

Addressing Social Emotional Learning in Washington's K-12 Public Schools

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Report by the
Social Emotional
Learning
Benchmarks
Workgroup

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the culmination of the work completed by the Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup (SELB), containing background information, research, and recommendations regarding social emotional learning (SEL). Final recommendations consist of a statewide SEL Framework (guiding principles, standards, and benchmarks) for K-12 students, as well as actionable next steps to further develop SEL in Washington.

Social emotional learning is broadly understood as a process through which people build awareness and skills in managing emotions, setting goals, establishing relationships and making responsible decisions, leading to success in school and in life.¹ Research shows SEL on a large scale supports better performing and more positive school communities.²

The Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup proposes to the Legislature a statewide SEL Framework, including guiding principles, standards, and benchmarks that provide the foundation and system for effective SEL programming. The guiding principles, which consists of (1) professional learning; (2) school/family/community partnerships; and (3) cultural responsiveness, ensure SEL in the classroom is culturally competent and inclusive across all schools and communities. Standards and benchmarks outline key SEL skills, which strive to develop interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies.

By defining and incorporating SEL at a systems level, we build a foundation to support academic and life-long achievement for students. By soliciting wide input and rigorously evaluating SEL in practice, the proposed Washington Social Emotional Learning Framework can support positive, equitable school environments in which all students learn the skills needed to be prepared for career, college, and life.

To implement SEL effectively and equitably schools will need to (1) start by evaluating and building school and classroom environments that are conducive to SEL; (2) incorporate principles of universal design for learning when adapting SEL curricula to their unique climate; (3) emphasize equity in the selection and implementation of curriculum; and (4) take a holistic approach, understanding that each person (child and adult) will start at different places and progress in different ways along an SEL continuum.

To ensure school districts have tools to do this work, we recommend the SELB Workgroup continues as a state level advisory committee. The future workgroup will need to develop indicators reflective of Washington's unique and diverse cultural heritage that are aligned to the proposed SEL standards and benchmarks, and develop resources to support districts and schools in the implementation process.

The workgroup recommends the following to the Legislature, with the guidance and support of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction:

1. Adopt the proposed Social Emotional Learning Framework, including the guiding principles, standards, and benchmarks for K-12 students in Washington.
2. Continue to fund the Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup (SELB) as a state level advisory committee.

¹CASEL. (2015). What is Social and Emotional Learning? Retrieved from: <https://casel.squarespace.com/social-and-emotional-learning/>; Oakland Unified School District. (2016). Oakland SEL Briefing Notes. Retrieved from: https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.theounce.org%2Fpubs%2FMaryHurley_Mid-YearSELinOaklandUnifiedSchoolDistrict2015-161.docx%3Fv%3D1

² Elias. (1997). Promoting social and emotional learning: Guidelines for educators. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg. (2004). Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say? Teachers College Press; Durlak., Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school based universal interventions. Child Development, 82(1), 1-29.

Washington's K-12 Social Emotional Learning Standards and Benchmarks

SELF		SOCIAL	
STANDARD 1	SELF-AWARENESS – Individual has the ability to identify and name one's emotions and their influence on behavior.	STANDARD 4	SOCIAL AWARENESS – Individual has the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
BENCHMARK 1A	Demonstrates awareness and understanding of one's emotions.	BENCHMARK 4A	Demonstrates awareness of other people's emotions, perspectives, cultures, language, history, identity, and ability.
1B	Demonstrates knowledge of personal strengths, areas for growth, culture, linguistic assets, and aspirations.	4B	Demonstrates an awareness and respect for one's similarities and differences with others.
1C	Demonstrates awareness and understanding of family, school, and community resources and supports.	4C	Demonstrates an understanding of the social norms of individual cultures.
STANDARD 2	SELF-MANAGEMENT – Individual develops and demonstrates the ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in contexts with people different than oneself.	STANDARD 5	SOCIAL MANAGEMENT – Individual has the ability to make safe and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions.
BENCHMARK 2A	Demonstrates the skills to manage and express one's emotions, thoughts, impulses, and stress in constructive ways.	BENCHMARK 5A	Demonstrates a range of communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
2B	Demonstrates constructive decision-making and problem solving skills.	5B	Demonstrates the ability to identify and take steps to resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.
		5C	Demonstrates the ability to engage in constructive relationships with individuals of diverse perspectives, cultures, language, history, identity, and ability.
STANDARD 3	SELF-EFFICACY – Individual has the ability to motivate oneself, persevere, and see oneself as capable.	STANDARD 6	SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT – Individual has the ability to consider others and a desire to contribute to the well-being of school and community.
BENCHMARK 3A	Demonstrates the skills to set, monitor, adapt, persevere, achieve, and evaluate goals.	BENCHMARK 6A	Demonstrates a sense of social and community responsibility.
3B	Demonstrates problem-solving skills to engage responsibly in a variety of situations.	6B	Demonstrates the ability to work with others to set, monitor, adapt, achieve, and evaluate goals.
3C	Demonstrates awareness and ability to speak on behalf of personal rights and responsibilities.	6C	Demonstrates effective strategies to contribute productively to one's school, workplace, and community.

BACKGROUND

Legislation

In Washington, the Legislature intends “to continue to strengthen and modify the structure of the entire K-12 educational system, including non-basic education programmatic elements, in order to build the capacity to anticipate and support potential future enhancements to basic education as the educational needs of our citizens continue to evolve”.³

In 2012, the [Department of Early Learning](#), [Thrive by Five Washington](#), and the [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) (OSPI) issued the ‘[Early Learning and Development Guidelines: Birth through 3rd Grade](#)’⁴. These guidelines discuss child development at different stages from birth through age eight in a way that is intended to be culturally inclusive.

In 2015, the Washington Legislature directed OSPI to “convene a workgroup to recommend comprehensive benchmarks for developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning for grades kindergarten through high school that build upon what is being done in early learning”.⁵

Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup

The Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup (SELB) is comprised of statewide experts with experiences working with youth and families in educational settings, and knowledge of topics relating to social emotional learning (SEL) (see [Appendix 1](#)). Members met monthly from October, 2015 to September, 2016 to develop recommendations regarding a comprehensive Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework for Washington.

The workgroup’s proposed framework was formulated after an extensive review of both national research and best practices (see [Acknowledgements](#)). From this review, SELB broadly defines SEL as a process through which people build awareness and skills in managing emotions, setting goals, establishing relationships and making responsible decisions that supports success in school and in life.⁶

Stakeholder Feedback

In order to receive the greatest level of feedback possible from this diverse group of stakeholders⁷, the workgroup utilized multiple focus groups, a community forum, and an online feedback form. See [Appendix 2](#) for more information.

Figure 1 outlines the four primary concerns from stakeholder feedback, as well as what was done in response to such feedback.

³ Washington State Legislature. (2009). RCW.28A.150.198. Finding-Intent-2009 c 548. Retrieved from: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.150.198>

⁴ Washington State Department of Early Learning. (2012). Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines. Retrieved from <https://www.del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/imported/publications/development/docs/guidelines.pdf>

⁵ Washington State Legislature. (2015). Substitute Senate Bill 6052 Section 501(34). AN ACT relating to fiscal matters. Retrieved from <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Senate%20Passed%20Legislature/6052-S.PL.pdf>

⁶ CASEL. (2015). What is Social and Emotional Learning? Retrieved from <https://casel.squarespace.com/social-and-emotional-learning/>; Oakland Unified School District. (2016). Oakland SEL Briefing Notes. Retrieved from https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.theounce.org%2Fpubs%2FMaryHurley_Mid-YearSELinOaklandUnifiedSchoolDistrict2015-161.docx%3Fv%3D1.

⁷ The workgroup identified stakeholder groups to be those which represent key components of the educational system and/or consumers of public education, such as teachers and para-educators, families, students, district administrators, principals, education board members, other school personnel, OSPI, education professional associations (school psychologists, school counselors, teachers' unions, etc.), and community based organizations.

FIGURE 1. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK AND SELB'S RESPONSE

Theme	Feedback/Response
Ensuring cultural responsiveness of the SELB Framework and its implementation	• If not carefully crafted and vetted, SEL standards and benchmarks could inadvertently elevate one set of cultural norms above others. • Feared school values would support one way of approaching inter-and intra-personal skills. • Stakeholders offered specific feedback on particular language. (Workgroup incorporated that feedback into the recommended standards and benchmarks.) • SEL standards should be framed and guided by principles of universal design, equity and inclusion. <i>The workgroup recommends that SEL standards and benchmarks must be accompanied with guiding principles, universal design for learning, equity and inclusion. As shown throughout this report, these principles must inform every aspect of the development and implementation of SEL standards.</i>
Risk that SEL standards would be used as another tool to measure (and potentially stigmatize) students	• Cautioned against having new SEL standards become another tool for assessing students. • Feared SEL standards would be used to label or stigmatize students. • Valued two-way communication between the school and family on students' individual progress in developing social emotional skills. <i>With the understanding that schools and districts will need to develop some form of feedback/communication system to families about their students' SEL progress, the workgroup has clarified their recommendation that the SEL Framework should not be used to develop another assessment.</i>
Concerns about alignment of detailed indicators	Note: In the initial draft of recommendations, the workgroup included detailed "indicators" for many of the benchmarks. Indicators provided concrete examples of what it might look like when a student meets a benchmark. • Concerned that some of the indicators could be used to stigmatize and/or marginalize particular groups of students. • Raised questions about whether all indicators were well aligned with the benchmarks. <i>Recognizing the development of detailed indicators that are culturally responsive, inclusive, developmentally appropriate and aligned to benchmarks will require both time and expertise, the workgroup decided to remove the indicators from the current framework. SELB recommends the task be supported by the continuation of this work.</i>
The need to continue the process, and further seek stakeholder input	• Requested the workgroup continue to seek statewide stakeholder feedback, including feedback from families that speak other languages. • Expand expertise and diversity of SELB Workgroup membership. • Coordinate and communicate with families, school staff, and communities on a plan for statewide implementation. <i>The workgroup recommends this state level committee continues, as more involvement with stakeholder engagement and feedback is needed.</i>

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

What is Social Emotional Learning?

Social emotional learning (SEL) is broadly understood as a process through which people build awareness and skills in managing emotions, setting goals, establishing relationships, and making responsible decisions that supports success in school and in life.⁸

Social emotional learning develops cognitive social competencies, such as self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness.⁹ Developing such skills fosters positive social skills, reduces conduct problems, diminishes emotional stress, and improves academic performance.¹⁰

Furthermore, when we develop SEL skills, our ability to form relationships and build social awareness increases, enhancing our ability to connect with individuals of diverse perspectives, cultures, languages, histories, identities, and abilities. By implementing SEL on a macro-level, we create more equitable, better performing schools and communities. This type of cultural change creates environments in which all students learn the skills needed to be prepared for career, college, and life.

As an educational approach, SEL recognizes students are complex human beings whose learning and behavior are just as impacted by their emotions – and their control over those emotions – as they are by the quality of instruction and discipline.

“In addition to content knowledge and academic skills, students must develop sets of behaviors, skills, attitudes, and strategies that are crucial to academic performance in their classes, but that may not be reflected in their scores on cognitive tests.”¹¹

Why is Social Emotional Learning Important?

The ability to recognize and manage emotions and establish and maintain positive relationships impacts both readiness to learn and the ability to benefit from learning opportunities. In 2011, a team of researchers conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of school-based universal social emotional interventions¹², which included 213 schools and 270,034 students ranging from kindergarten through high school.¹³

On average, the researchers found that students receiving social emotional interventions improved significantly compared to those not receiving an intervention. Social emotional skills¹⁴, social behaviors, and academic performance increased, attitudes towards self and others were more positive, conduct problems were reduced, and emotional distress lessened.¹⁵

⁸ CASEL (2015). What is Social and Emotional Learning? Retrieved from <https://casel.squarespace.com/social-and-emotional-learning/>; Oakland Unified School District. (2016). Oakland SEL Briefing Notes. Retrieved from https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.theounce.org%2Fpubs%2FMaryHurley_Mid-YearSELinOaklandUnifiedSchoolDistrict2015-161.docx%3Fv%3D1.

⁹ CASEL (2015). Social and Emotional Learning Core competencies. Retrieved from <http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/core-competencies/>.

¹⁰ Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik, Elias. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American Psychologist*, 58, 466-474; Durlak, (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82 (1), 1-29.

¹¹ Farrington, Roderick, Allensworth, Nagaoka, Keyes, Johnson, & Beechum. (2012). Teaching adolescents to become learners: The role of noncognitive factors in shaping school performance. A critical literature review. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.

¹² Interventions targeting all students in classroom and/or school.

¹³ Durlak et al. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82 (1), 1-29.

¹⁴ Durlak et al. refers to 'SEL skills' as developing cognitive and social competencies in the following areas: identifying emotions from social cues, goal setting, perspective taking, interpersonal problem solving, conflict resolution, and decision making.

¹⁵ *ibid*

Social Emotional Learning Meta-Analysis

SEL interventions improved....

- SEL skills
- Attitudes towards self and others
- Social behaviors
- Academic performance
- Conduct problems
- Emotional distress

The above findings were, on average, true across all three SEL intervention types, which included the following:

(1) Classroom-based interventions administered by regular classroom teacher. **Highest growth found with this type of intervention.**

(2) Classroom-based interventions administered by non-school personnel.

(3) Multi-component interventions (i.e. classroom intervention with a parent component and/or school-wide initiative.

(Durlak et al., 2011)

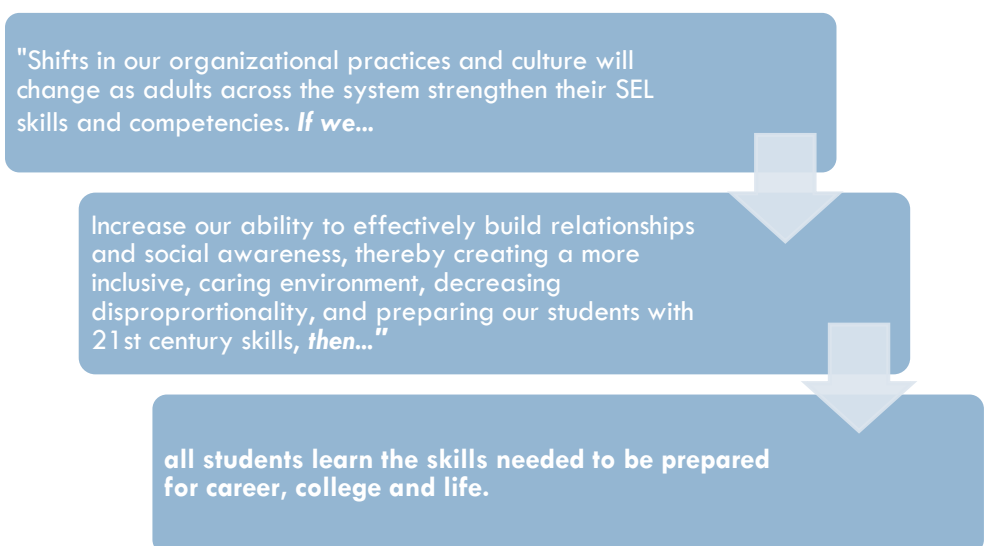
The most growth was found among students receiving classroom-based interventions administered by their regular classroom teachers. This finding held true across all education levels (elementary, middle, and high school, and across urban, suburban, and rural schools¹⁶).

Based on a small subset of studies, the same meta-analysis of interventions found a positive association between social emotional learning (SEL) programs and academic achievement, seeing an 11 percent gain in academic performance.¹⁷ These results build upon a growing body of research that indicate SEL programming enhances students' connection to school, classroom behavior, and academic achievement.¹⁸

Social emotional learning interventions strategically develop non-cognitive abilities, such as **goal-directed efforts** (e.g. perseverance, self-control, growth mind-set), **healthy social relationships** (e.g., gratitude, emotional intelligence, social belonging), and **sound judgement** and **decision making** (e.g., curiosity, open-mindedness). Longitudinal research confirms that such qualities can predict academic, economic, social, psychological, and physical well-being.¹⁹

Educators and schools can help students develop such skills by intentionally incorporating SEL into the classroom.

FIGURE 2. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING THEORY OF CHANGE²⁰



¹⁶ Note, few SEL studies have been conducted in rural high schools.

¹⁷ Durlak et al. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school based universal interventions. *Child Development*: 82(1), 1-29.

¹⁸ Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg. (2004). Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say? Teachers College Press.

¹⁹ Almlund, Duckworth, Heckman, & Kautz. (2011). Personality psychology and economics (No. w16822). NBER Working Paper Series. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.; Borghans, Duckworth, Heckman, & ter Weel. (2008). The economics and psychology of personality traits. *Journal of Human Resources*: 43(4), 972-1059 Farrington, Roderick, Allensworth, Nagaoka, Keyes, Johnson, & Beechum. (2012). Teaching adolescents to become learners: The role of noncognitive factors in shaping school performance. A critical literature review. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.; Jackson, Connolly, Garrison, Levine, & Connolly, (2015). Your friends know how long you will live: A 75-year study of peer-rated personality traits. *Psychological Science*, 26(3), 335-340.

²⁰ Oakland SEL Briefing Notes. (2016), p. 2. Retrieved from https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.theounce.org%2Fpubs%2FMaryHurley_Mid-YearSELinOaklandUnifiedSchoolDistrict2015-161.docx%3Fv%3D1

History and Future of Social Emotional Learning

In the last decade, increasing emphasis has been placed on understanding the many ways that social, emotional, and mental well-being affects learning. Significant progress has been made in the United States in establishing social emotional learning (SEL) as a component of education policy.

On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed the bipartisan [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA). Several elements of the new law support SEL, such as providing states and school districts with more flexibility to define and assess student success. In addition to providing states and districts with more authority, ESSA revised Title IV, which has been and will continue to be instrumental for developing SEL standards.

Part A of Title IV entitled “[Student Support and Academic Enrichments Grants](#)²¹” is a flexible grant program, which gives states the authority to allocate funding directly to local education agencies (LEAs).²² LEAs receiving this type of funding are required to implement comprehensive programs targeting the following areas: (1) well-rounded education; (2) safe and healthy schools and students; and (3) personalized learning supported by the use of technology. Most specific to fostering SEL standards in schools is the second objective, which seeks to “foster safe, healthy, supportive, and drug free environments that support student academic achievement”.²³ Under this guidance, a wide range of programs are included that, in different ways, foster SEL skills.

In Washington, like in many peer states, we can choose to define this success as incorporating SEL skills and competencies into the classroom. Other states, such as [Kansas](#) and [Michigan](#), as well as other countries (e.g. [Singapore](#)), have recognized the need for SEL standards. In 2004, [Illinois](#) became the first to adopt state standards for social emotional learning. Since then, several other states (e.g. [Colorado](#) and [California](#)) have adopted similar policies or are currently considering/developing such policies. (See [Acknowledgments](#)).

[Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#)

CASEL is the nation's leading organization in establishing statewide social emotional learning standards. Through research practice, and policy, CASEL works collaboratively to advance social emotional learning for preschool through high school students across the country.

In 2016, CASEL announced a two-year [Collaborating States Initiative](#) (CSI), funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This initiative will allow CASEL to partner with eight states to develop statewide implementation of social emotional learning.

The eight states chosen to participate in CSI consist of the following:

- **Washington**
- California
- Georgia
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Nevada
- Pennsylvania
- Tennessee

Note: no funding is provided with this initiative (see [Community Input Process](#))

²¹ Title IV, Part A of ESSA: Student Support and Academic Enrichments Grants. Retrieved from <http://www.casn.org/sites/default/files/Title%20IV%20Part%20A%20Fact%20Sheet%20Final.pdf>

²² Public Law 114-95. Every Student Succeeds Act. (2015). Section 4015. Retrieved from <https://congress.gov/114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.pdf>

²³ Ibid. Section 4018.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup (SELB) recommends a statewide Social Emotional Learning Framework adaptable to fit the needs of all schools, classrooms, teachers, and students.

Members of SELB are strong and unanimous in their agreement that social emotional learning (SEL) standards are necessary and should be clear and easy to implement across districts statewide, respecting local needs. As Washington's communities, workplaces, and expectations for citizenship grow and change, strong interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are vital for success.

Social Emotional Learning Framework

The Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework includes guiding principles, standards, and benchmarks which outlines for educators, families, and key stakeholders the awareness, understanding, and skills schools will teach to support the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies.

Guiding principles were established to ensure SEL in practice is equitable, culturally competent, and inclusive. Standards and benchmarks outline SEL learning objectives, and can be used as a reference point to identify student progress and areas of need.

Guiding Principles

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In order to implement SEL into the classroom and foster social emotional skills, professionals working in the K-12 education system must receive ongoing, job-embedded professional learning. As with any statewide learning standard, it is essential administrators and educators build a shared understanding, vocabulary, and vision before implementation.²⁴

SCHOOL/FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Two-way respectful and collaborative communication between schools, families, and community partners is essential to the development of effective, culturally responsive SEL supports in school. These communications should include the value of SEL in schools, how students demonstrate their social emotional skills in different settings, and effective ways to teach and reinforce these skills both in school and in their homes. Families also provide vital insights that can help identify where educators can support students and how students develop and express their interpersonal and intrapersonal assets across settings. As school communities work collaboratively, educators will be better able to effectively support the SEL development of each child, and families will be better able to support their child(ren) in building and using SEL skills throughout their lives.

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Recognizing there is a reflection of culture in any selection and implementation of standards requires us to be thoughtful and responsive to the many diverse cultures of the students, families, educators, and staff that make up school communities. Culturally responsive education recognizes that every person, including teachers, principals, and district leaders, brings a cultural perspective in the way they interact with others. By working to understand, respect, and integrate diverse student identities and backgrounds into curricula, educators can

²⁴ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2008). Publicly Funded Mental Health and School Coordination Resource Manual for Washington State. Retrieved from <http://www.k12.wa.us/MentalHealthandSchools/pubdocs/MHResourceManual-2008.pdf>

create optimal learning opportunities for all students. Delivering a culturally responsive education requires ongoing attention to attitudes, environments, curricula, teaching strategies, and family/community involvement efforts. Applying the SEL Framework in a culturally responsive manner is a requirement for success.

Standards and Benchmarks

Our proposed 'Social Emotional Learning Standards and Benchmarks' outline fundamental social emotional learning (SEL) skills for life effectiveness. Six standards were strategically created using a two-part structure, highlighting the need to develop awareness and understanding of both self and social competencies.

These are standards that will be applicable from kindergarten to 12th grade, and like other learning standards will outline skills to be developed over time. However, it is critical for educators to understand that social emotional development is not always linear.

Certain circumstances and life experiences may affect SEL skill development, the ability to apply these skills in particular environments, and general readiness to learn. Such experiences can include physical or emotional neglect and abuse, grief and loss, complex trauma, and other [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#).

Stress and anxiety associated with academic demands and school experiences may affect a student's social emotional skill development. These circumstances can be onetime events or chronic, and can lead to [toxic stress](#). It is important to understand that all children and adults handle trauma and adversity differently. Due to this, students may express emotional distress through different forms of internalizing or externalizing behaviors. Integrating SEL into curriculum and instruction will help build skills to cope with these circumstances and experiences.

Awareness, understanding, and acceptance of the variability among individuals in the development and demonstration of social emotional skills must be at the forefront of implementation.

For these reasons, the Social Emotional Learning Standards and Benchmarks should never be used as an assessment tool.

SELF	SOCIAL
Self-Awareness	Social Awareness
Self-Management	Social Management
Self-Efficacy	Social Engagement

SEL Standards and Benchmarks should...

- Elevate positive skill development.
- Indicate areas for growth and development.
- Adapt to be culturally responsive to the unique backgrounds of our students.
- Reflect diverse cultures, languages, histories, identities, abilities.
- Benefit from student and teacher diversity.

WASHINGTON'S K-12 SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

SELF-AWARENESS

Standard 1: Individual has the ability to identify and name one's emotions and their influence on behavior.

- *Benchmark 1A* – Demonstrates awareness and understanding of one's emotions.
- *Benchmark 1B* – Demonstrates knowledge of personal strengths, areas for growth, culture, linguistic assets and aspirations.
- *Benchmark 1C* – Demonstrates awareness and understanding of family, school, and community resources and supports.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Standard 2: Individual develops and demonstrates the ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in contexts with people different than oneself.

- *Benchmark 2A* – Demonstrates the skills to manage and express one's emotions, thoughts, impulses, and stress in constructive ways.
- *Benchmark 2B* – Demonstrates constructive decision-making and problem solving skills.

SELF-EFFICACY

Standard 3: Individual has the ability to motivate oneself, persevere, and see oneself as capable.

- *Benchmark 3A* – Demonstrates the skills to set, monitor, adapt, persevere, achieve, and evaluate goals.
- *Benchmark 3B* – Demonstrates problem-solving skills to engage responsibly in a variety of situations.
- *Benchmark 3C* – Demonstrates awareness and ability to speak on behalf of personal rights and responsibilities.

SOCIAL AWARENESS

Standard 4: Individual has the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

- *Benchmark 4A* – Demonstrates awareness of other people's emotions, perspectives, cultures, language, history, identity, and ability.
- *Benchmark 4B* – Demonstrates an awareness and respect for one's similarities and differences with others.
- *Benchmark 4C* – Demonstrates an understanding of the social norms of individual cultures.

SOCIAL MANAGEMENT

Standard 5: Individual has the ability to make safe and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions.

- *Benchmark 5A* – Demonstrates a range of communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
- *Benchmark 5B* – Demonstrates the ability to identify and take steps to resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.
- *Benchmark 5C* – Demonstrates the ability to engage in constructive relationships with individuals of diverse perspectives, cultures, language, history, identity, and ability.

SOCIAL-ENGAGEMENT

Standard 6: Individual has the ability to consider others and a desire to contribute to the well-being of school and community.

- *Benchmark 6A* – Demonstrates a sense of social and community responsibility.
- *Benchmark 6B* – Demonstrates the ability to work with others to set, monitor, adapt, achieve, and evaluate goals.
- *Benchmark 6C* – Demonstrates effective strategies to contribute productively to one's school, workplace, and community.

Implementation

If we expect students to develop and reflect on their social emotional competencies, we must continually strive to create environments conducive to such learning. Proper implementation requires schools to create environments where students can feel comfortable, confident, and supported. The following implementation recommendations (universal design for learning, emphasis on equity, holistic approach) will help create such environments.

Universal Design for Learning²⁵

Principles of [Universal Design for Learning](#) (UDL) reflect what we all seem to know and observe: different people learn and express themselves in different ways. Although there is a general understanding of this natural variability in how people learn, there is also a tendency to look for a gold standard, or an 'average' against which we can measure an individual's growth.

"When curricula are designed to meet the needs of an imaginary 'average', they do not address the reality of learner variability. They fail to provide all individuals with fair and equal opportunities to learn by excluding learners with different abilities, backgrounds, and motivations who do not meet the illusive criteria for 'average'."²⁶

Universal Design for Learning uses multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement to ensure the what, how, and why of learning is presented in a way that accounts for and expects learner variability.²⁷

Because social emotional learning (SEL) skills and competencies are more personalized, and because they can be affected by events and circumstances that children can encounter at any age, it is particularly important that educators are guided by principles of UDL when implementing SEL standards.

Schools and teachers must expect variability among learners, provide flexibility in the ways students learn, process, and engage with SEL, and adapt SEL strategies to fit the needs of the individual student.

Every Student Succeeds Act and Universal Design for Learning

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) references and endorses Universal Design for Learning (UDL) throughout.

ESSA defines UDL as a "scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that – (A) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and (B) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient" (ESSA, 2015).

States are encouraged to (1) design assessments using UDL principles; (2) award grants to local education agencies; and (3) adopt technology that aligns with UDL.

²⁵ National Center on Universal Design for Learning. (2014). What is UDL? Retrieved from <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl>

²⁶ National Center on Universal Design for Learning. (2013). The Concept of UDL. Retrieved from <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl/conceptofudl>

²⁷ Ibid.

Emphasis on Equity

In order to counter existing inequities and create more meaningful access and opportunity for every student, effective implementation of SEL requires intentional work on improving the climate and culture of the education system. Equity needs to be a lens and focus of the implementation of SEL throughout the process.

Our proposed framework allows for continual adaptation at the individual, school, and district levels to ensure SEL is equitable for students of all cultures, languages, histories, identities, and abilities.

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Holistic Approach

The Social Emotional Learning Framework should never be viewed as 'just another rubric' for teachers. Rather, it should be thought of as a school-wide integrated and holistic system of support, connecting to all aspects of school life and beyond. Social emotional learning connects with some of our most pressing problems (e.g. mental health needs, suicide, bullying, chronic absenteeism, and exclusionary discipline) in Washington. Policy makers, educators, families, and community professionals are working to address these issues by improving access to mental health care for children and youth in crisis, shifting the approach to school discipline, and working to reengage students who have left or been pushed out of school. Social emotional learning standards will not replace the need for these targeted interventions, but rather, will build a stronger foundation upon which other services and supports can be added and integrated.

Washington's Social Emotional Learning Framework is not a rubric for assessments of any kind, but rather, a helpful tool for teachers, families, and communities to understand how to cultivate and support SEL across all stages of development.

Community Input Process

With this set of recommendations, the Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup (SELB) has laid out a broad Social Emotional Learning Framework with guiding principles, standards, and benchmarks. The workgroup recommends the Legislature adopt this framework and provide the funding necessary to continue SELB. The continuation of this workgroup will provide the time needed to collect additional, culturally responsive, input. (Note: this will require funding for necessary interpretation and translation, see [Appendix 2](#)). Feedback received should be central to the development of indicators and the formation of resources to support implementation.

Key areas of focus for the future:

- Expand the 'Family and Community Engagement and Feedback Plan' to ensure all recommendations are culturally competent.
 - E.g. bias and sensitivity reviews, community forums, focus groups, surveys.
- Develop SEL to be an integrated system of support.
 - Integrated with, e.g. mental health, suicide prevention, bullying, trauma-informed approaches.
- Identify ways in which the state can support SEL implementation.
 - E.g. resources on best practices, technical support, creation of professional learning communities.
- More specified implementation recommendations.
 - Define indicators and develop guidance for Professional Learning Communities, school districts, and Educational Service Districts.

As mentioned previously, in 2016, Washington was selected for the [Collaborating States Initiative \(CSI\)](#), which means [CASEL](#) will partner with Washington for two years to help develop and improve SEL in Washington. This partnership will be key in advancing the proposed SEL Framework, however no funding will be provided by CSI. To support this national work and make the most of this opportune partnership, the Legislature must provide additional funding.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup (SELB) proposes to the Legislature a statewide Social Emotional Learning Framework, including guiding principles, standards and benchmarks. Standards and benchmarks outline key social emotional learning (SEL) competencies necessary for life effectiveness, while the guiding principles ensure SEL will be culturally competent and inclusive.

At the school-level, we highlight the need to create environments that support students' development of SEL skills. To create such an environment, schools must emphasize equity and use principles of universal design for learning, ensuring meaningful access and opportunity for every student. Additionally, SEL should be strategically developed as part of an integrated system of support in all schools.

The SELB Workgroup appreciates the opportunity to participate in the development of this essential and vital new framework in partnership with families, schools and communities for the benefit of every student within Washington. We look forward to supporting the continued development and implementation of social emotional learning across the state.

GLOSSARY

21st Century Skills²⁸ refers to a wide range of knowledge, skills, and traits applicable to all academic, career, and civic settings, and believed to be necessary for success in today's world.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)²⁹ refers to traumatic experiences, such as, abuse, household challenges, and neglect, that occur in a person's life before the age of 18. The hallmark Kaiser ACE study³⁰ (1955 to 1997) proved there was an association between ACEs and problems with health/wellbeing later on in life, demonstrating the urgent need to properly support children who have been affected by ACEs. Since then, numerous studies on ACEs have been conducted (e.g. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System³¹).

Universal Design for Learning is a "set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone—not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs."³²

Toxic Stress³³ is a strong, frequent, and sometimes prolonged activation of the body's stress response system. Without appropriate support, Adverse Childhood Experiences can cause and/or trigger toxic stress.

²⁸ The Glossary of Education Reform. (2016). 21st Century Skills. Retrieved from <http://edglossary.org/21st-century-skills/>

²⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Adverse childhood Experiences (ACEs). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>

³⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). About the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html>

³¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). About Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System ACE Data. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/ace_brfss.html

³² National Center on Universal Design for Learning. (2014). What is UDL? Retrieved from <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl>

³³ Early Childhood Learning & Innovation Network for Communities. (n.d.). Defining Toxic Stress from a Community Perspective. Retrieved from <http://www.cssp.org/reform/early-childhood/other-resources/Toxic-Stress-Defined2.pdf>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SELB conducted an extensive review of research and best practices regarding social emotional learning (SEL). The workgroup reviewed how other states, such as [Colorado](#)³⁴, [Illinois](#)³⁵, [Kansas](#)³⁶, and [Michigan](#)³⁷, and other countries (e.g. [Singapore](#)³⁸) have incorporated social emotional learning into their school systems. SELB would like to specifically acknowledge CASEL and the Oakland Unified School District, as the resources provided by these organizations were highly influential in the creation of this report. For more information, see below:

[Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#)³⁹ is the nation's leading organization in developing and implementing evidence-based social emotional learning from preschool through high school in America. CASEL uses research, practice, policy, and collaboration to advance SEL for students across the country.

[Oakland Unified School District \(OUSD\)](#)⁴⁰ stood out as exemplar because of its equity centered lens. All resources and definitions provided by OUSD reflect cultural inclusivity. OUSD defines SEL as, "a process through which children and adults develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. These are the skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work effectively and ethically. In OUSD, we believe that strengthening our social skills and competencies enhances our ability to connect across race, class, culture, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning needs and age."⁴¹

³⁴ Colorado Department of Education. (2016). A Brief Overview of Colorado's Emotional and Social Wellness Standards. Retrieved from

https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/pbis/bullying/downloads/pdf/briefoverview_coloradoemotionalandsocialwellnessstandards.pdf

³⁵ Illinois State Board of Education. ((2016). Illinois Learning Standards: Social/Emotional Learning. Retrieved from http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm

³⁶ Kansas State Department of Education. (2016). School Counseling – Social, Emotional, and Character Development. Retrieved from <http://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Career-Standards-and-Assessment-Services/Content-Area-M-Z/School-Counseling/Social-Emotional-and-Character-Development>

³⁷ Michigan Department of Education. (2016). Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). Retrieved from http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-74638_72831_72834-361321--,00.html#one

³⁸ Ministry of Education Singapore. (2015). Holistic Health Framework. Retrieved from <https://www.moe.gov.sg/education/programmes/holistic-health-framework>

³⁹ CASEL. (2015). Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. Retrieved from <http://www.casel.org/>

⁴⁰ Oakland Unified School District. (2016). Social Emotional Learning. Retrieved from <http://www.ousd.org/Domain/143>

⁴¹ Oakland Unified School District. (2016). Oakland SEL Briefing Notes. Retrieved from:

https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.theounce.org%2Fpubs%2FMaryHurley_Mid-YearSELinOaklandUnifiedSchoolDistrict2015-161.docx%3Fv%3D1

APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Committee Membership

Name	Representing	Background
Annemarie Hutson	Washington State Association of School Psychologists	Annemarie Hutson believes SEL is the foundation for which all academic learning takes place. If a child enters the educational world without a basic level of social/emotional skills, he/she will struggle with accessing any other educational opportunity. It is from this lens she has approached her career as a School Psychologist. Annemarie has been working on educating and building the social emotional skills of children and youth for the past eighteen years. She has vast experience working with all children and youth ages preschool through 21. With expertise in the developmental stages of children, youth, and young adults, and a focus on the social emotional and social skill development of all children in all environments.
Lyon Terry	Washington Education Association	Lyon Terry is a 4th grade teacher in the Seattle Public Schools. Over the past 20 years he has taught preschool to 5th grade. He has a Master's Degree in Education and holds National Board Certification. In 2015 he was selected as the Washington State Teacher of the Year.
Brandon Koenes	Washington Workforce	Brandon Koenes represented workforce development; having worked with worked with students through the Workforce Investment Act and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to complete their high school diploma or GED and then enter post-secondary education or employment. He also has experience working with students as a youth pastor and substitute teacher.
Carrie Basas	Office of the Education Ombuds	Carrie Griffin Basas is the Director of the Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO). Prior to leading OEO, she was a civil rights lawyer, law professor, and nonprofit director. Ms. Basas is a nationally recognized expert in disability rights, health equity, and inclusion in education, and has published extensively in those fields.
Dr. Todd Herrenkohl	Higher Education Faculty, University of Washington	Todd I. Herrenkohl, PhD is Co-Director of the 3DL Partnership, Professor of Social Work, and Adjunct Professor in the College of Education at the University of Washington. With his colleagues and students at the 3DL Partnership, Dr. Herrenkohl is helping to raise the profile and practice of social, emotional and intellectual learning to better prepare young people for success in school, work and life. Goals of the center include building and strengthening theory, methods and applied efforts that advance integrated models of three-dimensional learning for children and youth pre-K thru 12.
Nita Hill	Washington School Counselors Association	Nita Hill is a Professional School Counselor and National Board certified School Counselor. Over the past 17 years she has worked in both Puyallup and Bethel School districts supporting the academic, social emotional and career development of elementary students. She is an active member of the Washington School Counselor Association serving in several leadership roles, most currently chair of the advocacy committee. In 2008 she was selected as the Washington School Counselor of the year.
Julie Sullenszino	Washington Association of School Social Workers	Julie Sullenszino is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Washington and California specializing in the mental health and welfare of children and their families over the last 20 years. Julie has worked as a school social worker for the last 7 years and represents the Washington Association of School Social Workers. Julie currently works for Seattle School District as a behavioral consultant to help Seattle schools construct climates and cultures that support social emotional skills and life long learning for their staff and students.
Marissa Rathbone	Teaching and Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	Marissa Rathbone is the Director of Operations in the Division of Learning and Teaching with the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). She serves to strengthen the productivity, quality, and efficiency of division operations by increasing communication, improving systems, and leading strategic thinking within the division and in partnership with other programs at the agency. She previously supported the revision and adoption process for

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		the new Health and Physical Education (HPE) K-12 Learning Standards, which include grade-level outcomes that address social and emotional health, as OSPI's Program Supervisor for HPE.
Mick Miller	Regional Education Network	Mick Miller, Assistant Superintendent of NEWESD 101 (2014 – present), Superintendent of Walla Walla Public Schools & Deer Park School District (2005 – 2014); Principal Mead High School & Kelso High School (1994 – 2005); assistant principal and teacher at North Central High School (1983 – 1994) Currently, serve as champion for student support within the Association of Educational Service District (AESD) network.
Ron Hertel	Student Support, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	Ron Hertel works closely with schools regarding trauma informed education and is currently the Program Supervisor for Social Emotional Learning at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
Sarah Butcher	SEL for Washington	Sarah Butcher is a parent of 3 school age children, and the Co-Founder of SEL for Washington. SEL for Washington is a statewide grassroots coalition advocating for the social, emotional and academic skill development of all Washington students. Sarah believes that we must strengthen Washington State's education policies to support the needs of the whole child if we are to realize the successful outcomes we strive for with every student in Washington Schools.
Senator John McCoy	Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability	As a co-chair of the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC), Senator McCoy brings the lens of a person of color to the discussion. Since 2005 he has been on numerous national committees addressing racial equity, cultural, and religious awareness. John McCoy was appointed to the Senate in 2013, representing the 38 th Legislative District. Prior to this, McCoy served ten years in the Washington House of Representatives and twenty years in the United States Air Force.
Sherry Krainick	Washington State Parent Teacher Association	Sherry Krainick represents the Washington State Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Sherry currently serves Washington State PTA as Federal Legislative Chair and Learning Assessments Coordinator. From June 2013 through May 2015, she served on the Board of Director's as Legislative Director. Sherry has been a volunteer child advocate with PTA since 2004. Sherry lives in Bothell with her three special needs sons.
Susanne Beauchaine	Washington Association of School Administrators	Susanne Beauchaine is the Executive Director for Student Services with the Steilacoom Historical School District and supports programs for students with disabilities. Previously, Susanne worked for the Equity and Civil Rights Office at OSPI, and had previously served as the agency liaison for the Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs.
Veronica Santangelo	Department of Early Learning	Veronica has worked in the field of Early Learning for twenty-two years and began a special focus on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) while obtaining her Masters of Social Work. Veronica brought a valued systems perspective to the work group as her experience includes having a micro view from her experience working directly with children and their families as a Head Start and ECEAP preschool classroom teacher, the mezzo view from her work as a Mental Health Program Manager with a Head Start and ECEAP grantee, and a macro view from her current position as a state administrator for the Medicaid Treatment Child Care program at the Department of Early Learning.
Dr. John Glenewinkel	Rural Schools, Republic School District	John Glenewinkel has worked at all levels of the educational system. As a teacher and principal his primary work was with disenfranchised and non-traditional learners. He currently serves as the Superintendent of the Curlew and Republic School Districts.

Appendix 2. Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback Plan

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus group questions and standards, created for community members and stakeholder groups, were formed by the Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup (SELB). Participants were asked to discuss their likes, dislikes, and questions regarding draft SEL standards, benchmarks, and indicators⁴², as well as how they felt about SEL in general. All focus groups were led by a SELB member. Due to limited workgroup resources, SELB was unable to provide interpretation or translation to reach more families that are Limited English Proficient for feedback, but would seek to do so with the continuation of the workgroup's charge in the coming year.

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COMMUNITY FORUM

SELB held an evening community forum, open to the public, to discuss social emotional learning and SELB's proposed standards, benchmarks, and indicators⁴³. About 25 public attendees participated in this event, including parents, educators, and community leaders. Participants were broken into small groups: each group discussed a different standard. The event concluded with a whole group reflection and discussion.

SURVEY

An online survey, created by SELB, was posted online and disseminated to identified stakeholder groups. Stakeholders represent key components of the educational system and/or consumers of public education, such as teachers and para-educators, families, students, district administrators, principals, education board members, other school personnel, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), education professional associations, and community based organizations.

The survey included open text box responses for individuals to provide input. There was a total of 56 respondents; however, not each respondent answered every question. The largest portion (30%) of respondents identified as 'parent/caregiver'. Additionally, many respondents identified as school employees, such as teachers, administrators, and para-educators.

⁴² Indicators were included in the first draft, but have been removed since.

⁴³ *ibid*