



Social Emotional Learning & Assessment

SEL IS KEY

Social emotional learning (SEL) equips students with essential skills for thriving in school and life. Measuring SEL skills through high-quality assessments provides valuable data to guide each student's growth. By assessing SEL, educators can adapt their instruction and support systems to cultivate a positive learning environment that enables students to develop the necessary social and emotional competencies for personal well-being and academic growth.



STRENGTHS-BASED



SEL data highlights strengths and identifies areas for support. SEL assessments generate insights that empower educators to equitably support students' holistic development. These assessments should focus on measuring students' social-emotional learning and growth to inform and improve practice. Note that screeners aimed at identifying mental health needs are distinct from SEL assessments. Schools and districts have a responsibility to distinguish data collection that requires parental consent under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE-SUSTAINING CONTENT

Equitable SEL assessments should be culturally responsive and sustaining, considering each student's lived experiences, cultural assets, and unique identity. Providing ongoing staff training on diversity, equity, inclusion, and mitigating implicit bias is recommended. One-time trainings may exacerbate issues by raising awareness of bias without offering a forum to address and manage difficult feelings that emerge.



ALIGNED WITH VISION



SEL assessments should support the overarching vision and goals co-created by the school community, including educators, families, and students. This shared vision, based on stakeholder input and local needs, guides the selection of appropriate assessments and implementation approaches. Consistently communicating this vision through a variety of accessible formats promotes inclusion.

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EVIDENCE-BASED WITH ESTABLISHED VALIDITY

SEL assessments should be evidence-based with established validity and reliability. It is crucial to examine whether the evidence base reflects communities with similar demographics to your own. Dig deeper than overall metrics. Examine evidence across subgroups to uncover potential biases that could unfairly advantage or disadvantage specific subpopulations based on characteristics like race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, or other factors.



MULTIPLE DATA SOURCES

Embracing a holistic approach that incorporates various formal and informal measures provides a more comprehensive understanding of each student's unique abilities and areas for growth. Districts and schools that analyze data across subgroups can uncover patterns that highlight areas for support. Leveraging multiple data sources fosters an inclusive and equitable approach, celebrating diversity and promoting the overall well-being and success of all students.

KEY POINTS

- SEL assessments measure social emotional learning and growth and inform instruction. They are distinct from mental health screeners.
- SEL assessments should use culturally responsive and sustaining, strengths-based strategies.
- Ongoing staff training on DEI and mitigating bias is vital for effective implementation.
- Alignment with a co-created, community-driven vision is essential.
- Incorporating multiple data sources, both formal and informal, is recommended.
- SEL assessments should utilize evidence-based, valid, and reliable measures.

RESOURCES

- New York State Education Department (2022): [Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks](#).
- National Practitioner Advisory Group. (2019). [Making SEL assessment work: Resources and further reading](#). Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning and the American Institutes for Research.
- Walker, K., Olson, B., & Herman, M. (2019). [Social Emotional Learning in Practice: A Toolkit of Practical Strategies and Resources \(2nd ed.\)](#). St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota Ext.

New York State Education Department
Office of Student Support Services
<https://www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/sel>

- Minnesota Department of Education: [SEL Assessment Guidance](#).
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning State Resource Center: [Assessment Tools](#).