HOW TO USE THE CASEL GUIDE TO SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) PROGRAMS

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FINDING THE RIGHT SEL PROGRAM

With so many social and emotional learning (SEL) programs available, it can be overwhelming to identify the right one for your community. All too often, there's pressure to choose quickly, particularly when a new school year is looming or there are funds in the budget that need to be spent. We recommend, however, taking some time to identify the unique needs of your community and what you want to achieve, then using the *CASEL Guide to SEL Programs* to review your options among evidence-based programs to find the best fit.

Selecting an evidence-based program is key to systemic SEL implementation. CASEL offers multiple tools and resources to support systemic implementation. We recommend you explore these resources before choosing a program.

- If you are a school level team, the Guide to Schoolwide SEL will help prepare you for systemic implementation by walking you through the process of creating an SEL vision, forming an SEL team, and supporting adult SEL.
- If you are a district-based team, you will want to consult the District Resource Center for guidance on aligning resources, building district-level SEL expertise, and adopting SEL standards.

Step 1: Determine Your SEL Team and Goals

Determining your SEL Team and goals helps ensure you select a program that reflects the hopes and needs of your school community and matches your school and/or district's priorities. The right SEL program should support your existing priorities. Are you focused on improving climate and culture? Increasing academic performance? Providing opportunities for student leadership? All of these goals, and more, can be supported through SEL. CASEL has identified an inclusive process to identify school, district, and community goals.

Download the tool (.docx) and use learnings to set priorities while choosing a program.

Step 2: Connect Your Needs to CASEL Metrics

Now that you've determined your specific goals, you'll want to ensure the program you select will support them. To help you, the *CASEL Guide to SEL Programs* includes information on each program's approach (that is, whether it's based in lessons, teaching practices, academic integration, a school's organizational structure), evaluation outcomes, and school and student characteristics the program best serves. CASEL provides descriptions of the design and evaluation features within our review process so that you can start the process empowered with a strong understanding of our terminology.

Step 3: Identify and compare SEL programs

Now that you have determined your goals and learned about CASEL's metrics and terminology, it is time to review evidence based SEL programs! There are two ways to review programs.

- We recommend beginning with "View All Programs." This allows you to view and filter programs to best align with your goals. For example, by clicking on program approaches, support offerings, or grades offered.
- Once you have narrowed your search, use the "Comparison Tool" to look at up to three options side-by-side. This can help see similarities and differences between programs and make choices based on your top priorities.

NEXT STEPS

- Once you have determined your top program choices, **CASEL recommends you reach out to program providers directly** to learn more about pricing and ask questions based on your needs and priorities. Many districts invite providers to present (often by Zoom) to a panel of SEL team members, including diverse stakeholders, to determine if an SEL program will fit the needs of their students and staff.

- Remember that implementing an evidence-based program is just one important part of systemic SEL. **Learn more about Schoolwide and district-wide implementation of systemic SEL.**

- Keep a continuous improvement mindset! You won't be able to build in all the supports you'd like right away, but by **continuously reviewing what is working for you and your students and where change is needed** using different types of data, you will be able to implement powerful changes over time.

For answers to common questions, please visit the FAQ page.