

News Release

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Wisconsin launches social, emotional learning guide, resources

MADISON – Increasingly, educators are finding that deliberate instruction in social and emotional learning improves the classroom environment, academic achievement, and students’ future job prospects. And now, the resources to provide this instruction are available in one location through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Today, the agency launched “Social and Emotional Learning Competencies,” a guide for incorporating these practices into lesson plans, using them as part of classroom management, and infusing them in school culture. The [website](#) also includes resources on what social and emotional learning is; how this learning intersects with character development, technology, and before- and after-school programs; and provides supports for teachers and other adults.

Defined as the process 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 and emotional learning (SEL) makes a difference for schools and communities.

- Students receiving comprehensive SEL instruction increased their achievement test scores by 11 percentile points.
- Half of employers surveyed in 2013 said they had trouble finding recent graduates to fill positions due to a lack of communication, adaptability, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.
- Columbia University found an \$11 return resulted from each \$1 invested in SEL.
- A nationally representative survey of PK-12th grade teachers found that 93 percent believe SEL is very or fairly important for the in-school student experience.

“From learning how to understand another classmate’s perspective to being able to conceive a variety of solutions and outcomes to a problem, our kids will benefit from intentional instruction on social and emotional learning,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “These SEL competencies come from broad

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stakeholder input to ensure that they are meaningful and relevant to Wisconsin communities while maintaining a focus on equity for all students.”

Wisconsin is among about 20 states working with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to expand social and emotional learning standards. All states currently have early learning standards that address social and emotional learning for early childhood. As of February 2018, a CASEL survey showed just eight states have SEL competencies that span kindergarten through 12th grade. Wisconsin’s new “Social and Emotional Learning Competencies” encompass self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, decision making, and relationship skills and are written across grade bands from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade and from sixth grade to adulthood.

The department plans full-day training sessions on the SEL competencies and their implementation in each of the state’s 12 Cooperative Educational Service Agencies next school year. Additionally, the agency is developing online training modules that will support educators at any time.

“For years, we’ve been building up the importance of solid academic knowledge for all kids. But a growing body of research shows that must be supplemented with concepts like persistence, problem-solving, adaptability, and communication skills,” Evers said. “Those are part of social and emotional learning and contribute mightily to safety, respect, and equity in our schools, the workplace, and society. I’ve seen schools and districts that put social and emotional learning into action, and the kids there are impressive, citizen-ready people.”

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RESOURCES

Infographic

Social and Emotional Learning in Wisconsin PK-12 Schools: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/selinfographic.pdf>

Guide

Social and Emotional Learning Competencies: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/SEL-Competencies-Guide-web.pdf>

Videos

Positivity through Social and Emotional Learning (Adams-Friendship Area School District): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJ2Nlp3J2w>

Early Childhood Social and Emotional Learning (Racine Unified School District): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohzEujRKtLg>

Website

Social and Emotional Learning: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/social-emotional-learning>

NOTE: This news release is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2018-52.pdf>.