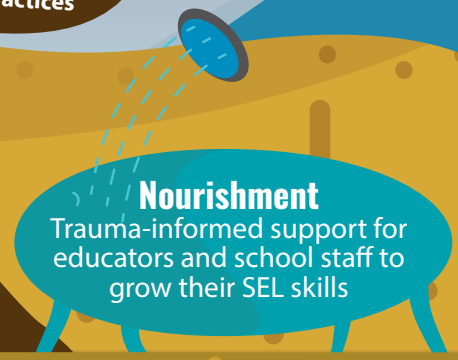


Social Emotional Learning Framework





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SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
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January 6, 2021

The promise of a great public education is built upon a foundation of healthy, safe, supportive, and joyful schools, students, and families. Attending to the social and emotional needs of our students and our communities has never been as apparent or as urgent as it is now. As we navigate this unparalleled moment in our educational history, we are proud to put forth this first statewide Social and Emotional Learning Framework. Using this as a guide, we set our stake in the ground that New Mexico's schools will fully engage in the critical and conscientious work of meeting the needs of the whole child. We will train and support our educators. We will work collaboratively with our students and families. We will invest in the systems and infrastructure that our children need and deserve so that they can thrive. Our reinvigorated commitment to this work begins now. Thank you for joining us on this journey toward healthy, safe, supportive, and joyful schools for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ryan Stewart".

Ryan Stewart, Ed.L.D.
Secretary of Education

The NM SEL Framework was created thanks to the dedication, passion and expertise of many individuals throughout the state. This project could not have been possible without the hearts and minds of the following individuals and their commitment to improving the lives of all children in NM:

Jaqi Baldwin – Director, Siembra Leadership High School
Ellen Bernstein – President, Albuquerque Teachers Federation
Mahpiya Black Elk – NACA Inspired Schools Network
Sbicca Brodeur – NMPED Special Education
Katherine Courtney – Co- Director, Ann Age Eight Institute
Ned Dougherty – Teacher Taos Schools
Gregory Frostad – Director NMPED Safe and Healthy Schools Bureau
Joy Garratt- NM State Legislator
Leslie Kelly – NMPED Behavioral Health Coordinator
Birgit Maurer - NMPED K-5 Plus Coordinator
Rosella McCaffrey – CYFD Behavioral Health Services Clinical Manager
Alli Moore – Future Focused Education
Suzanne Nguyen- Rio Rancho Public Schools – Federal, Bilingual and Native American Programs
Sasha Pellerin – City of Albuquerque
Bryce Pittinger – CEO, Behavioral Health Collaborative
Gilbert Ramirez – City of Albuquerque
David Salas – School Counselor Cimarron Schools
Katarina Sandoval – NMPED Deputy Secretary
Diane Vallejos – Superintendent Belen Consolidated Schools
Victoria Waugh- Reed – Department of Health Office of School and Adolescent Health

“Nothing -nothing - has more impact on the life of a child than positive relationships.”

Peter Benson, creator of the Search Institute Developmental Framework

We, the New Mexico Public Education Department, believe in the capacity and imagination of our students, staff and communities to recommit our energies to transform education across the state. Our focus on excellence and equity in education must include each student’s overall development and quality of life. We believe in transformational educational systems, frameworks, priorities, pedagogies and daily practices as the means to address, support and improve the well-being of students, staff, parents and communities.

- We commit to guiding our state towards the dynamic integration of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into all aspects of education.
- The COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing social issues throughout the country have propelled educators to reaffirm our commitment to community-building and to reassess how we fulfill our roles as educators, including the significance of our interactions with students and families.
- As a result of efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 through distance education and hybrid learning modalities, limited interactions with students and families have highlighted the importance of integrating Social and Emotional Learning concepts into daily instruction, emphasizing student and staff health and wellness.
- We believe, and research shows, that an educational framework rooted in Social and Emotional Learning creates stronger communities, builds meaningful life directions for students, staff and graduates, and complements the underlying reasons why educators are called to work in schools in the first place.
- Social and Emotional Learning practices are evident and embedded in many diverse communities around New Mexico. By building SEL statewide best practices and approaches all communities will benefit.

We believe a statewide commitment to Social and Emotional Learning addresses the following issues, all of which are current challenges for in New Mexico schools and communities:

- intergenerational trauma from culturally non-responsive educational practices
- generational cycles of poverty and violence
- inequities of opportunity for our students stemming from geographical isolation, issues of funding, or racial or cultural disparities
- the profound mobilization needed to holistically meet the aims of the *Yazzie/Martinez v. The State of New Mexico* decision
- increasing rates of incarceration and the expanding New Mexican population caught in the criminal justice system
- an educational system from the past that was largely driven by standardized test performance and narrow definitions of achievement
- the staggeringly low rates of teacher retention coupled with alarmingly high rates of teaching vacancies (*)

(*) A total of 1,054 educator vacancies in New Mexico including 644 teacher vacancies with the remaining vacancies including educational assistants, counselors, emotional/behavioral support providers and so on.

Source: 2019 New Mexico Educator Vacancy Report. SOAR: Southwest Outreach Academic Research Evaluation & Policy Center. October 2019, alliance.nmsu.edu/soa

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) **Social and emotional learning is an integral part of education and human development. 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.**

Historical Considerations

New Mexico is one of the richest places in the world when it comes to culture and tradition. This translates into unique architecture, food, dance, art and religious traditions. Our state has more Native Americans and a higher percentage of Hispanics than any other state. These diverse demographics are a strength and asset to our schools, communities and state. Not unlike other states and communities, there is always room for growth and improvement, and the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) is leading the charge. PED's mission is to partner with educators, communities and families to ensure that ALL students are healthy, secure in their identity, and holistically prepared for college, career and life. Rooted in strengths, the PED's vision is that students in New Mexico are engaged in a culturally and linguistically responsive educational system that meets the social, emotional and academic needs of ALL students.

The Difficult News: The Current Reality

- New Mexico ranked 50th in the nation with 76% of 4th graders not proficient in reading (2019), 79% of 9th graders not proficient in math (2019), and 26% of high school students not graduating on time (2017-2018).
- New Mexico ranked 49th in the United States, regarding economic well-being, with 26% of children living in poverty.
- 32% of New Mexico's children between the ages of 10 and 17 years old are considered obese.
- New Mexico ranks 48th in the nation regarding family and community resources. Children who live in nurturing families and supportive communities have stronger personal connections and higher academic achievement. Parents and caregivers struggling with financial hardship have fewer resources and supports available to foster their children's development and are more prone to face severe stress and depression, which can interfere with effective parenting.
- Low-income families, students with disabilities, English language learners, and Native American students, collectively, make up approximately 80% of the New Mexico student population.

Source: NM Center on Law and Poverty, nmpovertylaw.org, June 29, 2020.

** Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, aecf.org, retrieved 9/14/2020*

According to a national report, New Mexico has some of the highest rates of children suffering from adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Experts believe that the more ACEs a child suffers, the more likely the trauma will lead to negative impacts on well-being and health that can follow a child for life and contribute to chronic health issues and problems such as alcoholism, drug abuse, and suicide.

Source: Report: NM Has High Rate of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), nmvoices.org, February 2019

The COVID-19 pandemic added more stressors and negatively impacted the health and well-being of our students, staff, families and communities:

- 40% of New Mexican adults with children in the home felt anxious, stressed, or on edge nearly every day – or more often than not – over the past week.
- Children and parents are experiencing increased anxiety due to school and child-care closures from the pandemic, as well as isolation and other concerns.
- 9% of New Mexican adults in households with school-aged children rarely or never have a device available for educational purposes; 8% rarely or never have internet access.
- 1 in 5 New Mexico school kids did not respond to school or teacher emails after schools moved to distance learning in March, and more than half of students were not participating in distance learning by the end of the school year.

Source: The Impact of COVID-19 on Children's Well-Being in New Mexico, NM Voices For Children, nmvoices.org, August 2020.

Theoretical Foundation and Rationale for SEL

Brain Science and Trauma Informed Care

Child development is shaped by many converging factors, from biological to social, historical and environmental variables. For educators and staff supporting the development and education of New Mexico's children, it is important to understand the science of learning as well as the impact of trauma (i.e. adverse childhood experiences) on the developing brain. Healthy development of the brain, marked by positive brain-building experiences (e.g. responsive, loving caregivers, physical and emotional safety, healthy nutrition, low or tolerable stress), allows for earlier development of the neocortex of the brain in children. The neocortex is the part of the brain that allows for reasoning, language, decision-making and, when regulated, can control the limbic (emotional center of the brain) and reptilian (survival) brain.

- Unfortunately, for many of our children in New Mexico, adverse childhood experiences have created higher levels (sometimes for prolonged periods) of toxic stress. The impact of toxic stress from trauma (e.g. violence, neglect, racism) results in the development and primary response of the survival and limbic centers of the brain. This bottom-up response manifests as dysregulation and an inability to reason, problem-solve and learn.
- Despite the impact of earlier or ongoing experiences of trauma, the brain is capable of supported regulation and healthy development due to neuroplasticity. Educators, parents, caregivers, social workers and all individuals involved in a child's life can play an exciting role in supporting a child's brain in developing these new neural pathway connections, which ultimately result in social and emotional skills and deeper academic learning.

Understanding brain development is the first step in adapting intentional practices that support the developmental brain response during the educational process.

- Humans, especially children, are biologically hardwired with an imprinted need for connection and [belonging](#), to be in relationship with those around them. Therefore, it is critical for educators and school staff to intentionally focus on building connections and relationships with students. These relationships are the vehicle for deepened engagement and learning, especially for dysregulated children and youth.

- When students are dysregulated, they are operating from their survival and limbic portions of their brain; meaning, they are struggling to be able to connect and relate with others and are unable to problem solve. It is important and necessary to consider the neurobiology of what is occurring in the brain so that information can guide engagement. The [Hierarchy of Learning](#) (Sporleder & Forbes, 2019) is a Maslow-inspired framework that illustrates the importance educators and school staff supporting the regulation of students. This framework complements Dr. Bruce Perry’s “[Sequence of Engagement](#)” that recommends caregivers and educators initially focus on regulation; once a regulated connection exists, affirmation of a student’s presence and experience will support their ability to reason, problem-solve and demonstrate perspective taking. Attempts to skip the neuro-sequencing of engagement or rush through will likely be met by more dysregulation, lack of learning and potential for the stress to be experienced as intolerable or toxic.

Positive Youth Development and Developmental Assets

Social and Emotional learning supports the developmental and relationship assets as defined by the Search Institute: [40 Developmental Assets - Positive Youth Development](#)

Since 1990, Search Institute’s research-based Developmental Assets™ framework has become one of the foundations of positive youth development and the most frequently cited and widely utilized in the world. Search Institute has identified 40 positive supports and strengths that young people need to succeed. Half of the assets, external assets, focus on the relationship and opportunities they need in their families, schools, and communities. The other half, internal assets, focus on social-emotional strengths, values and commitments that are nurtured within young people. Research shows that young people from all backgrounds do better when they have a strong foundation of these strengths in their lives. When youth have more assets, they are more likely to thrive now and in the future, less likely to engage in a wide range of high risk behaviors, and more likely to be resilient in the face of challenges. The gateway to building assets is developmental relationships. The late Peter Benson, creator of the Search Institute Developmental Framework said:

“Nothing -*nothing* - has more impact in the life of a child than positive relationships.”

In 2013, the Search Institute focused its research on understanding what kinds of relationships propel young people to learn, grow, and thrive. This work became the Developmental Relationships Framework. This framework identifies key actions that move relationships from being “nice” to “necessary” for positive development. The Search Institute identified five elements - expressed in 20 specific actions- that make relationships powerful in young people’s lives. Research has found that young people who experience strong developmental relationships across different parts of their lives are more likely to show signs positive development in many areas, including:

- Increased academic motivation
- Increased social-emotional growth and learning;
- Increased sense of personal responsibility
- Reduced engagement in a variety of high-risk behaviors

Restorative Justice Practices in Schools

Successful SEL implementation includes a comprehensive approach with an emphasis on relationships and should address equity and excellence in all aspects of education. Discipline policies, such as zero tolerance

policies and discipline that does not address root causes of behaviors and the whole child are unlikely to engender positive outcomes or to deter recidivism. Restorative Justice Practices (RJP) is an approach rooted in indigenous peacemaking and the tradition of talking circles globally and here in New Mexico. RJP offers a school-wide culturally responsive approach to intentionally fostering communities that center on relationships and ensure that every member of the school community feels that they belong and that they are valued. Grounded in a philosophical belief of interconnectedness, it stresses the importance of collective buy-in and a shared commitment to every member of the school community. From this perspective, when wrongdoing or harm occurs to any member of the school community, wrongdoing has occurred to all. Likewise, it is the school community's responsibility to support the healing of everyone involved to foster the growth and strength of the collective. Additionally, building from the previous section on trauma-informed approaches, RJP employs techniques, practices and policies that operationalize the neurosequential stages of engagement, especially when responding to harmful behaviors, dysregulation or conflict.

When used to address harmful behaviors, RJP moves away from a punitive reaction, which focuses on the rule/law broken and use of punishments (often exclusionary in nature), and instead towards inclusionary dialogue to identify what harm has been caused by the incident. In so doing, this positions the individual(s) that has caused harm to take meaningful responsibility. Those who were harmed are given the opportunity to share the impact of the situation and are offered agency in voicing their needs as part of repairing the harm and the relationship. Additionally, and in alignment with brain development and trauma-informed practices, RJP allows students to develop the necessary social emotional skills to better handle big emotions and conflict, and to make more responsible decisions in the future; it transforms harmful situations into opportunities for growth, healing and positive development.

A primary vehicle for structurally institutionalizing RJP is the use of circles. The circle process allows for all participants to practice respect, equality, empathy and emotional literacy, problem-solving, responsibility and responsible decision making, self-awareness and self-regulation, shared leadership and social awareness; all these values and skills are named as core social, emotional learning competencies (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015). Circles can be used in: advisory; classrooms to discuss academic content; family conferences; department meetings; professional development (to include school support staff); and Parent Teacher Association meetings. Developing a "Culture of Self Reflection" among educators and staff to practice introspection, while modeling taking responsibility and repairing relationships will allow for the RJP ethos to more effectively take hold (Guldin, 2020). Seeing school leadership, staff and educators demonstrate these practices will pave the way for students, families and others to shift away from punitive school cultures towards one that values vulnerable accountability and collective growth.

Social and Emotional Learning

Student well-being can be defined as a sustainable state of positive mood and attitude, resilience, and satisfaction with self, relationships and experiences at school. In other words, an intentional focus on well-being supports the capabilities that students need to live a happy and fulfilling life. Social and emotional learning is one factor that supports the multiple aspects of overall well-being, which includes physical, social, emotional, economic, psychological and developmental well-being. Student well-being is considered pervasive in that it affects most aspects of a student's functioning at school.

This whole child approach to education is defined by policies, practices, and relationships that ensure each child, in each school, in each community, is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. As noted in the research brief, *Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate To Support Student Success*, “In recent years, a great deal has been learned about how biology and environment interact to produce human learning and development.” Educators have always fostered the integration of interpersonal skills into classrooms and schools. Today’s students require a more explicit and school-wide approach. Research and practice have a great deal to teach us about the critical role that SEL plays in student success.

School and classroom SEL practices help us to teach the whole child by providing students with emotional support and creating opportunities for students' voices, autonomy, and mastery experiences that also promote student engagement. While teaching SEL can be a lesson, it is more effective to implement a systemic approach in each school. As the information on the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) website states, “A systemic approach to SEL intentionally cultivates a caring, participatory, and equitable learning environment and evidence-based practices that actively involve all students in their social, emotional, and academic growth. This approach infuses social and emotional learning into every part of students’ daily lives—across all of their classrooms, during all times of the school day, and when they are in their homes and communities.”

What are the Social and Emotional Learning Competencies(SEL)? CASEL states that SEL is the teaching of five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Another way to think of SEL is as the teaching and learning involved in developing emotional intelligence. [CASEL](#) is a group that works to “drive research, guide practice, and inform policy.” CASEL is largely considered the expert when it comes to defining SEL.

Definition of SEL. CASEL defines SEL as “the process through which students and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” That process affects the quality of students' interactions with one another and their ability to adapt to and successfully navigate the complexities of daily life.

The Impact of SEL. Research examining the relationship between social and emotional competencies and student outcomes has found that the better developed student social and emotional competencies are, the better students do in school and life. This holds true for students from different economic backgrounds, races/ethnicities, genders and sexualities.



New Mexico's Social and Emotional Learning Framework for Schools

1. **Positive Developmental Relationships**: a learning environment that is supportive, culturally responsive and focused on meaningful connection, relationships and building community.
 - a. Teacher-student relationships are a priority for all adults in the building
 - b. Culture and identity are valued and explored
 - c. Classroom routines and procedures exist
 - d. Community building is intentional and encouraged

2. **Intentional Development of Skills, Mindsets and Habits** - students have consistent opportunities to cultivate, practice and reflect on social and emotional competencies in a way that is developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive.
 - a. The 5 SEL competencies are taught, modeled and practiced
 - b. Explicit SEL instruction is provided consistently
 - c. All students are exposed to an age appropriate, evidence based SEL curriculum
 - d. Student voice is present and encouraged

3. **Rich Instructional Experiences** - SEL content and objectives are integrated into rigorous instruction through interactive and collaborative pedagogies.
 - a. Academic and growth mindsets are fostered
 - b. SEL and academic objectives are aligned
 - c. SEL competencies are integrated into instruction, e.g.; grade level benchmarks, evident in all subject matter
 - d. Grading policies should reflect a competency based approach to education that is grounded in empowering students to make important decisions about their learning, how they will create and apply knowledge and how they will demonstrate learning.

4. **Environments Filled with Safety and Belonging** - conditions for belonging and emotional safety are created by being responsive to students' perspectives and needs, affirming all students' full identities, and establishing structures that create predictability and consistency.
 - a. Environments are filled with safety and belonging
 - b. School wide discipline policies and practices are instructive, restorative, developmentally appropriate and equitably reinforced
 - c. Staff and student relationships are evident and valued.
 - d. Staff relationships are supportive, respectful and collaboration exists
 - e. Student relationships are respectful, friendly and inclusive

5. **Integrated Systems and Supports** - SEL is seamlessly integrated into a continuum of academic and behavioral supports which are available to all students and ensure that all student needs are met.
 - a. Identify and communicate how SEL align with existing systems; MLSS, SAT, and/or PBIS-positive behavior interventions and supports
 - b. Align SEL to universal strategies, such as, school mental health, restorative practices and/or trauma informed practices
 - c. SEL is evident in out of school time programming

- d. SEL is integrated into family and community communications, activities and programming
6. Use of Data to Assess Need and Impact - Implementation and outcome data are collected and used to monitor progress toward goals and continuously improve all SEL related systems, practices, and policies with a focus on equity.
- a. Identify, Collect and Review data: Consider your purpose for collecting data
 - b. Use of Framework rubric to assess implementation
 - c. Use of individual reflection tools (student, staff, families) for practice development and continuous improvement.

Resources:

[NM Youth Risk & Resiliency](#) - Report of NM youth's engagement in risk behaviors (behaviors contributing to unintentional injury; behaviors associated with violence; mental health, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts; alcohol, tobacco and drug use; sexual activity; and physical activity, nutrition, and body weight) and resiliency (protective) factors.

New Mexico's Educational Ranking

Source: Educational Opportunities and Performance in New Mexico, Education Week. September 2, 2020.

Search Institutes' 40 Developmental Assets - Developmental Relationships

The Developmental Relationships Framework (English)

https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Developmental-Relationships-Framework_English.pdf

20 Maneras de construir relaciones que apoyan el desarrollo integral de los jóvenes (Span

https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Developmental-Relationships-Framework_Spanish.pdf

Brain Research/Trauma Informed Care/Whole Child Education

[Alberta Family Wellness Initiative](#) ; [Brain Architecture Game](#); [Turnaround for Children](#) and the [Five Non-Negotiables for Whole Child Design](#) ; Dr. Siegel [Hand Model of the Brain](#); Sporleder, J., & Forbes, H. T. (2016). *The trauma-informed school: A step-by-step implementation guide for administrators and school personnel*. Boulder, CO: Beyond Consequences Institute; [Neurosequential Network](#); Darling-Hammond, L., & Cook-Harvey, C. M. (2018). *Educating the whole child: Improving school climate to support student success*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/educating-whole-child>.

Restorative Practices

[Boyes-Watson, C., & Pranis, K. \(2015\). *Circle forward: Building a restorative school community*. St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press.](#)

Guldin, M. (2020, June). [Toward Fundamentally Transforming School Culture with an Accent on Communication, Self-Reflection and Accountability: Using Restorative Theory, Practices and Structures Throughout Your Building to Effect School Wide Cultural Change and Address Racial and Other Inequities](#). Retrieved September 14, 2020; [San Francisco Unified School District Restorative Practices Whole-School Implementation Guide](#)

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SEL CASEL's Five Core Competencies

<https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>

A Beginner's Guide to SEL, Monica Gupta Mehta, September 2019

<https://medium.com/everythingsel/a-beginners-guide-to-sel-e3e43e822db2>

Assessment Work Group. (2019). *Student social and emotional competence assessment: The current state of the field and a vision for its future*. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning <http://measuringssel.casel.org>