

Social and
Emotional
Learning:
What School
Committee
Members Need to
Know and Do

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Presenters--

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Session Goals

Participants will leave this session with:

- **Clearer** understanding of SEL
- **Stronger** understanding of an effective & comprehensive SEL plan for your district
- **New** ways to collaborate with stakeholders

Access the Slides/Worksheet

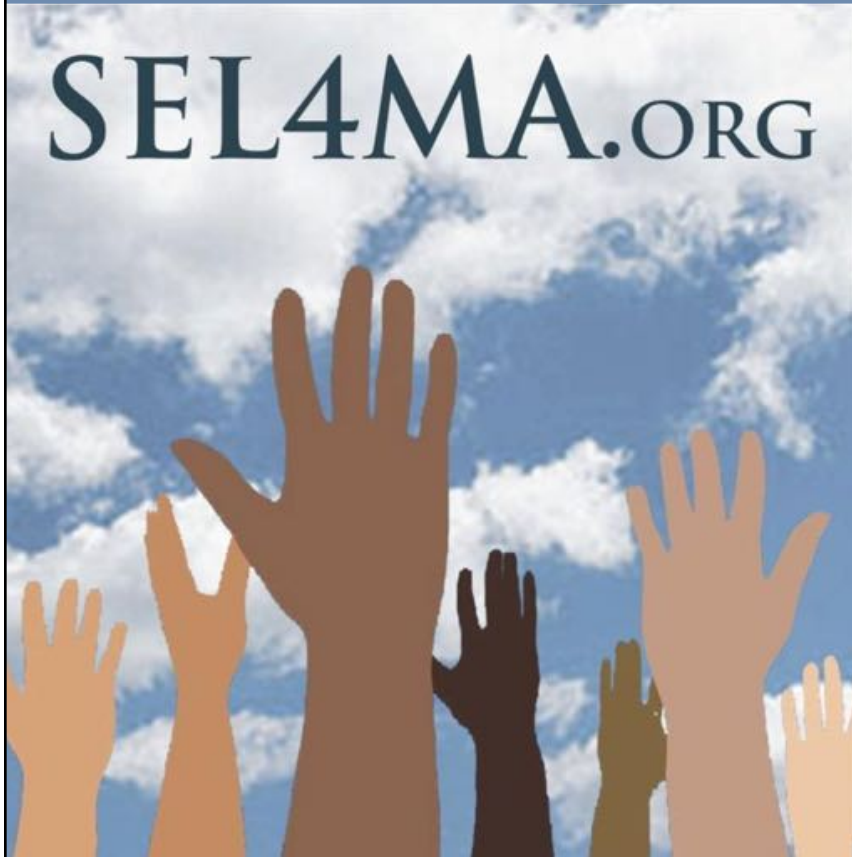
To download the presentation slides and digital worksheets, visit:

www.sel4ma.org/district

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Share key ideas from
this session
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Who's here?

Social-Emotional Learning Alliance for Massachusetts



Social-Emotional Learning Alliance for Massachusetts (SEL4MA) is a group of 1,700+ individuals, working in schools, community organizations, associations, businesses, and nonprofits, who care deeply about implementing effective social and emotional learning (SEL) in our schools and communities.

SEL in MA

MA SEL Policy

- Guidelines for the Professional Standards for Teachers
 - 2e) Social and Emotional Learning Indicator
- Massachusetts Standards for Preschool and Kindergarten
 - Social And Emotional Learning, and Approaches to Play and Learning
- SEL Guiding Principles in Math/ELA Curriculum Frameworks
- *Social and Emotional Learning for All: Access, Cultural Proficiency, and Cultural Responsiveness*
- Guidelines on Implementing SEL
- Massachusetts Consolidated State Plan Under ESSA (2017)

MA SEL Policy/Legislation

- Safe and Supportive Schools Commission
- MA Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- An Act Relative to the Reduction of Gun Violence (2014)
- An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools (2010)
- An Act Relative to Children's Mental Health (2008)

MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
Strategic Plan – May 2015



Massachusetts will support students' social and emotional health by providing high quality programming and promoting and building awareness of proven strategies in the non-academic domain.

Current MA SEL Policy/Legislation Opportunities

- Special Legislative Commission on Behavioral Health Promotion and Upstream Prevention in Massachusetts (Promote Prevent Commission)
- Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning Collaborating States Initiative

Why is SEL important in
your district?

Benefits of SEL

- **Better academic performance:** achievement scores an average of 11 percentile points higher than students who did not receive SEL instruction
- **Improved attitudes and behaviors:** greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork, and better classroom behavior
- **Fewer negative behaviors:** decreased disruptive class behavior, noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, and disciplinary referrals
- **Reduced emotional distress:** fewer reports of student depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal

Source: Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K. (2011) The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*: 82 (1), 405-432.

What is effective SEL?

What is SEL?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

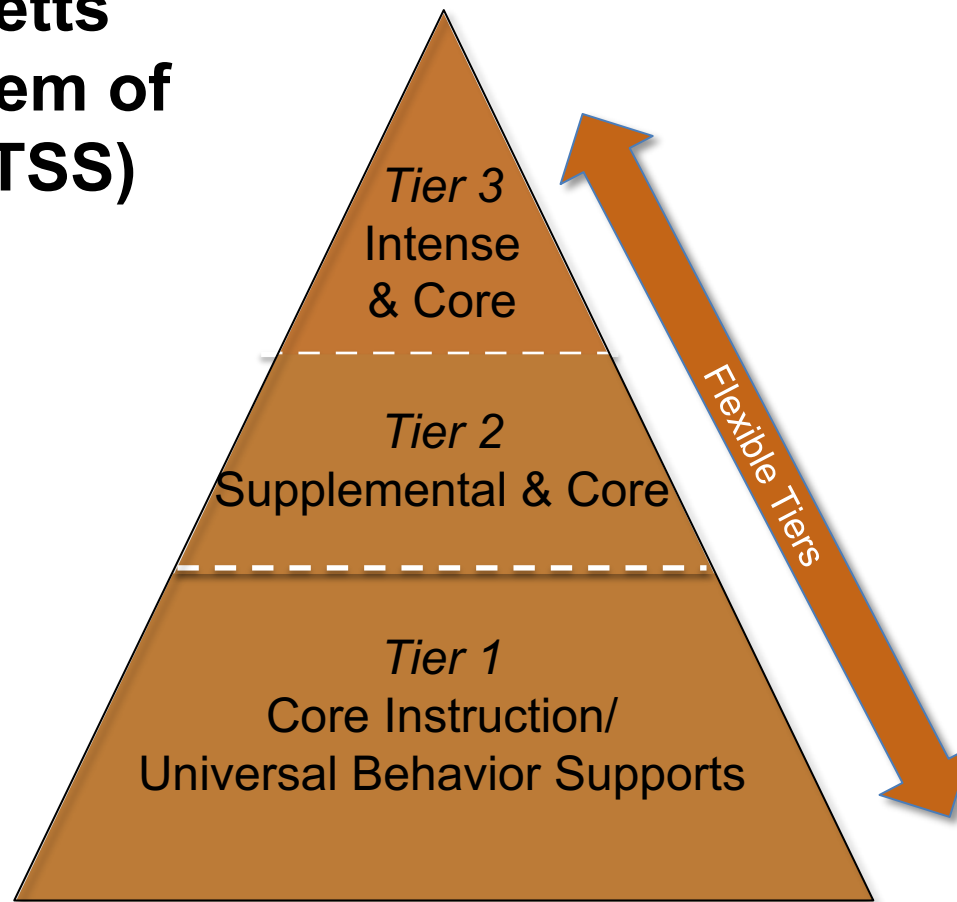
Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning.
What is SEL? Retrieved from <http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/>

Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies



Source:
Collaborative for Academic, Social,
and Emotional Learning

Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS)



What to know about SEL & how it connects to other important efforts

- School climate
- Achievement gap
- Culturally responsive teaching
- Safety
- Student trauma

Brain research bit #1

“The brain is a social organ...the modern brain’s primary environment is our matrix of social relationships. As a result, close supportive relationships stimulate positive emotions, neuroplasticity, and learning.”

(Cozolino, 2013)

Brain research bit #2

Former understanding:

We're thinking beings who feel.

Brain research bit #2

Former understanding:

We're thinking beings who feel.

Current understanding:

We're feeling beings who think.

Classroom & School Climate

Hardwired into the amygdala:

- The needs to belong & remain in good standing
- Sensitivity to social context

Classroom & school climate elements

- Standing - sense of others' perception of oneself
- Certainty - need for clarity & predictability
- Control - need for voice & input, controllable factors
- Connection - need for relatedness, security
- Equity - sense of fairness

Hammond, 2015

Classroom & School Climate Exploration

Imagine what could contribute to highly positive responses to these samples climate questions...

- I feel comfortable asking questions in class.
- I feel safe at this school.

Next, imagine what the outcomes for development and learning might be.

But, what about safety issues
and students who've
experienced trauma?

SEL's Impact on Safety

Tier 1 - Greater safety through

- relationships
- practices
- instruction
- structures

Tiers 2 and 3 - Greater safety through

- services
- training

SEL & Trauma-Sensitive Connection - one example

“Adversity is not something that just happens to students,” says Cantor.... “It happens inside their brains and bodies through the biologic mechanism of stress. ... The good news is the brain is malleable. We can use science to address what stress does to children and to schools.”

“When children experience a consistent and supportive connection with a trusted adult, it can alter their brain chemistry.” But trust doesn’t just happen, she says. It has to be intentionally built for all children through the environments and relationships they are exposed to.

Aspen SEAD, “How Learning Happens: Supporting Students’ Social, Emotional, and Academic Development,” 2018.

With positive relationships
and climate as a platform...
what is *effective* social and
emotional learning?

Brain research bit #3

“When you learn something, the wiring in your brain changes....The brain is constantly learning things, so the brain is constantly rewiring itself.”

(Medina, 2014)

Brain research bit #4

“Because humans have so much uncommitted brain tissue at birth...our brains have an extraordinary opportunity to become customized by life experiences....These undeveloped brain areas are waiting for signals from the environment...**whatever is first, whatever activities are more frequent, and whatever actions are more coherent** will ‘win’ the competition for network wiring and signal the brain to allocate space and resources to that set of behaviors.”

(Jensen, 2005)

Social and Emotional Learning - CASEL definition

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the **process** through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply **the knowledge, attitudes, and skills** necessary **to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.**

Effective SEL processes...

Effective SEL processes necessarily involve aligning relationships, instruction, structures, and systems in ways that are culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, coherent, and beneficial for all. Effective SEL unfolds through explicit learning and when woven throughout everyday practices. SEL competencies used by individuals, between individuals, and within and between groups are necessary for thriving, just, diverse, democratic societies.

Social-Emotional Learning Alliance for Massachusetts (2016).
What is SEL? Retrieved from <http://www.sel4ma.org/what-is-sel/>

SEL Approaches and Outcomes

SEL Approaches

- **Explicit SEL Skill Instruction** →
- **Teacher Instructional Practices**
- **Integration with Academic Curriculum Areas**
- **Organizational, Culture, and Climate Strategies**

Short-Term Outcomes

SEL Skill Acquisition:
Five Competence Areas →

Improved Attitudes:
Self, Others, Learning,
and Schools →

Enhanced Learning Environment: Supportive,
Engaging, and Participatory →

Behavior/Academic Outcomes

SEL Skill Acquisition

Fewer Conduct Problems

Less Emotional Distress

Improved Academic Performance

Source: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
<http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/approaches/>

What is the School
Committee's role in
promoting effective SEL?

Questions to Consider for Your District-wide SEL Plan

Prioritizing	Implementing and Integrating
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District leadership supports SEL?• Key constituents & level of support?• Community support?• In mission/vision/plans?• Key challenges in community?• Already successful SEL work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistent direct instruction in SEL?• SEL infused through academics & other activities?• Consistent modeling, practice, coaching?• Culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, coherent over time?
Operationalizing	Monitoring and Evaluating
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distributed leadership?• Funding sources?• Professional development?• Curriculum frameworks?• Community partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students gaining competencies?• Extent & fidelity of implementation?• Relevant existing data?• Sharing of results?

How do we incorporate SEL
into our district's system-wide goals?

Newton as ONE Example

- Find your **URGENCY**
- **Collaborate** with colleagues to **PRIORITIZE** SEL
 - *Mindful of Open Meeting Law*
- Work with Chair & Vice-Chair to get SEL on the **agenda**
- Build **MOMENTUM in your community** to understand & support SEL as priority
 - Who are the stakeholders?
 - Why is this important?

Find Your Urgency

- What might be your urgency?
- How is SEL **connected** to that urgency?
- How does your district **prioritize** SEL?

Collaborate with colleagues to prioritize SEL

- Do your School Committee colleagues prioritize effective SEL?
 - *Open Meeting Law !!*
- Do they need a fuller understanding of *effective* SEL
- Help them see connection of district's **urgency** to effective SEL
- Strategy to bring topic to full committee meeting

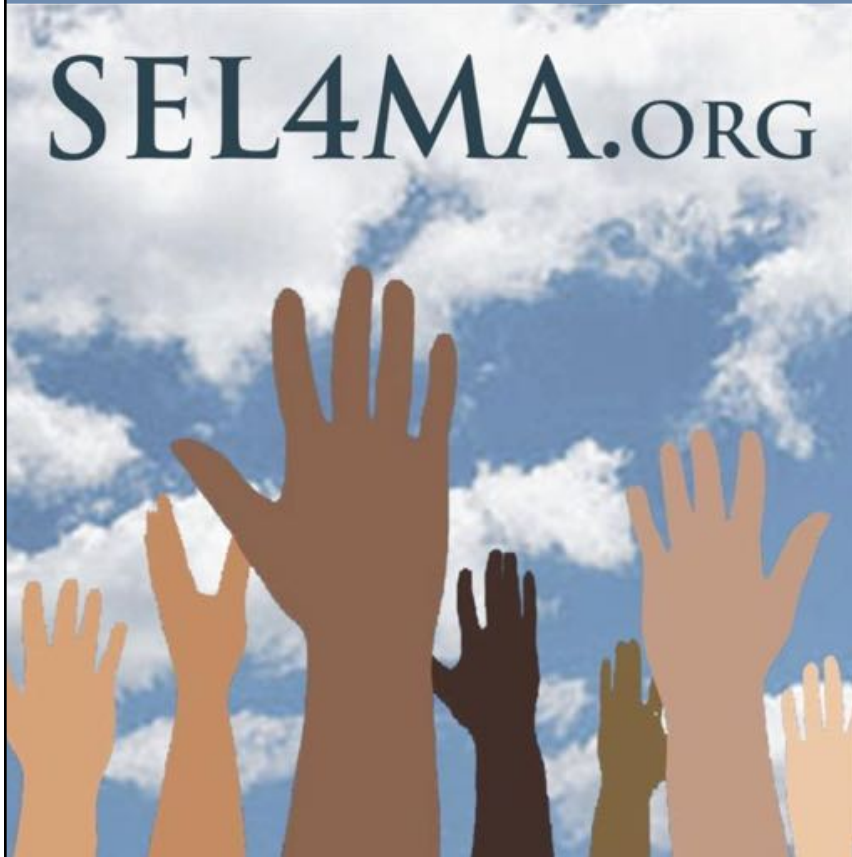
Getting Effective SEL on the Agenda

- Work with Chair and/or Vice-Chair to put SEL on the agenda
- Meet with Superintendent
 - Where are they in their thinking about SEL?
 - What is their urgency?
 - Share your urgency?
 - Collaborate with them on where it would fit in district's plan

Building *momentum* in your community

- Who are the stakeholders?
- Why does this matter?

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“Promoting Effective SEL in Your Community”

Regional events
coming in 2018-2019

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What is one key idea that
you will bring back to school
committee colleagues/
senior staff?

Thank you!

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