

Learning Bites: Engaging in Continuous Improvement



MICIP and Social Emotional Learning

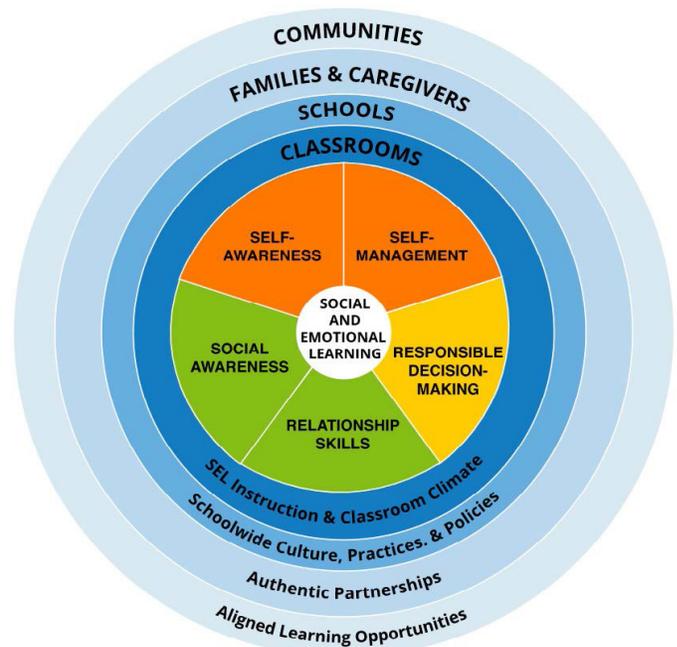
One of the Michigan Department of Education’s (MDE) primary goals, as outlined in the state’s strategic education plan, is to support all students’ health, safety, and wellness. MDE feels Social and Emotional Learning is critical to achieving this goal. According to the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#), social and emotional learning is the process of developing students’ and adults’ social and emotional competencies--the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that individuals need to make successful choices. Social Emotional Learning helps individuals understand and regulate their emotions, complete goals, take others’ perspectives or points of view, develop positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Social Emotional Learning is an evidence-based practice consisting of five competencies and may be incorporated into a district’s MICIP plan:

1. Self-Management – manage stress, set goals, take initiative
2. Self-Awareness – develop a sense of purpose, demonstrate honesty, identify feelings
3. Social Awareness – express gratitude, understanding others’ perspectives
4. Relationship Skills – work with others to solve problems, resisting peer pressure
5. Responsible Decision-Making – understanding consequences of one’s actions

Assess Needs

Identify an Area of Inquiry - During this first step in the Assess Needs process, the task of identifying a line of inquiry prompts the team to look at the degree to which a district’s system is or is not aligned with the Whole Child tenets of healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. The team may also ask, “Are our district systems not only aligned but also supported by an infrastructure that can reveal how children are doing within the five whole child domains?” As an effective innovation (EI), the five Social Emotional Learning competencies overlay the whole child considerations we want to support. (See [Michigan’s Social Emotional Learning Website](#)). For example, the team’s desire to increase engagement might link to teach relationship skills. They can meet their challenge goals by enhancing student proficiency in robust decision-making. The whole child model that promotes safety depends



on the adult and child practice of social awareness.

Data Discovery - In terms of data, teams might employ the whole child assessment resources through ASCD, access public domain school climate surveys, participate in the [Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth \(MiPHY\)](#) and/or complete the [Healthy School Action Tools \(HSAT\)](#). These data sources help detail the degree to which learning environments promote success in academics and student wellness.

Initial Initiative Inventory and Gap Statement - These data sets prepare the team to review what is or is not in place for evidence-based programs and practices. They might refer to the [Michigan's Social Emotional Learning Competencies Document](#) that provides birth to post-secondary targets which assure educators can promote Social Emotional Learning throughout the district by grade. The [CASEL District Wide Rubric](#) provides guidance to how to assess Social Emotional Learning.

Knowing what the Social Emotional Learning 'look fors' are by grade and core content helps the team complete the Initial Initiative Inventory. Michigan districts teaching health education can access a crosswalk between the [Michigan Model and Social Emotional Learning](#). The team can then map their Social Emotional Learning resources and develop a gap statement such as, *"While we are teaching social awareness through feeling check-ins at the beginning of all elementary classes, we are not teaching Social Emotional Learning management skills that bolsters frustration tolerance during instruction, nor are we providing instruction in the other three Social Emotional Learning competencies."*

Data Story Summary - The team pulls together the data that synthesizes its story describing the "what" of the data. The summary prepares them to discover the cause of the gaps they have unearthed, or the "why."

Conduct Root Cause Analysis - Using a root cause analysis method helps teams determine how Social Emotional Learning impacts the outcomes that surfaced in the beginning of the inquiry. Evidence of Social Emotional Learning's impact on academics, prosocial behavior, and its preventative effect on children's mental health indicates that the team needs to use root cause analysis to clarify their questions. They might target Social Emotional Learning and literacy, Social Emotional Learning and math, or Social Emotional Learning

as a layer of support that amplifies school-based mental health services' effectiveness. The root cause analysis will help focus on the impact Social Emotional Learning can have on adults and learners.

Identify Challenge - Where is there an opportunity to grow? Because Social Emotional Learning contributes to student wellness, academic progress, and prosocial behavior, the root cause analysis work should focus on the relationship between Social Emotional Learning and the intended outcome(s). Teams can pull their assessment process together by developing an 'If/then' statement. Examples might be: *If we provide explicit Social Emotional Learning instruction in grades K-3, then we will be able to calculate the increase in instructional minutes available to children needing math support. The rise in Social Emotional Learning management skill building might help learners demonstrate prosocial behavior and may protect them from decisions to send them out of class.*

Getting Ready to Plan - Since the team's next step is to adopt the Social Emotional Learning competencies, the evidence base for instruction Social Emotional Learning is a fit for implementation. Using the National Implementation Research Network language, Social Emotional Learning is 'learnable, teachable, doable and assessable.' These features make this practice a good choice for the team's next step, planning.

Plan

Because Social Emotional Learning is a Tier 1 universal strategy, the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) recommends implementing the five competences district-wide. District efforts to adopt Social Emotional Learning may find the use of the [CASEL District Rubric](#) helpful. An overlap exists between this resource and the [MICIP Activity Planning Tool](#). The Tool helps districts identify possible activities for each [implementation stage](#). The four sections of the Planning Tool (installation, implementation, monitor/adjust, and evaluation) are listed below with a brief explanation of how the CASEL Rubric and other resources aid the planning process.

Installation - Focal area one of the CASEL district-wide rubric guides a team through the readiness, competency, and infrastructure questions of the

planning tool. This section helps teams review their human and fiscal resources, the district's vision and mission, and the district's capacity for Social Emotional Learning knowledge and skills. The other three focal areas of the rubric address adult Social Emotional Learning, student impact, and Social Emotional Learning related continuous improvement efforts.

Implementation - Knowing what the Social Emotional Learning 'look fors' are can be complex without an observation tool that the district team can use. CASEL offers a [walk-through observation tool](#) that can help each building in the district support Social Emotional Learning practice.

Monitor/Adjust - In addition to using the rubric and the information collected through the walkthrough protocol, a practitioner Social Emotional Learning assessment can be found in the MDE guidance document entitled, [Connecting Social and Emotional Learning to Michigan's School Improvement Framework](#). Within Appendices C and D, teachers can review their own Social Emotional Learning proficiency. Finally, Social Emotional Learning formative assessments can assist teachers in adjusting instruction to assure that student impact is realized.

Evaluation - Since measuring implementation and impact can be a challenging task for any team, using the MiStrategyBank to find Social Emotional Learning evidence-based program (EBPs) might ease the process of knowing what works. The district's choice to pick a program that meets the criteria of an EBP means that the program will come with tools to determine the quality of both implementation and student impact. The MDE Social Emotional Learning team populated the strategy bank with programs that meet the United States Department of Education standards for being evidence-based.

Implement, Monitor and Adjust

Scaling up Social Emotional Learning at the district level, though complex, is an important and critical effort that can amplify the success of continuous improvement process. As Social Emotional Learning is being implemented, district teams need to use the planning process to identify how they will monitor implementation and Social Emotional Learning as well as what evidence needs to be collected to measure impact. The District Rubric, the adult Social Emotional Learning

assessments, and Social Emotional Learning survey information will also help the district team determine how to adjust their professional development and capacity-building efforts.

The Michigan Department of Education Social Emotional Learning team has been supporting district work with the hexagon tool; the assessment of district need, fit, and capacity helps answer questions about how they might assess the effectiveness of their implementation efforts. As the MICIP guidance for monitor and adjust recommends, teams also need to consider scale and reach. The [NIRN Hexagon Tool](#) can help determine in which buildings they might monitor pilot efforts. Equally important, it can help teams adjust their efforts when they take a principled approach to listen to student, family, teacher, and community voices to improve the implementation of Social Emotional Learning.

The following resources are tools that will help teams monitor for success:

Implementation

- District Wide Social Emotional Learning Rubric - For a customized CASEL rubric for Michigan, email [Leisa Gallagher](#) or [Amy Wassmann](#).
- [Adult Social Emotional Learning-Assessment](#)
- [Building Walk Throughs](#)

Impact on Students

- [Student Voice](#)
- Formative Assessment I Can statements
- MiPHY Survey pre and post results for middle and high school learners
- Academic Outcomes - for example, how did students' progress when Social Emotional Learning was taught during academic content?

Evaluate

A district-wide Social Emotional Learning system that produces results means having the district teams, data, and programming in place to determine effectiveness. The system needs to offer district leadership information from two areas:

1. Implementation - evidence that supports the district's internal decision-making process to improve the teaching and learning of these skills.

2. Impact/Student Outcomes - the attainment of the district's goals that relate to the degree to which learners can demonstrate the five competencies: self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision making, and social awareness.

Evaluating the effectiveness of this whole child effort is reliant on a district team that can maintain multi-year focus. Positive results are more likely when social emotional learning is linked to an established continuous improvement process. The district can look to the [CASEL rubric](#) for district wide Social Emotional Learning for guidance. The rubric identifies a cluster of efforts within 'Focal Area 4: Practice Continuous Improvement'. Once the team decides to include social emotional learning into their MICIP process, the team will be able to evaluate effectiveness best when they document both implementation and student results, also known as impact. The team will want to make time to reflect on what they have collected and then share these results with families, students, staff, and community members.

Before evaluation begins, district teams need to honor the spirit of five competencies (self/social awareness, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and self-management) and refrain from using data linked to social skill development for placement, high stakes decisions, or as a mechanism to identify or diagnose students.

In terms of student outcomes, teachers might use, document, and share how formative assessments reflect student learning. This feedback loop enables the district team to better support classroom and building efforts to produce positive results. The district can support teachers with the selection of an evidence-based program that includes methods of measuring student performance and progress. To find a comprehensive program, CASEL has recently updated their [CASEL programming guide](#).

If the district is adopting the five competencies without the use of a commercially produced program, district teams can [explore a way to assess effectiveness](#) through a program-agnostic measure of social emotional learning. Often districts will link their social emotional learning activities as a set of factors that lead to positive school climate. American Institute for Research's

[School Climate Survey Compendium](#) provides guidance to select a climate survey.

Implementation of social emotional learning depends on resources identified above under Implement/Monitor/Adjust. District teams can orchestrate a plan to review classroom teachers' reflection on their own social emotional proficiency. Like the caution of misusing social emotional assessments for children, this self-reflection should be protected from teacher evaluation methods. Rather, within a learning community, teachers and coaches build the psychological safety to discuss how they might improve their practice. In addition to self-reflection, building leaders and teachers might work to design a method of observation and participate in walk-throughs.

The MICIP process will support a district team to avoid the premature abandonment of an evidence-based program by responding to questions that ask about the quality of implementation. It will also help a team celebrate student outcomes and record a successful improvement effort. Social emotional learning's research base demonstrate that this multi-year effort is worth it. According to [Durlak's research](#), social emotional learning increases academic performance, increases positive behavior, and mental health.

For more information, contact Leisa Gallagher at gallagherl@michigan.gov or Amy Wassmann at wassmanna1@michigan.gov.