



Integrate SEL with Academics, Discipline, and Student Supports

The systemic integration of SEL into district priorities ensures that it will come to be seen as a vital component of what makes the district, schools, and students successful.

Below you'll find an overview of: WHAT high-quality implementation looks like, WHY it's important, WHEN to engage in this key activity, and WHO to involve. Also see the PROCESS page for step-by-step guidance on how to engage in the work, and the RESOURCES page for additional tools to support your efforts.

What does it mean to integrate SEL with academics, discipline, and student supports?



When fully implemented, SEL is infused throughout every students' school day, in every interaction and setting. This means SEL must be seamlessly embedded throughout all practices and policies that affect students' experience in schools, including academic content and instruction, discipline systems, and the continuum of academic and behavioral supports that the district offers (e.g., Multi-Tiered System of Supports).

When SEL is integrated with academics, discipline, and student supports:

The SEL team/lead collaborates with academic departments to integrate and prioritize SEL in academic and instructional frameworks, school leadership and improvement strategies, and the academic departments' professional learning content.

The district implements a coordinated and scaffolded professional learning plan to build teachers' capacity to foster students' social and emotional knowledge, skills, and attitudes through academic instruction and curriculum content, including support for culturally relevant instructional practices.

Discipline policies and practices emphasize proactive, restorative, and developmentally appropriate approaches, and the district intervenes to address disproportionate use of discipline.

Evidence-based SEL instruction and practices enhance the continuum of academic and behavioral supports that meet the needs of all students.

Use the Rubric to assess your integration of SEL with academics, discipline, and student supports.

Why does my district need to integrate SEL into academics, discipline, and student supports?

Students develop social and emotional competencies not just during a freestanding SEL lesson but through their daily interactions with peers and adults. The way that adults model and support students in learning academic content and responsible behavior sends strong messages that impact students' social and emotional learning.

Districts play a large role in shaping how academic instruction, discipline policies, and student supports are carried out at a school level. These three areas are among the most critical components of creating a school environment that consistently promotes and reinforces SEL for all students.

When should my district integrate SEL into academics, discipline, and student supports?

You should begin thinking about how SEL integrates with all district priorities and strategies from the beginning of implementation (See Focus Area 1, Key Activity: Shared Vision and Plan and Key Activity: Organizational Structure for more on this alignment). You'll want to begin deeper efforts to integrate SEL into academics, discipline, and student supports:

- After you've identified initial SEL programming and standards that will help guide integration.
- After you've developed foundational knowledge of SEL among school and district staff so that they can support integration.
- After you've developed collaborative structures to help academic, SEL, and student services department staff work together toward aligning efforts.
- Before you fully launch any SEL programs or initiatives to ensure they're not seen as a disconnected program or "one more thing to do."

Who needs to be involved?



SEL integration into school-level practices starts with collaboration at the district level. Key district teams or departments that influence academics, discipline, and student supports in schools may include:

- Teaching and Learning
- Professional Learning
- Equity
- Safety and Security
- Student Support Services/Interventions
- Health and Wellness
- Strategic Planning/Continuous Improvement

For more on building collaborative relationships among central office leaders, see Focus Area 1, Key Activity: Organizational Structure.

Outside of the central office, school leaders filter the SEL input they receive and apply it within their building, so it is critical that they believe in SEL as a lever for outcomes they are accountable for and have a positive experience when interacting with the SEL team.

Similarly, school-level disciplinarians and counselors who are experts in behavioral interventions and restorative practices have a major impact on the overall integration of SEL into the fabric of a school. Teachers and other school staff are involved in integration as they must have a working knowledge of how to reinforce SEL and set up experiences that strengthen student skills and build a strong class culture.

And at the most basic but decisive level, students are absolutely involved in integration as they recognize that SEL is part of the bigger picture of how to be successful and fulfilled in school, at work, and in personal relationships.

Up Next: Process