



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 2021

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors
Local Education Agency Principals

FROM: Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., State Superintendent 

SUBJECT: Children Matter. You Matter. Learn SEL. - MEMO #COVID-19-168

The mental health and social and emotional learning (SEL) of our students and educators are vital to children's education and to student and staff wellbeing.

With these important ideas in mind, we invite you to partner with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) in the **Children Matter. You Matter. Learn SEL!** effort. We are asking that a building leader and at least two to four teachers complete the [Michigan Virtual Introduction to SEL](#) before Labor Day. The course is free, offers SCECHs, and takes about two hours to complete. Along with your building-level and district-level SEL champions, you too would benefit from this important professional development.

Michigan educators have long understood the value of working in the social and emotional learning space. That said, everything in this space is not SEL as defined by CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

As we as educators seek to improve how we support children and to do so from a common foundation of understanding of SEL, MDE is asking educators to complete the introduction to SEL online module hosted at Michigan Virtual. We know that some of your educators have already done so, and that's great. For those that have not, however, this is an important step as we work to broaden and strengthen our SEL work in the state.

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As Dr. James Comer noted, “No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship.” We know that there is a wide range of experiences with SEL across the state. Whether your school or schools are relatively new or relatively experienced with SEL, we encourage you to join us in our goal of reaching every building in Michigan with the CASEL five SEL competencies: self-awareness, awareness of others, self-management, relationship to others, and decision-making. Our specific request is that you and your staff participate in the professional development on the competencies. With feedback from the SEL/Children’s Mental Health Network, MDE has developed an [action toolkit](#) that offers you tools and strategies to advance SEL in your district.

If you have questions or need support, email us at MDE-selresources@michigan.gov. Additional information can be found at www.michigan.gov/mde-sel and in Deputy Superintendent Kyle Guerrant’s March 18 memo found [here](#).

We appreciate your partnership in serving our children.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors

Children matter.
You matter. 
Learn SEL!