



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

SUPPORTING THE WHOLE CHILD ACROSS THE DAY AND YEAR

HOW EXPANDED LEARNING SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

A growing body of research tells us that today’s children and youth need opportunities to develop social emotional skills to thrive in school and be prepared for productive careers.

Social emotional learning is broadly understood as a process through which people build awareness and skills in managing emotions, setting goals, establishing relationships, and making responsible decisions that support success in school and in life.¹ When we develop these skills, we improve our ability to form relationships and connect with individuals of diverse perspectives, cultures, languages, identities, and abilities helping to create more equitable and better performing schools and communities.

Expanded learning opportunities offered outside the traditional school day by their design have the flexibility to engage young people in hands-on, experiential learning that build these critical social emotional skills.

QUALITY MAKES A DIFFERENCE FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Research shows that the quality of programming and level of participation are two key factors that matter for producing outcomes for youth.² Youth development practices embedded in quality expanded learning programs are consistent with strategies that promote social emotional skill development and enhance learning happening during the school day.

High-quality programs are built around providing safe, supportive environments with youth-serving professionals who incorporate highly engaging and interactive practices that strengthen key social emotional skills such as self-awareness, relationship-building, perseverance, and responsibility.

Investing in quality expanded learning opportunities with a particular focus on those serving high numbers of low-income youth and youth of color is an important strategy to address equity and closing the opportunity gap in our state.

RECOMMENDATION

When schools and community organizations partner to support student’s academic and social emotional development, students reap the benefits in positive gains and equitable results supporting the whole child across the day and year. Policies and public funding should reflect this best practice encouraging partnerships and coordination in order to provide opportunities for children and youth to thrive both in and out of school.

WHAT DATA SAYS ABOUT SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

In 2011, a team of researchers conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of school-based universal social emotional interventions with findings that students receiving social emotional interventions improved significantly in social behaviors, academic performance, attitudes towards self and others, and conduct problems were reduced and emotional distress lessened.³

1. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). *What Is SEL?* Website: <http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/>
2. Beyond the Bell at American Institutes for Research. *Supporting Social and Emotional Development Through Quality Afterschool Programs: Research to Practice in the Afterschool and Expanded Learning Field*. Retrieved from the AIR website: <http://www.air.org/resource/supporting-social-and-emotional-development-through-quality-afterschool-programs>
3. Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., & Pachan, M. (2010). A meta-analysis of after-school programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 45, 294-309.



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HOW WASHINGTON STATE IS ADDRESSING SEL

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

Based on this directive, the Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup developed a framework with guiding principles, standards and benchmarks that provide the foundation and system for effective SEL programming. The workgroup includes members representing the education sector, expanded learning field, workforce development, family support, mental health and additional sectors providing perspectives from a whole child approach.

The workgroup has recommended to the legislature adoption of the framework developed over the past year, and continuation of the workgroup as a statewide advisory committee.

HOW DOES SCHOOL'S OUT WASHINGTON SUPPORT SEL

For three decades, School's Out Washington (SOWA) has served a critical role as the expert and backbone organization working closely with programs offered outside the traditional school day. We work to ensure high-quality expanded learning opportunities offered afterschool and during the summer are available so all of Washington's youth—but especially low-income youth and youth of color— have opportunities to thrive.

In Washington, SOWA led the process of developing a set of Quality Standards for the expanded learning field rooted in social emotional learning practices. These Standards provide a benchmark to guide youth development professionals in delivering quality programming with specific Standards on Cultural Competency & Relevancy, Relationships, Youth Leadership & Engagement all of which get to the heart of social emotional skill building.

Over 600 expanded learning opportunities in our state have participated in a continuous quality improvement process aligned to the Standards utilizing a validated, research-based assessment tool from the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. Through training and coaching support, SOWA helps programs identify and work towards quality improvement in specific areas.

Evaluation results show that over 90% of youth programs engaged in the quality initiative have shown improvement in one or more measured areas with the greatest gains in the areas of youth engagement and interaction.

WASHINGTON'S SIX SEL STANDARDS

SELF-AWARENESS An individual has the ability to identify and name one's emotions and their influence on behavior.

SELF-MANAGEMENT An individual develops and demonstrates the ability to regulate emotions, thoughts and behaviors in context with people different than oneself.

SELF-EFFICACY An individual has the ability to motivate oneself, persevere, and see oneself as capable.

SOCIAL AWARENESS An individual has the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

SOCIAL MANAGEMENT An individual has the ability to make safe and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT An individual has the ability to consider others and a desire to contribute to the well-being of school and community.

COMMUNITY PROFILE:

In 2017, Tacoma Public Schools and the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation received a grant award from the Wallace Foundation to support the Tacoma Social Emotional Learning Initiative. Tacoma is one of six cities across the country selected to engage in this project to support elementary school children, both during and after school, to develop positive social and emotional skills, such as self-control, persistence, teamwork and goal-setting, which are linked to success in school, career and life.

OUR MISSION: School's Out Washington provides services and guidance for organizations to ensure all young people have safe places to learn and grow when not in school. SOWA is dedicated to building community systems to support quality afterschool, youth development and summer programs for Washington's children and youth ages 5 through young adulthood.

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