in teachers being too *depleted* to model *emotional wellness* or to *inspire students*.

Social-Emotional Learning Has Long-Lasting Positive Effects on Students, Study Says (Blad, 2017).

“Programs that teach students how to recognize their emotions, solve problems, and form healthy relationships may continue to show positive benefits for students months, or even years, after they complete them, a new meta-analysis finds.”

“Students who completed social-emotional learning interventions fared better than their peers who didn't participate on a variety of indicators—including academic performance, social skills, and avoiding negative behaviors like drug use, finds the analysis, which examined follow-up data from dozens of published studies on specific interventions.”

Programs that teach emotional intelligence in schools have lasting impact (University of British Columbia, 2017)

“The new study analyzed results from 82 different programs involving more than 97,000 students from kindergarten to middle school in the U.S., Europe and the U.K. where the effects were assessed at least six months after the programs completed. The researchers found that social-emotional learning continued to have positive effects in the classroom but was also connected to longer-term positive outcomes.”

Social and Emotional Learning Research Review (Vaga, 2017)

“Relationships and emotional processes affect how and what we learn. By reducing misbehavior and the amount of time spent on classroom management, SEL programs create more time for teaching and learning. SEL also strengthens students' relationships with their peers, families, and teachers, who are mediators, collaborators, and encouragers of academic achievement.”

The Future of Education Depends on Social Emotional Learning: Here's Why (Brotto, 2017)

“Social and emotional abilities are said to be indicators of how well a person adjusts to his or her environment, adapts to change and, ultimately, how successful she or he will be in life. In fact, core development abilities such as conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness and agreeableness can be as or even more important than cognitive intelligence in determining future employment.”

Why Social and Emotional Learning Is Essential for Students (Weissberg, 2016)

“In the long run, greater social and emotional competence can increase the likelihood of high school graduation, readiness for postsecondary education, career success, positive family and work relationships, better mental health, reduced criminal behavior, and engaged citizenship (e.g., Hawkins, Kosterman, Catalano, Hill, & Abbott, 2008; Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015).”



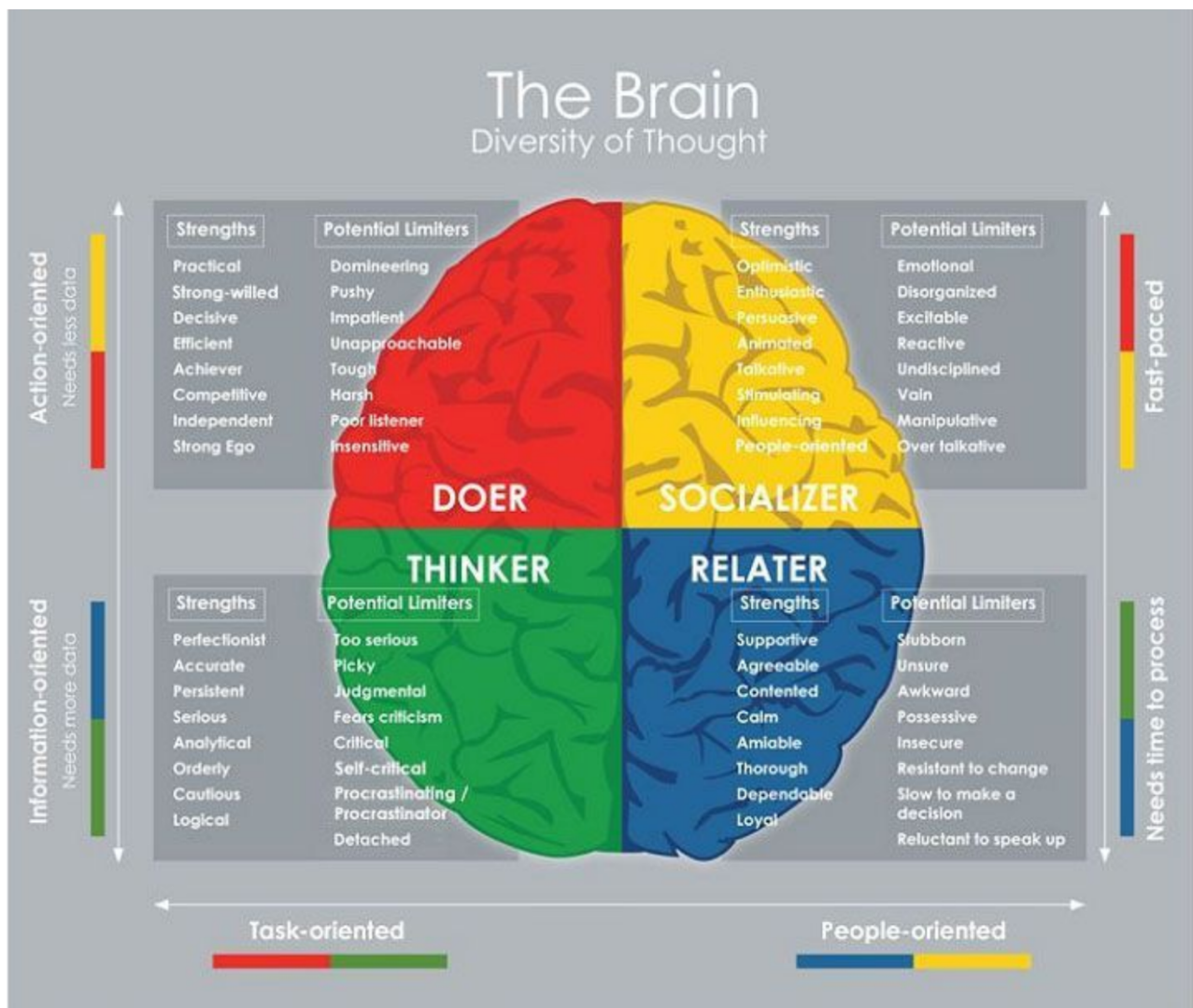
EQUILIBRIA™

Washington School District has participated in Equilibria E-colors who foster the following mission:

“Equilibria are personality diversity experts whose purpose is to develop and deliver world class coaching and consulting solutions to empower individuals, teams and companies to act with conscious awareness and intentionality in order to realize their potential and achieve their desired results.”

This program will help us to understand who we are as teachers and staff and how we can foster positive, productive, and collaborative relationships with colleagues and students by allowing us to understand our individual strengths and potential limiters.

Washington School District staff will receive additional training opportunities throughout the course of this Social and Emotional Learning Plan so that we have job-embedded, relevant professional training on areas to support our growth as professionals and as a unified team.



Effective Circles

What are they?

Effective Circles provide a structured opportunity to connect with students and build class rapport by forming a circle and responding to a question or prompt. All students participate in the circle and have an opportunity to have their voice and opinion heard.

Why do we need them?

By learning the value and process of Effective Circles, staff members can use Effective Circles to create a positive classroom environment, manage classroom behavior, engage students in their education and improve academic achievement. Circles teach students that their classroom is a community, how to build trust, to support each other's learning, and to hold each other accountable.

What is the intended impact?

The reason our district is implementing Effective Circles is to engage our students and build positive relationships with our students. Additionally, it is critical to get to know each and every student that we educate so we better understand each individual in class and provide them with the necessary support to be successful.

What does this actually look like in our district?

Students in a class create a circle and the teacher discusses the value of circles and the importance of hearing all voices. The teacher will then introduce a topic or question that members in the circle will answer. The intention is to increase student voice, share different perspectives, understand different viewpoints, and have healthy and meaningful dialog to build classroom relationships.

Who is involved?

All members of a class including students, teachers, and staff members. The expectation is that we listen to all voices and we respect other's opinions. This is done to engage all participants in a classroom and to emphasize the importance of listening to others and respecting the viewpoints of our classmates.

Restorative Practices

What are they?

Restorative Practices, which evolved from restorative justice, is a new field of study that has the potential to positively influence human behavior and strengthen civil society around the world. The fundamental premise of Restorative Practices is that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them. The four goals of Restorative Practices are to develop community, build relationships, repair harm, and manage conflict.

They are **not** an *alternative to punishment*, rather a way to ensure that the parties involved work together to restore the relationship and/or trust that was broken and own a portion of mending the relationship in a strategic fashion to reduce the likelihood for future negative occurrences. By analyzing antecedents, behaviors and consequences, we can begin to understand why individuals made certain choices, understand and analyze the actions of all parties involved and work towards a resolution that is fair and impactful.

Why do we need them?

Too often in education, when a student receives discipline, there is not an opportunity for the parties involved to sit down with one another and discuss how the negative actions impact the classroom and educational environment. Restorative Practices aims to bring parties involved to understand why someone reacted a certain way and to mend the trust and relationship that was broken. By doing this, there will likely be a reduction in future occurrences, relationships will be stronger, and expectations will be reinforced.

What is the intended impact?

The intended impact is that parties involved will be less likely to repeat negative behaviors. This process empowers all participants including the teacher and student to share their feelings, address negative behaviors and work to mend aspects of the relationship that is broken. Also, by monitoring progress, we can assess whether the negative behaviors are decreasing.

What does this actually look like in our district?

Conflict Resolution, both proactive and reactive. Building relationships and rapport with students and staff in the district. Refer to Social Discipline Window (Link under Resources Page / Hot Links).

Who is involved?

All members of the district including students, teachers, staff, counselors, administrators. The goal is to repair what was broken and build a positive and respectful learning environment.

RESOURCES PAGE / HOT LINKS

<https://casel.org/> - The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

<https://www.iirp.edu/> - International Institute of Restorative Practices

<https://www.tolerance.org/> – Teaching Tolerance

<https://www.ecolorsineducation.org/> - E-Colors in Education

<https://www.edutopia.org/social-emotional-learning> - Edutopia SEL

<https://www.cfchildren.org/about-us/what-is-sel/> - Committee for Children

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/> - Aspen Institute

<http://www.ibarj.org/schools.asp> - Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjVI-1XDX_Y – Weekly Circles: Building Communities Video

<https://www.iirp.edu/defining-restorative/social-discipline-window> - IIRP - Social Discipline Window

<http://ei.yale.edu/> - Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

