SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MASSACHUSETTS, LESSONS FOR THE NATION
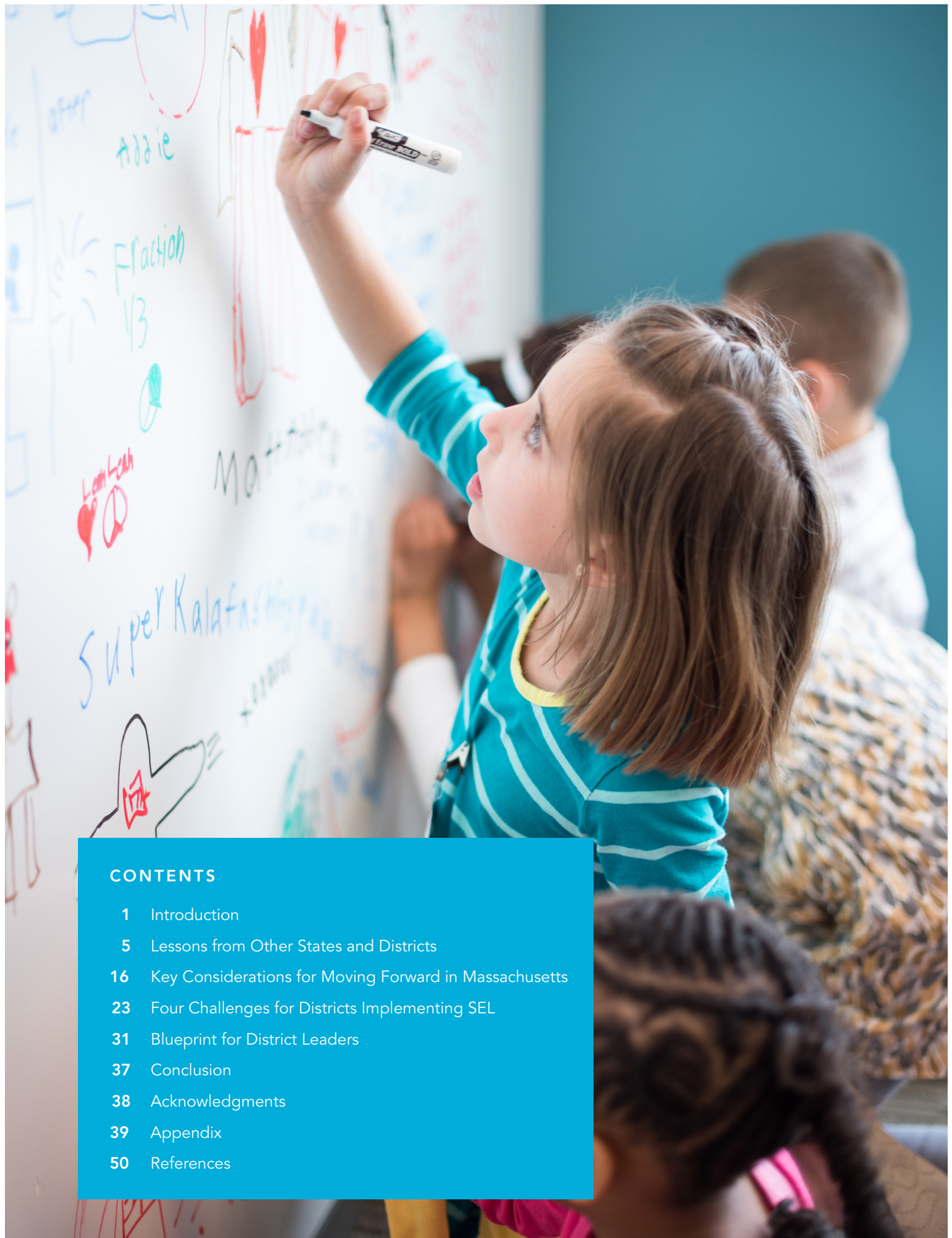
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Introduction

Education today is arguably more complex than ever before. Success in our increasingly dynamic global society requires students to develop skills that extend far beyond mastery of academic content. The knowledge-based economy needs adaptive workers with high-level critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaborative skills. Research has shown that, nationally, the occupations that continue to show growth require not only cognitive skills but also social skills such as cooperation, empathy, and flexibility.[1] In fact, jobs that demand technical *and* interpersonal skills are the most difficult to automate and thus continue to boom despite advances in workforce technology.[2] Yet, a recent survey of Massachusetts employers found that a majority of business leaders reported difficulty in finding local graduates with sufficient workplace-ready skills.[3] Various terms have been used to refer to these abilities, such as noncognitive skills, soft skills, or 21st century skills. More important, however, is the growing acknowledgment that students' social and emotional learning (SEL)—or the processes through which students 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[4]—is critical to developing competencies besides academic content knowledge that are necessary to succeed in college and in careers.

Workforce demands aside, many call for the 21st century classroom to be student centered and support individual learning needs. Moreover, students' ability to learn well depends not just on instruction but also on factors such as the school climate, a sense of belonging with peers, positive relationships with teachers, and the feedback they receive. Neuroscience research demonstrates that emotion and cognition are inextricably linked;[5] in fact, emotions are critical for all people to understand, organize, and make connections between even "pure" academic concepts.[6] Clearly, a

singular focus on traditional academics is insufficient to cope with the demands of modern society. As Maurice Elias, the head of Rutgers University's Social Emotional Learning Lab, has stated, schools have a "moral and ethical imperative" to take responsibility for students' well-being, not just their academic knowledge.

Although various groups interpret the term *social and emotional learning* differently, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has defined five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective,[A] and behavioral competencies for students: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.[7] Research on SEL competencies has shown promising results for children's well-being as well as their college and career readiness. First, evidence suggests that building healthy social and emotional skills leads to greater life success and higher lifetime earnings.[8] Second, SEL is an active ingredient in programs that enhance children's learning potential while preventing and managing destructive behaviors. Helping children improve their self-awareness and confidence, manage their emotions and impulses, and increase their empathy pays off *both* in improved behavior and measurable academic achievement.[9]

THE FIVE SEL COMPETENCIES[10]

To define SEL, CASEL identifies the following five interrelated clusters of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies:

1. **SELF-AWARENESS**. Students recognize their own emotions and their influence on behavior. They understand their own strengths and limitations and possess a grounded sense of confidence.

2. **SELF-MANAGEMENT.** Students effectively regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, including stress, impulses, self-motivation, goal setting, and progress toward goals.

3. **SOCIAL AWARENESS.** Students empathize and take the perspectives of diverse others. They understand social and ethical norms and recognize their own network of supports.

4. **RELATIONSHIP SKILLS.** Students can communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, negotiate conflict, resist inappropriate social pressures, and seek and offer help.

5. **RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING.** Students consider ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, realistic consequences, and well-being to make constructive and respectful behavioral choices.

A   Affective competencies relate to students' beliefs, attitudes, and emotions, such as self-esteem or impulse regulation.

SEL represents a fortuitous opportunity to prepare students for the workforce and help close academic achievement gaps, while simultaneously addressing the learning needs of each and every child.

As the Commonwealth's student population continues to diversify racially, culturally, and linguistically[11] and the percentage of public school students living in poverty increases,[12] more supports for differentiated learning styles are needed. In addition, there is critical concern for students' social and emotional health in public schools. School leaders report that severe anxiety, emotional trauma, and other mental health challenges can hinder students' learning and result in behavioral health problems and increased rates of disciplinary action. Although Massachusetts is a national leader in academic performance on a variety of measures, there is work left to do in multiple learning areas: closing achievement gaps, ensuring college and career readiness, and attending to various health and safety needs. Making SEL an explicit reform priority represents a re-envisioning of the education system as one that should educate the whole child for the 21st century. SEL strategies represent a fortuitous opportunity, in the Commonwealth as well as nationally, to prepare students for the workforce and help close academic achievement gaps, while simultaneously addressing the learning needs of each and every child.

To this end, the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, with the support of ASCD, conducted a research study to better understand how SEL policy, practice, and measurement are being effectively implemented in states and districts across the United States. The study team then applied this knowledge to Massachusetts' unique policy context, assessing opportunities and challenges for supporting SEL at the state level. Through this study, the team sought to identify strategies Massachusetts might employ to build on the practices of states and districts making strides in advancing students' social and emotional skills and move toward a more comprehensive approach for supporting SEL in states across the country.

STUDY APPROACH

In this study, the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy sought a broad understanding of SEL nationwide, as well as in specific states and districts. The goal was to draw lessons from existing SEL research and practice and apply them to an assessment of SEL in Massachusetts. As such, the study was centered around the following questions:

1. What can be learned from states with SEL-related policies?

    a. Specifically, what policy mechanisms (e.g., teacher preparation regulations or learning standards related to SEL) are enacted to incorporate SEL into learning environments? (This includes policies that govern implementation, the practice required of districts, and how student change is measured.)

    b. What opportunities and challenges do states and districts face in addressing students' social and emotional development on a systemic level?

2. What is the policy environment in Massachusetts for bringing about statewide change related to SEL, and how does it affect practice and measurement of SEL?

3. What policy and practice considerations can be learned from the close examination of SEL in Massachusetts to inform efforts in other districts and states?

To address these research questions, the Rennie Center team conducted the following activities:

A POLICY SCAN. Researchers scanned national and state databases on education policies and regulations to determine the extent of SEL in state policy and practice throughout the United States, including state standards, published guidelines or resources for SEL, and teacher preparation regulations.[B] After conducting this 50-state review, the team turned to a comprehensive review of Massachusetts state- and district-level initiatives to identify the presence of SEL competencies in existing programs and policies.

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE. The Rennie Center team reviewed research publications and empirical studies focusing on SEL as well as other related concepts, including noncognitive skills, 21st century learning, college and career readiness, bullying and violence prevention, and early childhood education.

INTERVIEWS. The study team used the review of policy and literature to identify a broad range of participants involved in some aspect of SEL education, both within and outside of Massachusetts. Researchers then conducted semistructured interviews with respondents from this group, which included administrators from districts with SEL initiatives, state agency personnel in SEL-relevant departments, university professors with SEL expertise, and representatives from SEL advocacy groups.[C]

B   See Appendix A.
C   See Acknowledgments section for a list of participants.

Lessons from Other States and Districts

To learn more about how to move SEL work forward in Massachusetts, the study team interviewed leaders from states with strong SEL agendas, including Kansas, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and New Hampshire. The team also contacted representatives from large districts implementing SEL initiatives, such as Eugene, Oregon; Austin, Texas; and the 10 districts that compose the California CORE initiative. Researchers interviewed each respondent about agency experience with SEL, including successful strategies, challenges, and details of implementation.

After reviewing all interview transcripts, the study team compiled four major topics from which Massachusetts can draw implications for its own practice. This section reviews each issue in turn. First, this section explores the need for a common language for and understanding of SEL statewide, as well as for stakeholder clarity on who is responsible for SEL. The second topic is the role of state-level standards for SEL, which do not guarantee changes in practice unless they are accompanied by supports. Subsequently, the brief discusses other types of supports states can provide, including professional development, collection and sharing of best practices, and funding. Lastly, the paper turns to the tensions between accountability and assessment—two important concepts that are often conflated in education but have unique implications for SEL. Although measurement and accountability are crucial elements of progress, additional assessments—especially any that are high stakes in nature—can become obstacles, rather than supports, to SEL work at the district and school levels.

Emerging across all of these themes is the acknowledgment that although states can and should prioritize and support SEL work, district-level leaders are the key actors for ensuring implementation.

Topic 1: Defining SEL

Two factors emerged from interviews that are important for building a foundation for SEL success. First, all stakeholders must share a common understanding for what SEL means in their context. Second, although SEL should be aligned with other initiatives, it must also have its own home, including personnel who are explicitly responsible for leading the work, to ensure it is prioritized.

Develop Common Terms and Expectations

Designing a SEL initiative is challenging right from the start. Although many stakeholders agree broadly that SEL is important, each group, agency, or individual educator may define the term, and its accompanying goals and practices, differently. Districts may think of SEL in terms of college and career readiness, while school leaders may think about bullying and school culture and teachers may consider classroom management and child development needs.[13] Moreover, different programs claim to address SEL, but they often focus on specific aspects. For example, the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework, which is designed to assist educators in adopting evidence-based behavioral interventions, is often considered SEL.[D] Yet three respondents pointed out that its focus is "behaviorist"[14] and "adult-driven"[15] without a strong enough focus on building students' skills.

Many interview respondents mentioned the challenges that stem from the "mess of terminology" used to refer to SEL concepts.[16] Without common language to describe SEL, leaders face "a problem of a tower of Babel of concepts, frameworks, interventions to apply, and competencies to be measured."[17] In order to move forward, leaders need a coherent vision and communication effort to create common expectations for what SEL does and does not entail.[18] For more information on this topic and the varying use of SEL-related terms, see ASCD's *Policy Priorities,* "A Lexicon for Educating the Whole Child (and Preparing the Whole Adult)."[E]

Create a "Home" for SEL

In her interview, CASEL researcher Linda Dusenbury pointed out that in 44 states, SEL is not prioritized independently but rather integrated into other standards. Addressing SEL as just part of a larger standard can lead to a lack of dedicated SEL focus. Many respondents indicated a similar lack of prioritization in their states. On one hand, SEL's adaptability and easy compatibility with many other areas of

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D   See Appendix B for more information on PBIS.
E   http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy-priorities/vol21/num02/toc.aspx.

education is an asset because the research base clearly indicates that a successful SEL initiative is fully integrated into the broader educational mission.

On the other hand, as expert SEL scholar Maurice Elias notes, "When there are so many ways of doing things, it can be difficult to know where to start and what to prioritize."[19] SEL can overlap with bullying, codes of conduct, character education, school culture and climate, health curricula, college and career readiness, teacher evaluation practices, safe schools, academic success, school discipline, and so on.[20] Because of this, respondents report that it is hard to know where to "house" the work—in an office of education or, perhaps, in a student support services or counseling department.[21] In Rhode Island, where no one agency is directly responsible for the work, leaders describe it as "quiet persistence from several offices," cobbling together funds and human resources wherever possible.[22] Lack of a dedicated person or team to lead a SEL effort can create challenges in moving the work forward.

Topic 2: State-Level SEL Standards: Important but Insufficient

Several SEL proponents have pursued or advocated for freestanding SEL standards. State-level standards do have some advantages, particularly in signaling the importance of SEL within the state. However, without additional supports and mechanisms for implementation, simply adopting standards is insufficient to guarantee changes in practice.

SEL Standards Can Be Useful Tools

Although states cannot do the work on the ground to implement SEL in schools, they can signal the importance of prioritizing SEL by setting standards, legislation, and formal policy.[F] A few states have made progress in setting student learning standards for SEL. Connecticut has incorporated SEL into its learning standards, a more common approach.[23] Rhode Island, too, has made efforts to integrate SEL into learning standards by drafting a crosswalk between SEL and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and attempting to create alignment between the SEL components of the health education standards, school counseling standards, and other state academic standards.

Kansas has taken a rarer stand as one of the first states to create freestanding SEL standards, known in the state as the Social, Emotional, and Character Development (SECD) Standards.[24] The SECD Standards, approved by the Kansas State Board of Education in December 2012, are aligned with a Kentucky precedent, the Rose Standards, which require schools to address students' physical and mental well-being. Kansas's SECD standards provide a comprehensive model for the competencies students should develop. Kansas has also made strides in setting formal priorities for SEL in several other ways, including the following: 1) a state board mission statement that includes support for SEL and character development; 2) designing a new school accreditation system incorporating SEL (in progress), and 3) creating a cross-stakeholder committee to align the SECD standards with other state initiatives, such as college and career readiness, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS),[G] 21st century skills, and the CCSS. Respondents from Kansas also mentioned plans to create crosswalks between the SECD standards and the state's counseling standards, a task the state has outsourced to partner organizations.[25]

F   SEL standards commonly refer to student learning standards but might also include professional standards for educators that acknowledge the need to enhance teachers' own SEL competencies. Massachusetts has made some headway in this direction; see p. 17 of this document.
G   See Appendix B for more information on MTSS and CCSS.

All of these efforts help to establish SEL as a formal priority in the state and provide justification for focus on SEL at school and district levels. A state-level priority is important, but it is not sufficient to ensure SEL implementation.

Standards Do Not Guarantee Practice

Although interviewees noted that standards play a role in their states' SEL initiatives, several also cautioned that standards do not guarantee practice on the ground. Translating standards into concrete implementation is a complex process requiring a host of other factors besides the standards themselves. Standards must be accompanied by implementation supports and some means of generating buy-in and urgency in order to ensure that schools and districts prioritize them. As previously discussed, it may be difficult to know who is responsible for implementing standards; they can be seen as "belonging" to many departments without actually being anyone's priority.[26]

> *A state-level priority is important, but it is not sufficient to ensure SEL implementation.*

Moreover, even if standards are mandated, districts and schools have little incentive to implement them without an accompanying funding stream and few consequences if they do not. For example, two interviewees cited Illinois—a state that has invested heavily in standards that are curriculum aligned, include descriptions of performance, and are promoted by the state board—as an example of a state that has struggled to move toward implementation without the necessary funding.[27] One respondent added that school safety teams in New Jersey are legally obligated to handle bullying prevention, but a lack of funding makes this mandate more difficult to regulate.[28] Overall, funding is critical for supporting schools through implementation with training, personnel, and other resources.

Respondents also discussed other practical challenges of implementing standards. According to Dusenbury, many states first create standards and then attempt to provide professional development, but, in fact, educators may not be prepared to implement standards unless the state invests in professional development *beforehand*. Other respondents referred to the difficulty of setting standards and offering guidance without prioritizing any particular SEL skills or approach, since sanctioning just one approach would counteract the vision of locally tailored initiatives that are

designed to respond to school and student needs.[29] An interviewee from the Rhode Island Department of Education noted that one of the state's challenges would be to "adopt standards to support the work, not to get in the way."[30] In short, although standards have an important role to play, much more is needed to move SEL forward with students.

Topic 3: Additional State-Level Supports

Districts are key leaders in SEL implementation. However, state agencies can provide several supports, drawing on their ability to network across many districts, serve as a centralizing resource, and secure and allocate funding. Among states and districts interviewed for this study, states support districts in SEL work by providing professional development, best practices, and funding.

Professional Development

Many respondents noted that although the field of education, collectively, is beginning to understand what SEL competencies students need to master, less is known about how to train teachers to develop these skills in students, and many educators would benefit from additional support for the SEL work they already do in their classrooms without any assistance.[31] Some agencies have begun to develop promising professional development offerings for both preservice and inservice teachers; however, they are by no means available to all educators.[32] Schools and teachers need support to find and understand evidence-based practice and to share growing knowledge with other schools.[33] State-level agencies are well situated to help coordinate across schools. In Kansas, for example, the state's Regional Service Centers (RSCs) provide character education training in schools.[34] Pennsylvania, too, has embraced the challenge of providing professional development at the state level by focusing on governance issues and rallying stakeholder support for SEL.[35]

STATES PROVIDE...

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COACHES AND TRAINERS

GRANT COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

ACCESS TO TOOLS, RESEARCH, AND BEST PRACTICES

Funding

States can also use grants and deploy federal funding to assist in coordinating resources and training. For example, Kansas was able to expand the RSC school training opportunities by using grant funding from the Partnerships in Character Education and the Safe and Supportive Schools program to hire seven SEL coaches and staff developers to work at the RSCs.[36] The Rhode Island Department of Education, despite a lack of dedicated SEL funding, previously funded a preservice trainer for students in Providence College's counseling department and has now brought on an additional staff member to help move SEL forward within the agency.[37]

New Hampshire has taken an active stance in funding distribution and resource coordination. When creating its SEL framework, the state gave every one of its districts a grant to start teacher study groups and provide training for the group leaders. Study groups gave feedback on the draft SEL framework and compiled standards to submit to the state. Respondents noted that this process incentivized teachers to focus on the implications of SEL frameworks. Furthermore, the state recruited a committee of stakeholders from across the state to examine research, update the SEL practices students should know, and submit recommendations to the state board of education.[38]

Research and Best Practices

States can play a role in supporting districts in monitoring their own progress. States are often well positioned to collect and manage data and facilitate research for developing evaluation instruments. These tasks are often too large for a district or school to take on by itself; moreover, concentrating knowledge and resources at the state level may help prevent duplication of the hard work of building tools, testing measures, and developing best practices.

For example, Kansas and Rhode Island have created instruments to assist with SEL monitoring. Rhode Island is in the process of building a database for collecting and displaying SEL-related indicators; state staff have also created online resources such as web tools, documentation, and profiles of schools implementing varied SEL approaches.[39] Similarly, Kansas has created the Conditions for Learning Index, which collects data from parent, student, and teacher surveys; achievement data; school discipline and bullying data; and survey data related to the state's social, emotional, and character development standards.[40]

Although states differ in the amount and type of coordination and support they provide to districts, they have the potential to provide significant help in many ways.

Topic 4: Tensions Between Accountability and Assessment

Another major topic surrounding SEL policy and implementation is the role of accountability and assessment. Although respondents agreed that accountability and incentives are important to motivate change, interviewees pointed out the danger of overly strong mandates that could restrict progress. If the accountability mechanisms are too exacting, they may inadvertently penalize those who strive to meet them but lack the capacity to do so to the degree required.[41] As one Kansas State Department of Education representative put it, when legislation focuses too heavily on any one aspect, such as assessment, it "creates an overreaction" that harms overall progress.[42]

Some Accountability Is Important

In the current educational climate, the terms *accountability* and *assessment* carry many different connotations. In the public's view, the term *accountability* is closely associated with high-stakes standardized assessments and the ways results are used to judge school- and classroom-level progress. However, this study's respondents frequently characterized accountability in a broader way, recognizing a spectrum

SEL ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE CALIFORNIA CORE DISTRICTS

When building their School Quality Improvement Index (SQII)—a measure of school performance used for accountability and continuous improvement—the California CORE districts took stock of what districts were already measuring that could serve as proxies for SEL. Districts wanted to move beyond test scores and include a broader set of factors that matter for student success. The CORE districts decided to include social and emotional skills in the SQII because of the compelling research on the importance of these skills and because "teachers and systems are already attending to" these skills without systematically collecting data on them.

The program settled on proxy data that they were already collecting—such as attendance and suspension rates. They then added new survey-based measures of social and emotional skills—such as growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, and social awareness. Respondents from the CORE districts told the study team that they couldn't justify excluding SEL from the new accountability model because they "were thinking about the measures that mattered—and SEL really mattered."[43] They consider SQII a pilot and have developed a three-year implementation timeline that includes field tests alongside curriculum and professional development changes to support the new measures.

The CORE districts take a more high-stakes approach to SEL accountability than other agencies, with 40 percent of many schools' quality ratings depending on SEL indicators. Yet, the principles underlying their approach to accountability could be used in a lower-stakes way as well. They have concentrated on skills and competencies that are important to their overall vision and engaged in public discussion of these skills and values. Moreover, they base the index on existing work, including student and teacher reports. They created implementation supports, including peer coaching and knowledge sharing within school-level communities of practice. The districts plan to refine the measures with input.

of behaviors including transparency of practices with the broader community, goal setting with indicators to measure those goals, and other behaviors that can hold people responsible for their work and for implementing approaches with fidelity.

Many respondents agree that some level of accountability and evaluation is important to move a SEL initiative forward. In today's political climate, accountability drives what is prioritized and signals that an initiative is particularly important. As Elias noted, "If we put emphasis on SEL, then we would have accountability and assessment for SEL."[44] In many cases, accountability mechanisms also create the pressure needed to define and measure progress,[45] which is important for refining practice and for satisfying external criteria such as federal education requirements.[46]

Measuring progress also generates support. Many respondents told us that teachers are already doing SEL work and believe in its potential to benefit students, but without data to back it up, SEL struggles to gain traction in policies formed outside the classroom.[47] The more data that are amassed to demonstrate SEL's effectiveness, the more likely others—including funders, high-level policymakers, legislators, and communities—are to support SEL initiatives.[48] Moreover, monitoring SEL progress will help generate a body of knowledge about best practices and the most useful resources to ensure districts and schools are supported on their path toward SEL implementation.[49] Used in these ways, measurement can bolster internal accountability,[50] create incentives for districts to focus on SEL,[51] and help districts monitor and improve the progress of their SEL initiatives.

More Work Is Needed to Develop Broad-Based SEL Assessment

Despite the need for a way to incentivize and measure SEL progress, many respondents cautioned that schools and districts do not need more formal, standardized assessments. As Albert Wat of the National Governors Association put it, "At the state level, we are already over-assessing" in traditional academic domains, without adding another assessment to the mix.[52] Certainly, overassessment can interfere with good practice. Respondents stated that more knowledge is needed to successfully implement statewide SEL assessments similar to those being used to assess student progress in more traditional academic domains.

According to Sara Bartolino Krachman and Rebecca Arnold, both senior leaders at Transforming Education—an organization devoted to supporting school systems in measuring and developing students' social and emotional skills—SEL measurement is at an early but promising stage. Currently, the most commonly used measures of social and emotional skills are student self-reports and teacher reports on students. These survey-based measures may be subject to various biases, including the

tendency for respondents to report what they think others want to hear and the challenges of interpreting (survey) questions and the data produced from them. Despite these potential issues with survey-based measures, a recent field test of such measures conducted by the CORE districts and Transforming Education demonstrated that both student and teacher measures of several social and emotional skills were statistically significant predictors of important academic and behavioral outcomes, such as GPA, test scores, attendance, and suspensions.

Chris Gabrieli, cofounder of Transforming Education and professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, highlighted the potential for next-generation measures of social and emotional skills, including performance tasks and game-based assessments that can evolve to help the field learn more.

Further, there are some assessments that exist for determining SEL student competency and progress, such as the PISA teamwork/problem-solving performance tasks, among others.[53] In fact, CASEL has amassed a compendium of many of the existing SEL measures, but these only extend through elementary school and often target specific subgroups (e.g., 5th grade males).[54, H]

Using Pre-Existing Indicators as SEL Proxies

Because comprehensive SEL-specific assessments are still emerging, respondents wonder what other data can be used to measure SEL. Representatives from various contexts mention several possible proxies, including absenteeism, suspension, disciplinary actions, truancy, dropout rates, and other nonacademic indicators, but have found it difficult to decide which are appropriate.[55] These indicators may help monitor changes within their local settings; as previously discussed, Kansas, Rhode Island, and the California CORE districts, along with other agencies, have made considerable progress by attending to climate and academic engagement. However, these measures do not assess the actual skills and competencies articulated in the CASEL framework, and they ultimately will not produce the knowledge and understanding required to evaluate practice.

In short, there's more work to be done in developing reliable methods for assessing whether students are improving in SEL on a large scale[56] and in measuring the specific behaviors teachers use to build these competencies in students.[57] Although districts and states have found ways to monitor their work with proxy data, widespread

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H   Additional tools not mentioned in the CASEL compendium include the Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence assessment (http://www.6seconds.org/tools/sei/sei-yv/), the Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency's Holistic Student Assessment (http://www.pearweb.org/tools/hsa.html), and the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (http://www.centerforresilientchildren.org/school-age/assessments-resources/the-devereux-student-strengths-assessment-dessa-kit/).

use of direct measures of improvement in students' SEL abilities, or in teachers' skills for fostering these abilities in students, has not yet been achieved. And even as more information on measurement techniques becomes available, states and districts in this study expressed hesitancy to move forward with developing and administering large-scale SEL assessments. Despite this reluctance, states can and should consider the assistance they can provide in sharing best practices, especially at the classroom level and particularly for a critical issue like assessment.

Key Considerations for Moving Forward in Massachusetts

The interviews conducted for this study clearly indicate that to move SEL forward, the most important step is supporting implementation by educators. The teaching profession has long considered SEL competencies to be essential components of child development, and many educators incorporate SEL into their regular practice. Although SEL can and should be integrated into a state's strategic plan and vision, SEL initiatives must be championed at the district level and tailored to each local context, in order to build on existing success.[58] More resources and support will allow districts to do so. Therefore, it is critical to emphasize SEL as a priority and continue to support momentum in all public school districts across the Commonwealth, while advocating for the state's assistance with funding, advocacy, and SEL-friendly policy leadership.

To add to the knowledge collected from the state-level interviews, and to investigate the potential directions for SEL in Massachusetts, the study team conducted interviews with personnel from several districts that are already pursuing a SEL focus. Because the state-level respondents clearly indicated the importance of leading change from the local level, the next sections of the report discuss key takeaways from the districts that have already made progress on SEL in Massachusetts and elsewhere.

THE MASSACHUSETTS SEL CONTEXT

Massachusetts has a number of state-level initiatives that can easily align with SEL goals and approaches. Several respondents identified programs with the potential to serve as a foundation upon which to build a statewide SEL agenda, or at least contribute to one. However, although these mandates are SEL-compatible, few explicitly prioritize SEL as a primary focus.

MASSACHUSETTS' MTSS. Based on the general MTSS concept,[I] Massachusetts' MTSS is a blueprint for school improvement that seeks to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. It emphasizes targeted supports for all students, from those with significant academic or behavioral difficulties to those who have mastered concepts and skills being taught.[59] MTSS is one of many tools that originated as a resource for special education (SPED), as teachers of special needs students often pay particular attention to differentiated instruction, individual learning needs, and social and emotional well-being. SPED initiatives, therefore, provide a logical point of SEL alignment, as in the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (ESE) SEL educator training program for inclusive preschool classrooms.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO BULLYING (2010). This law, which grew from a mandated Behavioral Health Task Force for Trauma-Sensitive Schools (2008), requires schools to attend to student behavior and safety, often through SEL curricula. However, Massachusetts State Representative Alice Peisch noted that although the act does not include implementation specifics such as grade-level benchmarks, it does require ESE to establish guidelines for the implementation of SEL curricula in grades K–12.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO STUDENT ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL (2012). Commonly referred to as "Chapter 222," the act requires schools and districts to pursue disciplinary options besides suspension or expulsion. In particular, educators should "address the behavioral and social-emotional issues that give rise to student misconduct," making SEL strategies clearly applicable.[60]

AN ACT RELATIVE TO SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS (2014). This act mandates that every school create "a safe, positive, healthy and inclusive whole-school learning environment"[61] to facilitate a range of positive outcomes, including SEL. The law also created the Safe and Supportive Schools Commission, which is tasked with helping ESE develop a framework for creating these learning environments.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. Some whole-environment approaches to reform include the Gateway Cities—which partner with the state on economic and community development—and the Wraparound Zones Initiative (WZI). WZI awarded funds to six districts to "build district and school capacity to systematically address students' non-academic barriers to learning."[62] WZI has also led to the formation of the Urban Leaders Network (ULN), a group of district staff from across WZI sites who meet regularly to discuss strategies for sustaining improvements to school culture, safety, and SEL.[63]

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS. The Massachusetts Consortium for Social-Emotional Learning in Teacher Education (MA SEL-TED) has worked with ESE to incorporate two SEL-relevant clauses into the Commonwealth's Professional Standards for Teachers (PSTs), released in January 2015.[64] The Social and Emotional Learning indicator (2.e) states the following: "Employs a variety of strategies to assist students to develop social-emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making." There is also an indicator for Classroom Management (2.f). In addition, SEL is incorporated in a recently developed resource to support positive practices, the *Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice*.[65] This guidebook, a comprehensive set of tools related to improving inclusive practice and aligned with all major components of the Educator Evaluation system (e.g., rubrics, observation, artifacts, goal setting, administrator evaluation, common assessments, and student feedback), was designed with SEL as one of its guiding frameworks.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS. Massachusetts' Integrated College and Career Readiness definition articulates what students need to know to be prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workplace. This definition, approved by the Boards of Higher Education and Elementary and Secondary Education in 2013, includes a focus on the personal and social development needed to enter college and the workforce.[66] In developing and approving this definition, the Integrated College and Career Readiness Task Force published recommendations for students developing these skills as part of successful secondary and postsecondary transitions.[67]

LEARNING STANDARDS. In collaboration with the National Governors Association, Massachusetts has focused on creating nonacademic standards for young children (preschool through grade 3), grounded in the work of CASEL and Head Start.[68] In addition, ESE's Learning Supports and Early Learning Office developed a kindergarten entry assessment that is being implemented in 180 districts, and the state recently released SEL standards for preschool and kindergarten.[69, J] However, much more work is required to continue to implement and support these early learning standards. As Donna Traynham of the Early Learning Office notes, these efforts, which currently focus on preK and kindergarten, need to be situated in a broader birth to grade 3 context.[70] Creating comprehensive, freestanding SEL standards beyond the early years is a large task that some respondents felt the state is not ready to take on.[71]

Clearly, Massachusetts has some structures and resources in place to move SEL forward. However, these have not translated to school- and districtwide programs for all Massachusetts educators and students. Although Massachusetts has made some progress in SEL, much remains to be done if the goal is a comprehensive, coherent, and well-supported initiative that helps all children develop SEL competencies.

I   See Appendix B.

J   For more information, go to http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/curriculum-and-learning/pre-school-and-kindergarten-standards.html.

Districts Can Be Key Actors with State Support

The data collected for this study demonstrate that states have an important role in SEL initiatives, including setting formal standards, providing supports, and assisting with measurement and coordination. However, there are many aspects of enacting SEL on the ground that cannot be accomplished at the state level. To take root, SEL must be a priority for the entire community of actors that make up public education systems. Not only should SEL initiatives be a focus for state policymakers and district and school administrators, but they must also be locally grounded and involve all community stakeholders.

Everyone Contributes to the Work

Respondents agreed that a successful SEL initiative cannot be imposed with a solely top-down approach, and in many states and districts participating in the study, a bottom-up approach is being pursued. In Eugene, Oregon; Austin, Texas; Rhode Island; Kansas; and the SEL-focused California CORE districts, respondents stated that although incentives may be helpful, true change is voluntary and driven by engaged educators and local community members who see SEL as an opportunity, not a requirement.[72] In the California CORE districts, teachers receive additional payment for participation in SEL development; in Eugene, Oregon, they may volunteer to take an unpaid professional development workshop during the summer. Representatives from Austin as well as Eugene reported that starting with eager volunteers could form the basis for a strong SEL program, which would then organically spread along professional networks once they began to see positive results.

Respondents from this study's focal Massachusetts districts—Reading, Fall River, and Gardner—emphasized the important role of the community in SEL work. Much of the push for a Behavioral Health in Public Schools self-assessment in Reading came from a local community coalition, the Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse (RCASA). RCASA secured a federal Drug-Free Communities grant, convened a task force, and continues to work closely with the district to implement the MTSS system, which the district now leads.

Fall River representatives report a similar pattern of work, both top-down from district leadership and bottom-up from community members. The district piloted and refined its work with a subset of schools that were particularly interested in SEL before scaling up. Fall River convenes a community council and is planning a parent academy; moreover, each school maintains a SEL team that meets regularly to offer recommendations, best practices, and tools to the district.

Regardless of who initiates the SEL focus in a district, both formal district leaders and community members must ultimately be involved to create a functional program. As one respondent said, SEL must be adopted building by building; everyone should feel responsible for SEL climate and culture.[73]

SEL Must Be Tailored for the Local Context

Each district and school pursues SEL in its own way.[74] In Reading, the community coalition that drove the SEL focus formed in direct response to local need—that is, several drug-related behavioral health incidents in the district. Gardner also used SEL programming to address a local community need—that is, decreasing graduation rates coupled with an increasing concentration of poverty. When implementing SEL, Gardner also offered principals the freedom to select their own programs for addressing building-level contexts and facilitated professional development around those contexts.

Reading also continues to maintain a locally grounded approach, pursuing what one respondent referred to as "continuity of clinical care," in which schools network across community health providers and families to ensure that children receive health services. According to interviewees, Reading also seeks to maintain connections to researchers and other types of local agencies. Furthermore, the district "widely, publicly" communicates its approach to SEL-driven improvement through several strategies: 1) including behavioral health goals in the superintendent's action plan; 2) presenting at school committee meetings; 3) posting online about PBIS, MTSS, and Open Circle;[K] 4) disseminating a parent newsletter; and 5) offering wellness fairs and open houses on health-related issues. Involving a wide range of community partners is one way to ensure that the resulting programming is grounded in the local context and that decisions continue to reflect community needs.

Clearly, there are many challenges inherent in SEL work. However, the experiences of these focal districts also suggest key actions that others can take as they begin to implement SEL. The next section will present four major SEL challenges: prioritizing SEL, operationalizing the work, integrating it into existing strategies, and monitoring progress. Finally, the report offers suggestions for action steps and concludes with a blueprint tool that district leaders can use to begin to think about these challenges strategically.

K   See Appendix B for information on MTSS, PBIS, and Open Circle.

FOCAL DISTRICT

Reading, MA

Reading's existence dates back to some of the earliest colonial settlers, and the town played an active role in the Revolutionary War. Today, it is a primarily residential community of approximately 24,747 people.[75] The school district, led by Superintendent John Doherty, consists of a preschool, five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Reading's SEL initiative began in response to multiple drug-related behavioral health incidents. In 2014, the district won a five-year federal grant to implement Massachusetts' MTSS, and it has extended that work through all of its schools.

BY THE NUMBERS[76]

K–12 ENROLLMENT
4,407

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
17.3%

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS
6.1%

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
0.6%

STUDENTS SCORING PROFICIENT OR ABOVE ON MCAS ELA
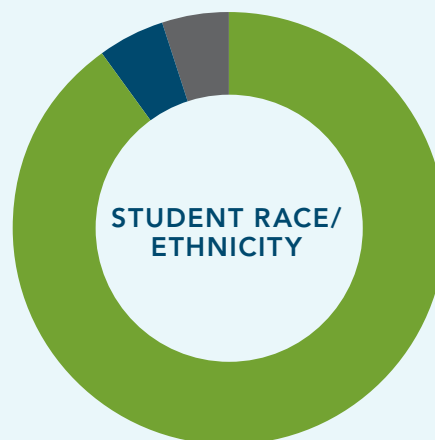**80%**

STUDENTS SCORING PROFICIENT OR ABOVE ON MCAS MATH
69%

FIVE-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
96.3%

GRADUATES IN HIGHER EDUCATION
90.6%

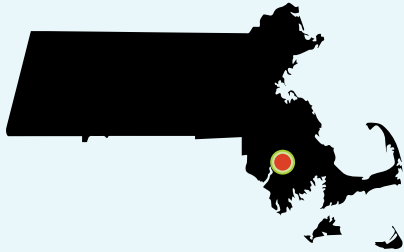STUDENT RACE/ETHNICITY

● WHITE   ● ASIAN   ● OTHER

FOCAL DISTRICT

Fall River, MA

Fall River's natural granite supply and proximity to the Quequechan River made it possible to construct excellent mills and become a manufacturing powerhouse in the 19th century. However, a slowing postwar economy along with a citywide fire in 1928 marked the decline of industrial prosperity. Today, Fall River is a large, ethnically diverse city of 88,857 residents and 17 public schools.[77] A Wraparound Zones Initiative (WZI) participant, the district uses SEL strategies to address its students' comprehensive needs and focus on school climate, culture, and community engagement.

BY THE NUMBERS[78]

K–12 ENROLLMENT
10,246

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
19.1%

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS
55.6%

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
7.8%

STUDENTS SCORING PROFICIENT OR ABOVE ON MCAS ELA
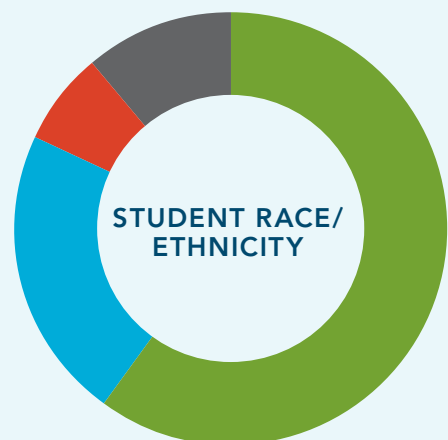**50%**

STUDENTS SCORING PROFICIENT OR ABOVE ON MCAS MATH
42%

FIVE-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
75.7%

GRADUATES IN HIGHER EDUCATION
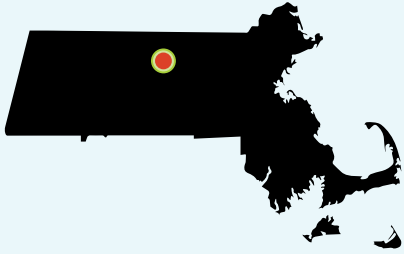**61.0%**

STUDENT RACE/ETHNICITY

- ● WHITE
- ● HISPANIC
- ● AFRICAN AMERICAN
- ● OTHER

FOCAL DISTRICT

Gardner, MA

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, Gardner was an industrial center, known as "Chair City" and the "Furniture Capital of New England." However, most factories stopped production in the latter half of the 20th century.[76] Today, Gardner's population is around 20,228, with increasing poverty levels that affect the public schools.[79] When Denise Clemons took the helm as district superintendent in 2014, she brought a renewed focus on SEL as a strategy for addressing changing needs, which the district continues to uphold in its six schools.

BY THE NUMBERS[80]

K–12 ENROLLMENT
2,473

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
20.9%

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS
43.1%

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
4.3%

STUDENTS SCORING PROFICIENT
OR ABOVE ON MCAS ELA
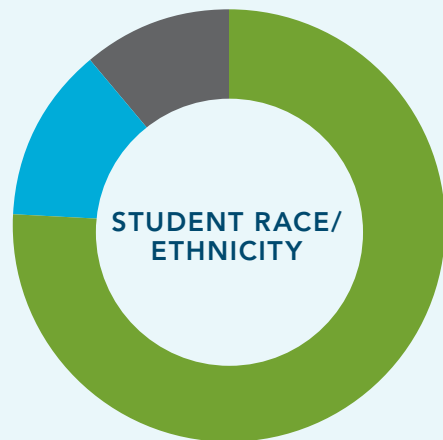**55%**

STUDENTS SCORING PROFICIENT
OR ABOVE ON MCAS MATH
40%

FIVE-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
76.4%

GRADUATES IN HIGHER EDUCATION
75.8%

STUDENT RACE/ETHNICITY

● WHITE ● HISPANIC ● OTHER

Four Challenges for Districts Implementing SEL

States play an important role in providing many SEL supports; however, this section focuses on the actions district leaders have taken to create structures and systems to fuel their SEL work. The table below summarizes strategies that the three focal districts are using to overcome the challenges discussed in this section.

	READING	FALL RIVER	GARDNER
PRIORITIZE	**Creates visibility** with a regular SEL newsletter, wellness fairs, health open houses, and world cafes.	Explicitly includes SEL benchmarks in **district improvement plan**.	**Addresses local needs** by opening a new alternative high school with SEL focus.
OPERATIONALIZE	**Allocates staff** to a district-level MTSS team, plus school-level teams.	**Builds capacity** with summer training on Responsive Classroom/Guided District for all new staff.	**Creates SEL teacher leaders** to receive training and provide professional development to colleagues (two per school).
INTEGRATE	Works with a **community coalition** against substance abuse that partners with the district and manages a Drug-Free Communities Grant.	Creates MOUs with community partners for **wraparound services** coordination.	Incorporates SEL into **school-based programs**: middle school student advisory, high school counseling, plus a transition program between grades 7, 8, and 9.
MEASURE/ EVALUATE	Provides monthly **data training** for school staff.	**Shares best practices** through school-level SEL teams who work with the district as a SEL network and conduct walk-throughs. **Reviews SEL data** monthly at the Office of Instruction.	Regularly collects data on implementation of PBIS as part of a **SEL task force** led by a student support team.

Prioritizing SEL

SEL implementation efforts will flourish only if they are prioritized among multiple stakeholders. District leadership must fully embrace SEL and recognize that it is central to learning, instruction, and student and staff well-being. The commitment must also be shared by decision makers, engaged educators, and local community members who are responsible for actively shaping SEL climate and culture.

SEL Must Be a Leadership Priority

Sherrie Austin, SEL director at the Austin Independent School District, told the study team that it is "one thousand times harder" to incorporate SEL into a school or district if the administrators have not fully bought into the idea. Because school and district leaders have many competing priorities, it is important that they see value in SEL, prioritize it, and work actively to engage teachers—otherwise, other demands can easily overwhelm the motivation to focus on SEL.[81]

In Massachusetts districts with a SEL focus, respondents cited leadership as a key component of the initiative. Reading, Fall River, and Gardner all began focusing on SEL at the behest of the superintendent or other district leaders upon the recognition of an important learning challenge. When Reading Public Schools faced significant behavioral incidents in 2010, the superintendent convened a task force to conduct a capacity assessment of the district based on the recommendations from the statewide Behavioral Health Task Force.[L] The self-assessment uncovered a lack of a comprehensive mechanism for dealing with trauma and other behavioral health issues, which led to the creation of an MTSS district team that continues to meet monthly and conduct in-school training. Reading representatives report that the school committee is also very involved in leading SEL.

Similarly, Fall River Public Schools' instructional team reviews SEL data monthly, in addition to its weekly review of academic data, after leadership decided that SEL could help the district address a state mandate to improve its disciplinary issues. In Gardner, a brand-new superintendent arrived with a specific SEL plan, hired new personnel, and created considerable momentum around SEL, including a new SEL-focused alternative high school for at-risk students.

L   See *An Act Relative to Bullying* (2010) on p. 17 of this document.

Operationalizing SEL

Even in districts with strong leaders and fully engaged communities, shifting the district vision to incorporate SEL can require considerable resources, training, and support. Deepening relationships with community partners has proven an important strategy for many districts in operationalizing their SEL initiatives.

Securing Adequate Funding

Unfortunately, because SEL is not the explicit priority of any program in Massachusetts, it lacks a dedicated resource stream. In the past, SEL advocates have accessed funding through the federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools program,[82] the Race to the Top (RTTT) Early Learning challenge,[83] and other grant programs. However, multiple respondents noted that although state legislation surrounding SEL imposes guidelines, it does not currently provide implementation funding.[84] Without legislation that explicitly allocates funding, Massachusetts will need to strategically use discretionary state grants and categorical funds to support implementation.[85] Community partners, such as private foundations and local businesses, may also be able to contribute funding to support implementation and sustaining progress as a supplement to local aid.

Allocating Human Capital

One particular resource challenge districts face is amassing personnel to cover additional SEL needs. Thanks to heavy resource commitment from the district as well as funds from the Novo Foundation and local private partners, Austin Independent School District has established an entire SEL department, including 13 SEL coaches who support school staff and visit campus at least once every two weeks.[86] However, not all districts are able to allocate as many people exclusively to the SEL effort. In fact, representatives from Fall River stated that they were able to accomplish most SEL goals by reallocating and refocusing existing staff rather than hiring new personnel. Instead of hiring new staff, the California CORE districts pair lower- and higher-performing schools together for coaching and support. One respondent also noted that if the district has ties to a higher education institution, graduate students may be a valuable resource—even if they are not SEL experts, their basic knowledge and dedicated support can accomplish a lot.[87] Lastly, community partners, including early educators, healthcare specialists, and after-school program staff, as well as parents, families, and representatives from community organizations and businesses, may similarly add capacity to SEL efforts.

Building Professional Capacity

Elizabeth Losee, Massachusetts ESE's assistant director of educator preparation and assessment, informed researchers that schools and districts do not have much guidance from the state as to how to select, design, and implement successful programs. For example, even though teacher professional standards now include a SEL indicator—"Employs a variety of strategies to assist students to develop social-emotional competencies"—teachers may need assistance to translate the indicator to their particular grade level and integrate it into the rest of their practice.[88]

Historically, those supporting early grades have had the most capacity for promoting SEL practices in Massachusetts. Open Circle,[M] for example, has helped elementary schools incorporate SEL for the past 27 years.[89] However, even within elementary schools, teachers' and especially administrators' professional backgrounds may not necessarily have included formal training in social and emotional development. Middle and high school educators are even less likely to have SEL expertise.[90] Implementation may involve content knowledge training, coaching, data review practice, CCSS alignment, and other supports.[91]

Representatives from focal districts offered several examples of building local capacity. Although Reading does not currently provide districtwide professional development, every school has an MTSS leadership team that regularly meets to build common expectations for core behaviors in the building around discipline, attendance, and academic data. The district has also incorporated a SEL focus into teacher professional learning communities (PLCs) to allow teachers a space for discussing student SEL needs and successful strategies for addressing them. Gardner uses a train-the-trainer model to disseminate SEL best practices; by training two people per school, and then asking them to train their colleagues, they are able to reach a wider range of educators.

Strategic professional development choices can also build sustainability. For example, Reading has introduced the notion of SEL training into contract negotiations with the teachers' union, which may help ensure the future of SEL practices in the district. Fall River made SEL professional development part of the mandatory new staff orientation. By focusing on new hires, Fall River hopes to provide this important skill building early in teachers' careers and eventually prepare all staff to address SEL.

M   See Appendix B for more information on Open Circle.

Integrating SEL

Many respondents discussed the need to calm their colleagues' fears about adding yet another competing initiative to their workload. They emphasized the importance of integrating SEL into the broad mission of the school or district so that SEL becomes an integral part of the approach to education rather than an add-on component. When not well integrated into the core mission of the district, some stakeholders may perceive SEL as just a "shiny thing"[92] to be picked up and quickly dropped in the long line of shifting policies, which creates "initiative fatigue."[93]

"This isn't something else on the plate; this is our plate. Once you get the plate established, everything else flourishes."

Instead, respondents urged others to think about SEL as part of the larger solution to meeting the other mandates.[94] Repeatedly, they brought up existing initiatives that would benefit from a SEL approach: college and career readiness, special education, counseling standards, teacher preparation, violence prevention, suicide prevention, and CCSS implementation. SEL integration even extends beyond the boundaries of the school building and day and can be strengthened by integration into health services, after school programs, early education, nonprofit work, and the missions and goals of other local partners. Respondents expressed a firm belief that institutionalizing SEL as common practice, integrated into "whole child, whole school, curriculum, and accountability together," would make all other time and effort more productive. As one Kansas respondent said, "This isn't something else on the plate; this *is* our plate. Once you get the plate established, everything else flourishes."[95]

Strategies for Integration

The focal districts offered many examples of integrating SEL into their core work. Representatives from Fall River emphasized the importance of including SEL in every school and district improvement plan to begin this integration. Fall River also partnered directly with healthcare and other community agencies, bringing SEL into its wraparound services. Lastly, the district creates Memoranda of Understanding

with school partners, which allows them to re-evaluate the partnership and renew the SEL focus annually.

At the school level, there are many different types of pre-existing programs for integrating SEL. Programs like Responsive Classroom, Open Circle, and Second Step[N] are already designed to incorporate some SEL principles into everyday teaching and learning.[96] In Kansas, respondents describe service learning as a popular and lower-cost approach to integrating academic and SEL content.[97]

However, SEL can also be interwoven without the use of an additional program. Sherrie Raven, SEL director at Austin Independent School District, recommends facilitating conversations directly with educators about which SEL skills to use during academic content lessons (e.g., what SEL skills can be practiced during a group math lesson? During an individual social studies project?), as well as explicitly highlighting SEL connections to academic material (e.g., the theme of conflict resolution within *Romeo and Juliet*).[98] Educators can draft plans titled "How to Teach Character Education/SEL Through [Content Area]" to plan for an integrated approach.[99]

However districts choose to implement SEL, integration with academic skills and content will make both domains stronger. Partnering with local community leaders, too, can be a key strategy for integrating SEL across children's lives more broadly and prove mutually beneficial for various social policy organizations.

N   See Appendix B for more information on Responsive Classroom, Open Circle, and Second Step.

Monitoring and Evaluating SEL

Perhaps even more challenging is the issue of assessment and evaluation to support SEL implementation. As previously discussed, those working with SEL both inside and outside of Massachusetts express a strong desire for some form of accountability for SEL implementation. Even a well-designed initiative will not succeed unless it is implemented with fidelity.[100] However, respondents agree that it would be a mistake to create added assessment burdens that are attached to high-stakes consequences, particularly when the field is in the early stages of determining what and how to measure.

How, then, can districts ensure that they are improving without interfering in their own work? Respondents indicated that evaluation was very much a work in progress in their home districts. All of the below measures represent *proxies* for SEL assessment, rather than the direct measures of SEL skills and competencies themselves. Although there is not as much consensus about how to assess a 1st grader's ability to motivate herself or manage her stress as there is consensus on how to assess her letter recognition, respondents also offered comments on the indicators they use to evaluate their practice.

Surveys

Most interviewees' districts rely on some form of survey to assess SEL outcomes. Several pre-existing instruments include the Measures of Effective Teaching/TELLS survey, KIPP/Character Lab character growth card, and the Farrington survey on Becoming Effective Leaders.[101] In Eugene, Oregon; Austin, Texas; the California CORE districts; and Fall River, Massachusetts, students take surveys that include various SEL indicators. These districts also survey other stakeholders like parents and teachers about topics such as school climate and student performance. Although these data are self-reported, and therefore cannot independently measure growth, respondents cite them as a key window into SEL progress.

Educator Observations

Austin Independent School District has a SEL implementation rubric for evaluating schools, which is completed separately by both the principal and a district SEL coach. SEL coaches also routinely observe teachers and provide written descriptive feedback. Fall River schools conduct walk-throughs during which they attend to various aspects of climate, including SEL. Whether there are dedicated administrators for observing SEL progress or general administrators take on this task, training

is necessary to help observers understand what they should be seeing and how to make judgments regarding teachers' SEL instruction.[102]

Student Outcomes

Interviewees cited a host of student-level indicators that they use as proxies to assess student SEL progress, including attendance, graduation rates, disciplinary referrals, and academic outcomes. Reading, which selected a SEL approach to address a high level of behavioral health incidents in the district, also conducts behavioral assessments with students and thrice-yearly risk screening surveys to make sure it's on track to meet its SEL health goals. In New Brunswick, New Jersey, as well as some districts in Rhode Island, SEL is directly included on student report cards, which has created a particularly strong need to train teachers on what to look for in their students to determine SEL progress.[103]

Climate and Culture

Some respondents offered information that was not necessarily included in primary data collection and evaluation efforts but that they nevertheless considered evidence of progress, such as the creation of a student leadership course or reduced calls from parents to schools about disciplinary issues. Interviewees also referred to broader, less tangible changes they perceived in their district. For example, they mentioned increased student buy-in, changes in behavior, improved discipline, improved teacher expectations of students, and "feelings of a cultural shift." Although difficult to measure concretely, these types of impressions were important for reassuring participants that their districts were making positive change.

Moving Forward

This report has argued that actors at the district level must collaborate to move SEL forward. By all accounts, this is a difficult task. However, the focal districts in this study offer some examples of their approaches to common implementation challenges. The next section of the report offers a blueprint for district leaders, which can serve as a tool for assessing the state of SEL in a district and identifying possible entry points for furthering SEL work in a specific community.

Blueprint for District Leaders

When it comes to implementing SEL in Massachusetts, districts—meaning the entire community of actors that makes up a district community—are the key to change. SEL-focused districts and states identify four major challenges for moving forward: prioritizing SEL, operationalizing SEL, integrating SEL into existing work, and monitoring SEL progress in order to evaluate and improve practice. This blueprint offers district superintendents an entry point into leading this work, with implications for their own roles and the roles of others in the district community.

<table>
<tr><td>

KEY CHALLENGE

Prioritizing SEL

</td><td>

LESSONS FROM FOCAL DISTRICTS

- Leaders must actively prioritize SEL.

- Everyone must contribute to the SEL effort.

- SEL must be tailored to the local context.

</td></tr>
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QUESTIONS FOR DISTRICT LEADERS

- Who are the key constituents to engage in the SEL work? What would convince them of its importance?

- What local partners have a vested interest in students' social and emotional success? How have local early education and care programs addressed SEL?

- What constituents already support a SEL approach?

- Do any of my schools, administrators, or teachers already demonstrate a positive climate or strong SEL focus? How can I help share their successes with others?

- What avenues exist for communicating SEL information to administrators, teachers, families, and community members?

- What avenues exist for receiving information about SEL needs from administrators, teachers, families, and community members?

- What are the key challenges in my district, and how can we address them through improved student social and emotional competencies?

- What is my district's current mission and vision, and what elements of SEL are inherent in those statements that could be made explicit?

<div style="color:blue">**KEY CHALLENGE**</div>

Operationalizing SEL

<div style="color:green">**LESSONS FROM FOCAL DISTRICTS**</div>

- Securing funds is challenging without mandated funding sources.

- Human capital must be allocated to ensure that SEL is "owned" explicitly and that specific people focus on its implementation.

- Administrators and teachers must build capacity to be able to implement SEL with fidelity and ensure sustainability.

<div style="color:red">**QUESTIONS FOR DISTRICT LEADERS**</div>

- What teacher preparation or preservice programs exist in our local area? How can we work with them to incorporate attention to SEL competencies?

- What funding sources exist in my district—whether from federal, state, or private funders—related to bullying, violence prevention, health, safe and supportive environments, drug prevention, college and career readiness, wraparound supports, local partnerships, or addressing local needs that could be redirected to this effort?

- Which of my staff members currently focus on school improvement, counseling, teacher professional development, curriculum design, family and community engagement, or wraparound services? How could they approach their work from the perspective of day-to-day SEL leadership?

- Are there existing teacher leaders, content coaches, administrators, professional development providers, or others who could serve as SEL coaches/trainers?

- What professional development and training do teachers currently receive? How can these be infused with SEL?

- Does my agency provide curriculum frameworks or other resources to teachers? Which of these include attention to, or could be updated to include, SEL competencies?

- How could community, business, and early education and care partners contribute to SEL?

Integrating SEL

- SEL isn't on the plate; it *is* the plate.

- SEL shouldn't be an added burden or short-term policy.

- SEL can be part of the larger solution to many challenges.

- SEL works best when it is aligned with other strategies in the district.

- What are my district's biggest learning challenges? In what ways would improved self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making help students navigate these challenges?

- How can SEL enhance our academic curriculum?

- What initiatives are already in place in my district that attend to student health, behavior, and other social and emotional skills?

- Do we, or any of our schools, use programs to target health and behavior?

- Is SEL integrated into the community's school readiness strategies?

<div>

KEY CHALLENGE

Monitoring and Evaluating SEL

</div>

<div>

LESSONS FROM FOCAL DISTRICTS

- Adding assessments can create burden.

- Some level of accountability is necessary for success.

</div>

QUESTIONS FOR DISTRICT LEADERS

- What do our schools and families consider the major challenges related to health, safety, climate, and student development? What solutions do they suggest?

- How will district staff, administrators, teachers, and families know that students are gaining SEL competencies? What behaviors will students exhibit?

- What concrete steps should each staff member take to further SEL? When should these steps be completed? How will we know that they have occurred?

- What data does my district already collect about student progress, school climate, and teacher practice? Which of these indicators provides evidence of SEL?

- Can we tailor existing data collection methods—such as surveys, classroom observation protocols, or data dashboards—to include SEL indicators?

- What will motivate administrators and teachers to focus on SEL? What supports will they need to do so?

Conclusion

Massachusetts is known around the world for the quality of its schools, but it still has much work to do. The Commonwealth has achieved great successes in traditional academic subjects, as measured by test scores. However, like many other states, it also faces persistent achievement gaps and struggling student sub-populations, challenges related to poverty and shifting demographics, and behavioral, health, and emotional issues for students with complex learning needs. The demands of a dynamic workforce and global society require all educational systems to continually refine their current practices to ensure all students have the adaptive high-level skills necessary to succeed. Every student deserves to be nurtured and educated as a whole child. SEL is an integral part of meeting that goal.

This report has assessed the current state of SEL in Massachusetts, concluding that although the Commonwealth has several SEL-relevant programs and policies, more work is needed to align efforts, create a common focus, and ensure that all districts have support to further their work in this area. Additionally, this report has offered an overview of several SEL initiatives around the country and their implications for improving practices in states and districts, including Massachusetts.

Many challenges lie ahead—for both Massachusetts and the nation—in operation-alizing and resourcing SEL, integrating SEL into existing initiatives, finding and sharing the good SEL work already being done on the ground, creating appropriate SEL accountability without impeding the work, and monitoring and assessing SEL progress. In particular, this report has cited a critical need to improve the research and practice base on measuring SEL competencies. Without direct indicators of students' SEL competencies, districts and states must rely on proxies that, although useful for progress, cannot fully capture the learning that takes place.

Despite these challenges, it is critical for Massachusetts to embrace the opportunities and potential benefits of a concerted statewide effort to support district innovation to implement SEL policies and practices. In doing so, Massachusetts continues to serve as a visionary education leader, helping to shape SEL policy and practice in other states and districts across the nation. Moreover, all students—regardless of the public education system they are in—need to cultivate not only traditional academic content knowledge but also the social, emotional, and behavioral competencies that will allow them to succeed in college and careers and lead fulfilling, well-rounded adult lives.

Acknowledgments

Appendix A

Policy Initiatives Related to Social and Emotional Learning[P]

The Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy undertook a scan of all 50 states to understand the extent to which SEL is integrated into policy. The criterion we used in our search was that a state needed to have clear references to SEL in its official documents or website. This scan revealed that 30 states, 8 large districts (all CASEL collaborating districts), and 1 consortium of districts have some policy element related to SEL.

The table in this document represents our understanding thus far of the policies that support SEL. We noticed that most states do not have any evidence of implementation or outcomes; therefore, the extent to which states, districts, and individual schools are implementing these policies is unclear. Even in some states with clearly stated SEL standards and developmental benchmarks, implementation is dependent on school leadership's support of SEL. Many stakeholders we spoke with suggested that integration of SEL into accountability systems will drive change in practice, but a lack of political will may hinder these efforts. (We did not explicitly review state accountability systems in our scan, so the extent of our knowledge here is limited to date.)

Many states intend for SEL to be a part of students' learning experiences through a variety of initiatives. These initiatives ultimately seek to improve the learning environment and student skills but may be implemented through adults in the system. There are several strategies in which SEL is executed. The most common or notable include the following:

- Standalone and comprehensive SEL standards (not required)

- Overarching guidelines or resources about SEL

- Integration or mention of SEL in other standards, such as health, communication, or character education standards

- Integration or mention of SEL through guidance counselor or mental health models

- SEL built into behavior guidelines

- Passed legislation that requires teacher preparation programs to integrate SEL

- Inclusion of SEL into an accountability system

- Piloting of revised school accreditation system for all schools that incorporate SEL

The following table describes our best understanding of SEL policies in 39 education entities (states, districts, and district consortium) and highlights the most relevant resources for each.

Note about symbols in the table: An asterisk (*) signifies that participants from this state/district were interviewed for this report. A pound sign (#) signifies that this district is part of CASEL's Collaborating Districts Initiative.

P   A note about terminology: We use the term *social and emotional learning* to encompass anything within the social, emotional, noncognitive, nonacademic, and related domains. Character education is sometimes explicitly linked to SEL; when this is the case, we include it here. There are many other character education initiatives across the country that are not included.

STATE/ DISTRICT	INITIATIVE RELATED TO SEL	RESOURCES
ALABAMA	Character education standards partially integrate SEL; law mandates that character education is integrated into K–12 for 10+ minutes each day	http://alex.state.al.us/standardAll. php?subject=CE&summary=1
	School-based counseling programs integrate SEL	https://www.alsde.edu/sec/sct/COS/2003 Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Model for Alabama Public Schools (State Plan).pdf (Refer to pp. 37–39)
ALASKA— ANCHORAGE#	Districtwide SEL curriculum standards for K–12	http://www.asdk12.org/pld/sel/about/ http://www.asdk12.org/media/anchorage/globalmedia/ documents/sel/SEL_Standards.pdf http://www.casel.org/collaborating-districts/anchorage-school-district
CALIFORNIA— CORE DISTRICTS*	New accountability system through ESEA waiver, the School Quality Improvement Index, incorporates SEL; five SEL competencies measured through a combination of confidential student self-reports and teacher reports Districts pair similar schools across district lines in learning communities to work on SEL	http://coredistricts.org/social-emotional-learning-efforts http://coredistricts.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/SE-CC-Domain-Social-Emotional-Skills-updated-10.3.14-1.pdf
CALIFORNIA— OAKLAND#	SEL curriculum standards for preK–adult	http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/Page/1091 http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/cms/lib07/CA01001176/ Centricity/Domain/143/SEL%20PK-Adult%20Standards.pdf http://www.casel.org/collaborating-districts/oakland-unified-school-district
CALIFORNIA— SACRAMENTO#	Adoption of SEL practices across district through CCSS and SEL standards; includes professional learning for staff and families	http://www.casel.org/collaborating-districts/sacramento-city-unified-school-district http://www.scusd.edu/social-emotional-learning-sel-1
COLORADO	Model content standards for health education partially integrate SEL	http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/ cohealthpe/documents/ch_gle_at_a_glance.pdf http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/ documents/cohealthpe/documents/health_pe_ standards_adopted_12.10.09.pdf
CONNECTICUT	Recent legislation requires any candidate entering a teacher prep program to complete training in SEL	http://www.ecs.org/ecs/ecscat.nsf/ 2d31bcd4432fdea586256cb0007602f4/ db6504f0eddc6dd287257b860059fc60?OpenDocument http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/ACT/PA/2013PA-00133-R00HB-06292-PA.htm

STATE/ DISTRICT	INITIATIVE RELATED TO SEL	RESOURCES
HAWAII	Comprehensive Student Support System identifies, monitors, and tracks student concerns over time, focusing on personalized supports	http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ TeachingAndLearning/StudentLearning/ PersonalizedLearning/Pages/home.aspx
IDAHO	Early learning standards for birth to 3rd grade incorporate SEL, aligned with CCSS	http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/ Children/InfantToddlerProgram/CommonCore_ ELeG_10-10-12_final.pdf http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/ Unknown/123008%20Cover%20Introduction%20 and%20Framework%20with%20at%20a%20glance%20 tables.pdf
	K–12 health education standards incorporate SEL	https://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/content_standards/ health_standards.htm https://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/csh/docs/Standards/ Health%20Education%20Standards%20FINAL%20 Approved%20by%20Legislature%201-2010%20for%20 Adoption%20Fall%202010.pdf
ILLINOIS	SEL learning standards established for grades preK–12 with developmental benchmarks for each standard; came about through legislation	http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm
ILLINOIS— CHICAGO#	Districtwide efforts to infuse SEL into schools; includes 28 schools with a SEL team/action plan and districtwide task force on SEL integration	http://cps.edu/About_CPS/Departments/Pages/ Departments.aspx https://sites.google.com/site/cpspositivebehavior/ home/about-positive-behavior-supports/strategies http://www.casel.org/collaborating-districts/chicago- public-schools
INDIANA	Legislation requires teacher candidates to complete suicide prevention training as a condition of licensure	http://www.doe.in.gov/licensing/suicide-prevention- training
IOWA	Health education standards for grades K–12 include the development of social and emotional habits but are not specifically designed around SEL	https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/content-areas/ health-education#Health_Education_Requirements_ selected_edited_excerpts
KANSAS*	Comprehensive social emotional character development learning standards established for grades preK–12 with developmental benchmarks for different grades; initially developed under a grant from the federal Partnerships for Character Education Project Piloting SEL as part of school accreditation process Created the Conditions for Learning Index to track survey results from students, faculty, and families, as well as suspension, expulsion, bullying, and academic performance data	http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=482

STATE/ DISTRICT	INITIATIVE RELATED TO SEL	RESOURCES
KENTUCKY	Health education standards for grades K–12 loosely incorporate SEL	http://education.ky.gov/curriculum/docs/pages/kentucky-core-academic-standards---new.aspx
LOUISIANA	Health education standards for grades K–12 loosely incorporate SEL, establishing benchmarks for multiple dimensions of health	http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/academic-standards/health-handbook.pdf?sfvrsn=3
MAINE	Guiding principles developed curriculum expectations loosely integrating SEL to provide 21st century instruction, including communication, self-direction, problem solving, citizenship, and critical thinking skills	http://www.maine.gov/doe/proficiency/standards/guiding-principles.html
MINNESOTA	Early learning standards through 3rd grade include SEL, to be aligned with K–12 academic/content standards	http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/EarlyLearn/
	Social and emotional screenings required for entrance to kindergarten	http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/mch/devscrn/
	Student support services include curricular strategies and standards for teaching elements/skills of SEL	http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/SchSaf/StuSuppServ/index.html
MISSISSIPPI	School counseling guidelines incorporate SEL, passed through legislation	http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/healthy-schools/health-services---counseling-psych-social-services/counseling-psychological-and-social-services---curriculum
MISSOURI	SEL part of state standards that emphasize gathering and analyzing information, effective communication, problem solving, and responsible decision making	http://dese.mo.gov/show-me-standards/knowledge-standards http://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Show_Me_Standards_Placemat.pdf
	Guidance curriculum includes SEL through specific learning standards aimed at developing self-awareness and balancing emotions	http://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/guidance-counseling/grade-level-expectations
	SEL included in violence prevention training for students and staff; programs include character education and social emotional skill building	http://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/mo-school-improvement-program/violence-prevention-training-requirements
MONTANA	Montana Behavioral Initiative is a state initiative (part of PBIS framework) for establishing a learning environment that supports social, emotional, behavioral, and academic success for all students	http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/MBI/

STATE/ DISTRICT	INITIATIVE RELATED TO SEL	RESOURCES
NEVADA— WASHOE COUNTY#	District strategic plan includes objectives for SEL through SEL standards, new assessment system, professional growth system, and multi-tiered systems of support; implementation in progress, results will be measured in annual climate survey (of parents, students, and staff)	http://www.casel.org/collaborating-districts/washoe-county-school-district http://www.washoeschools.net/Page/1840 http://www.washoeschools.net/cms/lib08/NV01912265/Centricity/Domain/202/Social%20Emotional%20Learning/SEL%20Standards%20English%20and%20Spanish/2014_SEL_Standards_English_Final.pdf
NEW HAMPSHIRE*	Service learning is an instructional strategy with required character education and citizenship elements incorporated into courses	http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/MBStProfileRT?Rep=SL13ST&st=New%20Hampshire
	SEL included in career development curriculum plan	http://www.education.nh.gov/career/guidance/nh_career_dev.htm http://education.nh.gov/career/guidance/documents/framework_k12.pdf
NEW JERSEY*	Social, emotional, and character development through a variety of programs; developing technical support (in partnership with Rutgers) to schools New Brunswick Public Schools includes SEL measures on report cards	http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/sandp/character/ http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/civil/
NEW MEXICO	Health standards benchmarks for social and emotional well-being require each school district to address student and staff wellness through a coordinated school health approach (also includes school counselor guidelines)	http://healthierschoolsnm.org/index.php?page=social-emotional-well-being
NEW YORK	Guidelines for elementary and secondary schools provide resources to families for social and emotional development and learning	http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/sedl/ http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/sedl/SEDLguidelines.pdf Examples of SEL in Action: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/sedl/SEDLinAction.pdf
	SEL integrated into health standards; requires students to demonstrate responsible personal and social behaviors	Included in the Safe & Healthy Environment section: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/pe/pub/hpefcle.pdf http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/bytopics.php?topicid=1130
NORTH CAROLINA	SEL mentioned in Essential Standards for Health Education K–12	http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/new-standards/#healthful http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/bytopics.php?topicid=1130

STATE/DISTRICT	INITIATIVE RELATED TO SEL	RESOURCES
NORTH DAKOTA	SEL integrated in health standards and safe school environment standards	http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/child/team/standards.pdf
	Counselor standards provide expectations for student development in social and emotional skills: personal/social standards include elements of SEL indicated by academic domain, standard, competency, and indicator	School Counseling Standards: http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/counselor/ND_pers_soc_std.pdf
OHIO—CLEVELAND#	Several strategies to support SEL: PATHS curriculum, student support teams, planning centers, class meetings, and introduction of a scope and sequence and lesson plans for SEL	http://www.casel.org/collaborating-districts/cleveland-metropolitan-school-district http://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/Page/398
OREGON—EUGENE*	Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) used districtwide, as well as Caring For Kids initiative training for all elementary schools based on the Caring School Community program	https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/caring-school-community
PENNSYLVANIA	SEL included in comprehensive P–12 standards with developmental benchmarks focused on school climate and interpersonal skills	http://www.tulpehocken.org/Downloads/Student_Interpersonal_Skills_Standards.pdf
	SEL included in the Safe Schools Initiative, including a framework for interpersonal skills focused on crisis intervention, safety, and social/emotional wellness	http://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Safe%20Schools/Pages/default.aspx#.VUvRo5OkZxA
RHODE ISLAND*	SEL integrated throughout K–12 health education requirements, including school safety, by incorporating a comprehensive approach to promote positive development	http://www.thriveri.org/components_HealthEducation.html
	Emotional and Social Competency law (ESC) requires the state department of education to develop model programs that encourage social and emotional competency/learning	http://www.ecs.org/ecs/ecscat.nsf/5741e7f457e2861586256ae900595a76/3202848d3c30f9888625692600533e50?OpenDocument
	SEL programs connected to CCSS through grassroots initiative at state department of education	http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/Special-Education/Social-Emotional-Learning/SEL-flyer-PRESS-FINAL.pdf
SOUTH DAKOTA	Health education incorporates SEL, including components of healthy living and character education	http://doe.sd.gov/schoolhealth/healtheducation.aspx http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/bytopics.php?topicid=1130
TENNESSEE	Health education standards for grades 9–12 incorporate SEL, including performance indicators for personal and social development	http://www.tennessee.gov/education/topic/coordinated-school-health
	Service-learning training and curriculum offered to teachers	http://www.tn.gov/education/cte/service_learning.shtml

STATE/DISTRICT	INITIATIVE RELATED TO SEL	RESOURCES
TENNESSEE—NASHVILLE#	SEL integrated throughout all district initiatives, including teacher professional development; elementary and middle schools adopt Responsive Classroom	http://www.casel.org/collaborating-districts/metropolitan-nashville-public-schools http://www.mnps.org/resources/34ea3c5076d883ce3745a49013852ec4
TEXAS—AUSTIN*#	SEL incorporated into academic instruction and school climate, using Second Step (for grades preK–8) and School Connect (for grades 9–12) Employs 13 SEL coaches to offer training, conduct walk-throughs, and provide support Annual survey of students and faculty on school climate to accompany data on behavior, test scores, and attendance	http://www.austinisd.org/academics/sel http://www.casel.org/collaborating-districts/austin-independent-school-district/
UTAH	Elements of SEL, including developing skills for social and emotional transitions, are incorporated into K–12 character and health standards	http://www.uen.org/core/health/ http://www.schools.utah.gov/CURR/healthpe/Core.aspx
VIRGINIA	Character education resources provide support to a comprehensive teaching approach, offering opportunities to develop SEL skills	http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/character_ed/modules/script.pdf http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/character_ed/
WASHINGTON	SEL part of aligned early learning standards through 3rd grade	http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/development/docs/Guidelines.Pdf
	Free-standing K–10 standards for communication	http://standards.ospi.k12.wa.us/
WEST VIRGINIA	SEL incorporated through comprehensive P–12 standards with developmental benchmarks	http://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/ElectronicManual4373New.html#SelfawarenessandSelfmanagement

Appendix B

Description of Frameworks

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS): MTSS is a framework designed to help instructors provide support at the appropriate level for struggling students. When a student's learning needs are more severe, instructors move that child to a higher tier to provide more intensive support—for example, creating a small group that receives extra instruction in addition to classwide instruction. Massachusetts' MTSS is one example; Kansas also uses MTSS. MTSS is often referred to as Response to Intervention (RTI), but some distinguish between the two, saying that RTI is purely academic while MTSS includes social and emotional supports. For more information, visit the following:

- http://www.rtinetwork.org/
- https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/rti/whats-the-difference-between-rti-and-mtss

Open Circle: Developed by the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College, this program focuses on SEL for grades K–5. Open Circle is a whole-school approach that includes professional development and implementation training for teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff, and families, as well as curricula and materials. Learn more at http://www.open-circle.org/.

Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS): PBIS is a framework that assists school personnel in drawing on applied behavior research and analysis to create behavioral interventions for students and integrate them into practice, whether for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or at the school level. PBIS is not a curriculum but rather a tool to help school staff organize and better implement evidence-based social behavior practices. Visit https://www.pbis.org/ for more information.

Responsive Classroom: This program, designed by the Center for Responsive Schools, trains elementary school educators to incorporate SEL into their daily practice and pedagogy. While not a full curriculum, Responsive Classroom centers on 10 classroom practices for teachers to implement, such as a daily morning meeting. The program provides training, coaching, consulting, an annual conference, and resources for educators. To learn more, visit https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/.

Second Step: Created by the Committee for Children, Second Step is a series of SEL curricula for grades preK–8 that includes fully scripted lessons, additional materials, and interactive training. The Committee for Children has recently merged Second Step with units on bullying prevention and child protection for a broader social and emotional approach called the *Second Step* Suite, which includes additional lessons and educator training. Visit http://www.cfchildren.org/second-step for more information.

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