An Exploration of Equity-Centered K–12 SEL Implementation Guidance, Standards, and Competencies Across 17 States

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Within the past two decades, states have increasingly developed state policies that promote student social and emotional development. They have done this through the development of social and emotional learning (SEL) guidance documents, professional learning supports, and standards/competencies for students and for adults. While states increasingly focus on policies and practices that promote social, emotional, and academic development, there is also an intentional effort to refine policies and practices to take an equity lens. Centering equity ensures that there are not unintended consequences in the development and implementation of policies and practices (e.g., avoiding a deficit orientation or assuming there is only one way to develop them).

The purpose of this document is to be a resource to states interested in creating or revising SEL implementation guidance and SEL standards/competencies with an equity focus. It is important that states use an equity lens when creating or revising their SEL guidance and standards to ensure that SEL is accessible and supportive for all students. The document is broken into two sections:

- The <u>first section</u> of this document includes a collection of examples of how 17 states are embedding equity in their SEL implementation guidance and/or SEL standards/competencies for students and adults. As states shape their SEL standards with an equity focus, they have included multiple equity considerations, for example, diverse student populations (e.g., culturally and linguistically responsive practices), accessibility for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, trauma-informed practices, and violence prevention efforts (e.g., restorative practices for conflict resolution).
- The <u>second section</u> of this document includes additional resources about embedding equity in SEL standards and guidance for further consideration.

This collection of examples and resources is not exhaustive, and highlights work that leading states and organizations have done on this topic.

State Examples of Equity-Centered K-12 SEL Standards and Guidance

Alaska

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance	☑ Diverse Student Populations
☐ Student Competencies	☐ Special Education
☐ Adult Competencies	☑ English Language Learners
	☑ Trauma-Informed Practices
	☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
Transforming Schools: Trauma-	Guidance
Engaged Toolkit—Skill Instruction	Speaks to students developing social and emotional skills as an essential element for building resilience and mitigating the impacts of stress and trauma. The chapter provides resources to help schools and districts adapt SEL practices to ensure they are culturally relevant and align with each community's strengths, norms, and expectations.
	For example:
	What Can Leadership Do?
	 "C. Partner with families and communities to localize and/or indigenize SEL approaches and curriculum to reflect place-based community values and culture."
	What Can Staff Do?
	 "C. Partner with families and communities in adapting classroom SEL practices to reflect community values and cultures."



California

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance ☑ Student Competencies ☑ Adult Competencies	☑ Diverse Student Population ☐ Special Education ☐ English Language Learners ☐ Trauma-Informed Practices ☐ Violence Prevention Efforts
Transformative SEL Conditions for Thriving Guidance	Guidance Provides guidance to support adults across the California education system to co-create transformative social and emotional learning (T-SEL) and conditions for thriving. T-SEL utilizes an explicit equity and social justice lens to approach SEL.
T-SEL Competencies and Conditions for Thriving Guidance	Guidance Presents information and resources to support student success through T-SEL implementation.
California Transformative SEL Competencies Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making Student Competencies, Adult Competencies	 Student and Adult Competencies Organizes competencies across the five dimensions by Identity, Belonging, and Agency. For example: Student Competencies: Competency 4.C.4. "Students recognize the value of trust, rapport, and respect in developing healthy relationships across different racial, cultural, linguistic, gender, sexual orientation, religious, ability, and neurodivergent student groups. Students recognize the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy dating relationships. Students use a variety of culturally affirming strategies to show appreciation and gratitude to their peers and social networks." Competency 4.F.4. "Students can participate in harm reparation by using restorative affective statements and restorative questions in order to communicate the impact of harm and hold community members accountable for their actions. Students are able to take responsibility for their own actions and can contribute to the collaborative process of harm reparation."



Resources	Equity Considerations
	Adult Competencies
	 Competency 1.D.5. "Adults continually reflect on and interrupt their own prejudices and biases in regard to academic and behavioral expectations of students, including how those impact discipline, grading, giving leadership opportunities, and whose voices are heard in the learning environment."
	 Competency 3.F.5. "Adults can identify and explain how power and privilege can perpetuate inequities and contribute to marginalization. Adults are aware of the historical and current inequities and the social issues of the community in which they work or live."



Delaware

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance ☑ Student Competencies ☑ Adult Competencies	☑ Diverse Student Population ☐ Special Education ☐ English Language Learners ☐ Trauma-Informed Practices ☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
Delaware Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies Guidance, Student Competencies, Adult Competencies	 Guidance Includes guidance on how SEL is related to advancing equity for students. It highlights the importance of equity-centered SEL and how Delaware's SEL competencies embody equitable practices and values, such as delivering culturally responsive curricula and having respect for differences in others. (p. 8) Student and Adult Competencies Integrates skills such as understanding effects of privilege on others, valuing cultural diversity, and conflict resolution in competencies. For example: Student Competencies: Social Awareness 3C: "Develops an understanding of how privilege impacts groups and individuals" (p. 19) Relationship Skills 4C: "Uses skills and strategies needed to manage intimidation, avoid and escape violence, and maintain personal safety" (p. 22) Adult Competencies: Social Awareness 3C: "Identifies and addresses explicit or implicit biases" (p. 19) Relationship Skills 4C: "Utilizes appropriate conflict resolution skills to prevent, prepare for, and manage conflict across multiple settings" (p. 22)



Hawaii

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance ☐ Student Competencies ☐ Adult Competencies	 ☑ Diverse Student Populations ☑ Special Education ☑ English Language Learners ☑ Trauma-Informed Practices ☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
School Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Guides Guidance	Advises school leaders on how to create SEL programming in their school and what to consider when creating and implementing SEL programming. For example, these guides include instruction on how to integrate the culture of Hawaii in SEL programming as well as questions for consideration on how SEL can be inclusive for all students, including those with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who have experienced trauma.
Nā Hopena A' (HĀ) Guidance	Guidance Presents Nā Hopena A'o or HĀ, a framework that reflects Hawaiian values, language, culture, and history and guides the entire school community. The framework identifies six outcomes for learners and leaders alike: Belonging, Responsibility, Excellence, Aloha, Total Wellbeing, and Hawai'i. These outcomes emphasize the knowledge building, social, and emotional skills that support student success and "become the core BREATH that can be drawn on for strength and stability throughout school and beyond."



Indiana

Resources	Equity Considerations
☐ Guidance ☑ Student Competencies ☐ Adult Competencies	☑ Diverse Student Populations ☐ Special Education ☐ English Language Learners ☑ Trauma-Informed Practices ☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
PK-12 Social-Emotional Learning Competencies Built Upon A Neurodevelopmental Culturally Responsive Framework Student Competencies	Explains the neurodevelopmental culturally responsive framework that was used to create student social and emotional competencies in the introduction. Competencies include ideas such as emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and social awareness. For example: Regulation Indicator 3B: "Students continue to identify challenging situations (and may or may not need support from an adult) and experiment with various stress-reducing coping strategies that help calm the amygdala and nervous system." (p. 34) Collaboration Indicator 4C: "Students approach conflict in a collaborative manner and work toward solutions using a strength-based lens." (p. 45) Connection Indicator 5A: "Students begin to think critically about equity and social justice." (p. 47)



Illinois

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance	☑ Diverse Student Populations
☑ Student Competencies	☐ Special Education
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	☑ Trauma-Informed Practices
	☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
School Wellness: Social and	Guidance
Emotional Learning	Provides an overview of the approach to SEL, which promotes
Guidance	"quality SEL instruction in which students learn to process, integrate, and selectively apply SEL skills in developmentally, contextually and culturally appropriate ways in conjunction with a safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climate." The web page provides further resources regarding anti-bias and anti-hate, supporting children of military families, and creating safe spaces for youth.
Illinois Social Emotional Learning	Student Competencies
<u>Standards</u>	Includes the development of skills to create an inclusive
Student Competencies	environment for a diverse student population.
	For example:
	 Learning Standard 2A: "Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others."
	 2A.5a: "Demonstrate how to express understanding of those who hold different opinions." (p. 4)
	Learning Standard 2B: "Recognize individual and group similarities and differences."
	 2B.2a: "Identify differences among and contributions of various social and cultural groups." (p. 5)



Massachusetts

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance	☑ Diverse Student Populations
☐ Student Competencies	☐ Special Education
☑ Adult Competencies	☐ English Language Learners
	☐ Trauma-Informed Practices
	☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
Culturally Responsive Social-	Guidance
Emotional Competency	Defines and provides guidance regarding access to SEL for all
<u>Development</u>	students, culturally proficient SEL, and culturally responsive and
Guidance, Adult Competencies	sustaining SEL.
	Adult Competencies
	Provides a SEL and culturally responsive teaching reflection guide, which supports building adult competencies.
	For example:
	 Indicator II-C. Cultural Proficiency: "Actively creates and maintains an environment in which students' diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges are respected." (p. 9)
Social and Emotional Learning in	Guidance
Massachusetts	Contains information about SEL definitions and approaches, SEL
Guidance	and equity, and developing SEL competencies through a tiered approach.



Michigan

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance	☑ Diverse Student Populations
☑ Student Competencies	☑ Special Education
☐ Adult Competencies	☑ English Language Learners
	☐ Trauma-Informed Practices
	☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
Michigan Department of	Guidance
Education Early Childhood to Grade 12 Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies and	Shares guidance on SEL connections with special education, cultural responsiveness, equity considerations, and teaching practices. (pp. 1, 3, 7–9)
Indicators	Student Competencies
Guidance, Student Competencies	Includes student competencies and implementation strategies that incorporate cultural responsiveness, conflict resolution, and equitable practices. (pp. 32–43, 53–60)
	For example:
	Social Awareness: "Demonstrate an awareness of different cultures and a respect for human dignity" (p.38)
	Responsible Decision Making: "Uses personal, ethical, safety, and cultural factors in making decisions" (p.53)
	 Responsible Decision Making 5A: "Positive and accepting attitudes toward people of a variety of backgrounds/characteristic, e.g., race, ethnicity, national origin, physical characteristics, disability, economic status, language spoken or signed background" (p. 53)
	 Relationship Skills 4C: "Use prevention, management, and resolution skills to resolve interpersonal conflicts constructively" (p. 52)



Minnesota

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance ☑ Student Competencies ☐ Adult Competencies MDE: Great Lakes Equity Center Guidance Guidance	☑ Diverse Student Populations ☑ Special Education ☑ English Language Learners ☑ Trauma-Informed Practices ☑ Violence Prevention Efforts Guidance Urges district and student leaders to consider certain practices that promote equitable outcomes for diverse populations of
Relationship Skills Competency Self-Awareness Competency Self-Management Competency Social Awareness Competency Responsible Decision-Making Competency	Student Competencies Includes benchmarks, sample activities, and related academic standards by grade band for each competency. The benchmarks include ideas such as, acknowledging and valuing cultural contributions as well as practices for managing interpersonal conflict.
Student Competencies	 For example: Relationship Skills, Learning Goal 3, Benchmark for Grades 9-12: "Demonstrate an ability to co-exist civilly in the face of unresolved conflict." (p.25) Social Awareness, Learning Goal 2, Benchmark for Grades 4-5: "Identify contributions of various social and cultural groups." (p.15)
MDE SEL Learning Modules SEL Learning Modules Facilitation Guide Guidance	Guidance Provides training and guidance for school staff on 14 SEL topics, including SEL and Trauma, Cooperative Learning, and Transformative SEL and Cultural Competency.



New Mexico

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance	☑ Diverse Student Populations
☑ Student Competencies	☑ Special Education
☐ Adult Competencies	☑ English Language Learners
	☑ Trauma-Informed Practices
	☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
New Mexico Public Education	Guidance
Department's Social Emotional	Explores six components and corresponding indicators that are
<u>Learning Framework</u>	informed by culturally and linguistically responsive practices,
Guidance	restorative justice practices, and trauma-informed care.
	For example:
	 "School wide discipline policies and practices are instructive, restorative, developmentally appropriate and equitably reinforced." (p. 8)
	"Culture and identity are valued and explored." (p. 8)
New Mexico Social and Emotional	Guidance
Learning Framework School Self-	Provides indicators that demonstrate what the six SEL framework
Assessment	components look like when fully implemented, partially
Guidance	implemented, and not implemented.
	For example:
	 Positive Developmental Relationships: "A learning environment that is supportive, culturally responsive and focused on meaningful connection, relationships, and building community."
	 Fully Implemented: "Teachers use inclusive, relationship centered, and culturally responsive practices to create supportive classroom environments. Strategies are
	developmentally appropriate and focus on creating a community of learners that supports, honors, and acknowledges the cultural assets, contributions, and needs of all students. Shared agreements are collaboratively developed, consistently modeled by adults and students, and woven into daily routines and practices." (p. 3)



New York

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance	☑ Diverse Student Populations
☑ Student Competencies	☐ Special Education
☑ Adult Competencies	☐ English Language Learners
	☑ Trauma-Informed Practices
	☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
Social Emotional Learning:	Guidance
Essential for Learning, Essential	Contains information on the intersection of equity and SEL,
<u>for Life</u>	impact of trauma on social emotional development, and SEL-
Guidance	informed approach to discipline. (pp. 8, 10–11, 21–24, 26)
NY Social Emotional Learning	Guidance
Benchmarks - Equity Revisions	Describes process of revising SEL goals to be more equity focused.
Guidance, Student Competencies,	(pp. 3, 4, 7, 9, 11)
Adult Competencies	Student and Adult Competencies
	Incorporates equitable practices, cultural responsiveness, and
	conflict resolution in competencies.
	For example:
	Student Competencies:
	Indicator 2D.3a. "Describe potential causes and consequences
	of conflicts; recognizing that power and privilege impact
	relationships." (p. 9)
	 Indicator 3A.4b. "Evaluate how the expectations of different groups, including the expectations of those with social
	influence, power, and privilege, influence personal decisions
	and actions." (p. 10)
	Adult Competencies:
	Indicator 2D.B. "Respond immediately to conflicts that involve
	injustice or are related to culture, ethnicity, race, religion,
	gender identity or expression, ability, etc. to affirm student
	and adult peer identity, agency, and belonging." (p. 9)
	Indicator 3C.A. "Use restorative practices in responding to a
	witnessed incident of bias or injustice among students or adult
	peers." (p. 12)



Ohio

Resources	Equity Considerations
☐ Guidance	☑ Diverse Student Populations
☑ Student Competencies	☐ Special Education
☐ Adult Competencies	☐ English Language Learners
	☐ Trauma-Informed Practices
	☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
Ohio's K-12 Social and Emotional	Student Competencies
<u>Learning Standards</u>	Presents student competencies that incorporate cultural
Student Competencies	responsiveness and conflict resolution in competencies. (pp. 5–6, 19–20)
	Competency C3. 1.d "Examine and address explicit or implicit personal biases toward an individual or group" (p. 17)
	 Competency D3. 2.d "Apply conflict management skills and strategies to manage intimidation, avoid and escape violence, and maintain personal safety" (p. 21)

Pennsylvania

Resources	Equity Considerations
☐ Guidance	☑ Diverse Student Populations
☑ Student Competencies	☐ Special Education
☐ Adult Competencies	☐ English Language Learners
	☐ Trauma-Informed Practices
	☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
The Pennsylvania Career Ready	Student Competencies
The Pennsylvania Career Ready Skills: An Introduction	Student Competencies Incorporates ideas of situating oneself in a diverse community and
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Skills: An Introduction	Incorporates ideas of situating oneself in a diverse community and



Rhode Island

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance ☑ Student Competencies ☑ Adult Competencies	 ☑ Diverse Student Populations ☑ Special Education ☐ English Language Learners ☑ Trauma-Informed Practices ☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
Introduction and Guidance to Rhode Island Social Emotional Learning Standards: Competencies for School and Life Success Indicators Guidance	Guidance Provides sections about different variables and their influences on students' abilities to learn social and emotional skills, including cultural expectations, disabilities, trauma, and poverty. (pp. 7–8)
Student Competencies, Adult Competencies	 Student and Adult Competencies Incorporates equitable practices and conflict resolution in competencies. For example: Student Competencies: Indicator 1D: "I accept and can describe assets related to my personal identity, including cultural and linguistic assets, race, ethnicity, disability, etc." (p. 4) Indicator 3B: "I can evaluate strategies for being respectful of others and opposing stereotyping and prejudice." (p. 11) Adult Competencies: Indicator 1E: "I can identify my biases and try to reduce their influence on my choices." (p. 5)
	 Indicator 4C: "I can use prevention, managements and resolution skills to resolve interpersonal conflicts constructively on a regular basis." (p. 17)



Virginia

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance	☑ Diverse Student Populations
☑ Student Competencies	☑ Special Education
☐ Adult Competencies	☑ English Language Learners
	☑ Trauma-Informed Practices
	☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
Virginia Social Emotional Learning	Student Competencies
Guidance Standards	Organizes competencies by grade band and incorporates
Guidance, Student Competencies	considerations for diverse student populations, trauma-informed practices, and conflict resolution.
	For example:
	Indicator ReS1: 5-6c, "I can outline and practice the use of conflict resolution skills with adult support." (p. 14)
	 Indicator SeM1: 7-8b, "I can apply coping skills to process thoughts, express my emotions and manage stressful situations." (p. 16)
	 Indicator ReS1: 9-10d, "I can discuss how to stand up to exclusion, prejudice and discrimination, even when it is not popular or easy or when no one else does." (p. 18)
Social Emotional Wellness Video	Guidance
Quick Guides Guidance	Contains a collection of quick video guides on how to implement SEL for certain groups, such as English language learners, students with disabilities, and marginalized groups.



Washington

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance ☑ Student Competencies ☑ Adult Competencies	☑ Diverse Student Populations ☑ Special Education ☑ English Language Learners ☑ Trauma-Informed Practices
	☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
Washington Social Emotional Learning Standards, Benchmarks and Indicators Student Competencies, Adult	Student and Adult Competencies Includes ideas such as cultural responsiveness, reflecting on one's own biases, and conflict resolution in competencies. For example:
Competencies	Student Competencies:
	 Benchmark 4C: "I can apply strategies to examine biases and the strength of the evidence supporting the arguments and positions of others." (p. 17)
	 Benchmark 5A: "I can identify the characteristics of equity and demonstrate respectful behavior and consideration of others." (p. 18)
	Adult Competencies:
	Benchmark 4B: "I can identify how perspectives and biases affect interactions with others and how advocacy for the rights of others contributes to the common good." (p. 16)
	 Benchmark 5B: "I can practice solving problems in a peaceful way, but when peaceful solutions don't happen, I can analyze and understand my role and take initiative for reparation." (p. 19)



Washington SEL Implementation	Guidance
Brief: Focus on Culturally Responsive Practices	Presents brief on key terms and example opportunities for equity-focused SEL practices.
Guidance	For example: Self-management and social management: • "Help students to develop coping strategies to manage acculturative stress, microaggressions, and discrimination. Provide students with opportunities to engage in critical analyses of inequality and support them to process their emotions and channel their energies toward challenging inequities and advocating for themselves, their allies, or communities."
	 "Provide educators with opportunities to listen deeply to students' life experiences and perspectives. Support educators to integrate universal design for learning (UDL), culturally responsive, and healing-informed practices. Encourage educators to consider how school policies and practices may be interpreted and implemented differently depending on one's identity, as no practice is neutral." (p.2)
Washington State Social Emotional Learning Implementation Guide Guidance	Guidance Shares guiding principles for SEL implementation that include equity focused, culturally responsive, and trauma informed and has a universal design that is inclusive of students with disabilities.



Wisconsin

Resources	Equity Considerations
☑ Guidance	☑ Diverse Student Populations
☑ Student Competencies	☐ Special Education
☑ Adult Competencies	☐ English Language Learners
	☐ Trauma-Informed Practices
	☑ Violence Prevention Efforts
Wisconsin Department of Public	Student and Adult Competencies
<u>Instruction Social and Emotional</u>	Incorporates social awareness and conflict resolution skills in
Learning Competencies	competencies.
Student Competencies, Adult	For example:
Competencies	Student Competencies:
	 Social competence No.14: "Learners will be able to assess for personal bias and evaluate strategies to oppose stereotyping." (p. 24)
	 Social competence No.19: "Learners will be able to apply negotiation skills and conflict resolution skills to resolve differences." (p. 25)
	Adult Competencies:
	 Social Competence No.13: "Learners will be able to support the rights of all individuals to reflect their family, culture, and community in society." (p. 24)
	 Social Competence No.16: "Learners will be able to use assertive communication, including refusals, in a variety of settings and with a variety of audiences to get their needs met, without negatively impacting others." (p. 24)
Advancing Equity through Social	Guidance
Emotional Learning	Provides guidance on implementing SEL in schools with
Guidance	consideration of the student experience, how to engage district and school leaders, integrating SEL into the school ecosystem, and how to leverage community partner relationships.



Additional Resources

- <u>Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Through an Equity Lens</u> (The Education Trust)
 - Presents a framework and action items to support the creation of an equitable learning environment that includes consideration for the contexts that students live in
- State Policy Bright Spots: Social and Emotional Learning and Equity (CASEL)
 - Highlights policy innovations of states moving toward equity-centered, systemic SEL
- The Role of Social and Emotional Learning in Future Workforce Readiness (Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center, The Pennsylvania State University)
 - Shows SEL's importance in career and workforce development and explores how SEL
 can mitigate equity barriers that hinder youth from underserved populations
- Whole Child Policy Toolkit (Learning Policy Institute)
 - Includes strategies, tools, and resources to promote whole child policy and systems change

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