



# Social Emotional Learning: Essential for New York

**Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** “is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.”<sup>i</sup>

## Benefits

Benefits of SEL include the following:<sup>ii</sup>

- Higher achievement scores, up to 13 percentile points.  
Improved attitudes and behaviors, including motivation to learn, commitment to school, and engagement in the classroom.
- Fewer negative behaviors, including disruptive classroom behaviors, non-compliance, aggression, and disciplinary referrals.
- Reduced emotional stress, including student depression, anxiety, and social withdrawal.

## New York’s SEL Goals

1. Young people develop a self-awareness that nurtures and affirms a strong sense of identity, informs decisions about their actions, and builds a sense of agency.
2. Young people use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish, navigate, and maintain mutually supportive relationships with individuals and groups that nurture a strong sense of belonging.
3. Young people demonstrate intentional decision-making skills and behaviors that consider social, emotional, and physical safety and well-being in personal, school, and community contexts.

## SEL and Equity

Eliminating systemic inequities requires cultivating SEL in students and adults. For students, developing self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills affirms cultural identities and empowers marginalized voices, supporting the capacity to critique inequity and drive change. For educators, strong SEL enables culturally responsive-sustaining (CR-S) practices. Self-awareness helps to identify biases. Social awareness supports understanding of others’ cultural experiences. Strong relationships help connect instruction to students’ experience.

## SEL and Academic Instruction

Integrating SEL into academic instruction includes:

- Free-standing lessons that teach SEL competencies,
- Embedding SEL in academics across subject areas, and
- Intentional teaching practices to model and nurture SEL in the classroom and school.



New York State  
**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**  
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

# Social Emotional Learning: Essential for New York

## Adult SEL

Adult SEL is critical for positive school environments that support students' holistic development. To effectively nurture students' SEL, educators must cultivate robust SEL competencies themselves. Ongoing professional learning allows enhancement of personal SEL skills through practicing SEL instruction, analyzing data, examining biases, and collaborating to improve equity. SEL competencies are vital for effective leadership, management, and improvement in schools/districts. Modeling SEL enables leaders to build trust, have courageous conversations, make inclusive decisions, and persevere.

## SEL and School Culture & Climate

Critical conditions for learning include:

- An engaged school community responsive to diversity,
- Safe and inclusive academic environments that recognize and value all students,
- Caring relationships built on trust and respect, and
- Activities and curricula that engage and challenge students.

Without these conditions, students are more likely to engage in negative behaviors, disengage from school, or drop out.<sup>iii</sup>

## SEL & Approach to Discipline

Restorative Practices draw on SEL competencies to help students understand how a behavior caused harm, take responsibility for it, understand what they could have done differently, learn strategies and skills to use in the future, make amends if possible, and understand consequences of their actions.

## SEL, Mental Health, & Trauma

SEL supports mental health education requirements and nurtures skills to better to understand and respond to emotions. Learn more on our [Mental Health Education web page](#) at: <http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/mental-health>

## SEL & Economic Impact

SEL provides an \$11 return for every \$1 invested in evidence-based SEL programs with proven outcomes.<sup>iv</sup>

## Find Out More

NYSED's Office of Student Support Services [SEL web page](#) (<https://www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/sel>) offers the following resources:

- [New York State SEL Benchmarks](#) (<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/SELBenchmarks2022.pdf>)
- SEL Snapshots are two-page introductions to related topics with resources and research.
  - [Equity and Social Emotional Learning](#) (<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/equity-and-sel-snapshot.pdf>)
  - [Social Emotional Learning and Adult Practice](#) (<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/adultselnapshot.pdf>)
  - [Social Emotional Learning & Family and Community Engagement](#) (<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/familyandcommunityengagementsnapshot.pdf>)
- [Social Emotional Learning: Essential for Learning, Essential for Life](#) (<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/SELEssentialforLearningandLife.pdf>) a framework for SEL
- [Social Emotional Learning: A Guide to Systemic Whole School Implementation](#) (<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/GuideToSystemicWholeSchoolImplementationFINAL.pdf>)
- [District-developed crosswalks](#) (<https://www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/sel-crosswalks>) aligning SEL, academics, and teaching practices

## Contact Us

[NYSED Office of Student Support Services](#)

<https://www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/sel>

T: 518-486-6090

E: [studentsupportservices@nysed.gov](mailto:studentsupportservices@nysed.gov)

**References:** [i] Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2024) [What Is the CASEL Framework?](#), [ii] Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger. (2011). [The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions](#). Child Development, Taylor, R. D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J. A. and Weissberg, R. P. (2017). [Promoting Positive Youth Development Through School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Interventions: A Meta-Analysis of Follow-Up Effects](#). Child Development, Cipriano, et. al. (2023) [The state of evidence for social and emotional learning: A contemporary meta-analysis of universal school-based SEL interventions](#). Child Development, [iii] Osher, Coggs, Colombi, Woodruff, Francois, and Osher. (2012). Building school and teacher capacity to eliminate the school-to-prison pipeline. Teacher Education and Special Education: The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, [iv] Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education at Columbia University's Teachers College. (2015). [The Economic Value of Social and Emotional Learning](#).