

## Overview: Social and Emotional Learning Standards May 2017

### Introduction

Across the county, there is growing momentum to develop standards for social and emotional learning as states seek to incorporate social and emotional learning more explicitly into education practice. Such standards, sometimes referred to instead as learning “goals,” or “benchmarks,” or “competencies” articulate what students should know and be able to do with regard to SEL. This brief provides national context to inform ongoing conversations in Delaware about how best to support educators in incorporating social and emotional learning (SEL) into their teaching.

### Examples of SEL Standards<sup>i</sup>

Grade levels	Example performance descriptors for SEL standards
<b>Elementary school students</b> are expected to be able to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and manage emotions and behavior</li> <li>Recognize personal qualities and external supports</li> <li>Demonstrate skill related to achieving personal and academic goals</li> <li>Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others</li> </ul>
<b>Middle and high school students</b> are expected to be able to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify factors that cause stress as they manage their emotions and behavior</li> <li>Select healthy defense mechanisms</li> <li>Ability to reduce stress by assessing a situation</li> <li>Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions</li> <li>Explain how a change in social policy would impact the behaviors of individuals and groups</li> </ul>

### Current Delaware and National Landscape

While few states have already established free-standing, comprehensive SEL standards from K-12, many states are in the process of exploring and developing standards. For instance, eight states (California, Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Washington) are working in partnership with the Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to create and implement plans to encourage social-emotional learning in their schools. Many of these plans involve developmentally sensitive standards that show how social and emotional skills are demonstrated at each grade level.<sup>ii</sup>

Grade levels for Established Standards	National Landscape	Delaware landscape
<b>Preschool<sup>iii</sup></b>	All states in the nation, including Delaware, have articulated learning goals for SEL with developmental benchmarks at the preschool level.	Like all other states, Delaware has articulated learning goals for SEL with developmental benchmarks at the preschool level.

<b>Early grades only</b>	<b>Just seven states</b> have SEL standards/developmental benchmarks for <b>pre-school through early elementary</b> : Connecticut, Idaho, Ohio, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington. <sup>iv</sup>	Delaware Department of Education and Office of Early Learning previously convened a working group of educators that explored the development of SEL standards for grades K-2. <sup>v</sup>
<b>K-12</b> <sup>vi</sup>	As of early 2017, only <b>four states</b> (Illinois, Kansas, Maine, and West Virginia) have articulated comprehensive, free-standing learning goals for SEL, with developmental benchmarks <b>for K-12</b> .	Do not currently exist.

### What are Delaware Teacher Saying?

A survey conducted by the Rodel Teacher Council of 220 Delaware educators found support for state standards for social emotional learning and accompanying guidance for schools and educators.

Would explicitly adopting state standards for social and emotional learning, with appropriate support for educators, help to:	% Agree (Overall)	% Strongly Agree
Provide guidance on how to <b>create a positive learning environment and school climate</b> essential to social and emotional development	97%	61%
<b>Provide guidance on how adults can support students</b> through teaching practices	97%	59%
<b>Bring increased awareness of and legitimacy</b> to social and emotional skill development	97%	58%
Provide guidance on how to <b>integrate SEL with other subject areas</b>	96%	50%
<b>Provide simple, clear, and concise statements and developmental benchmarks</b> for what students should know and be able to do in terms of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making	95%	46%

### What Are the Possible Characteristics of SEL Standards and Next Steps for Delaware?

States might consider the following questions when considering SEL standards:<sup>vii</sup>

- Should standards be **comprehensive**, meaning they apply to K-12, or should they apply to only certain ages? Should they apply to adults?
- Should standards be **free-standing**, meaning they are defined separate from academic goals?
- What **range of social and emotional competencies** would be included in SEL standards?
- What **developmental benchmarks** fall within each standard?
- How should developmental benchmarks be structured? **Per grade? Or for grade bands?** What grade bands?
- What criteria should SEL standards and benchmarks meet? Some examples:
  - Be **clear and meaningful** to educators, students, parents and the community
  - Be written so that they are clear and can easily **inform practice**
  - Include an appropriate **combination of knowledge and skills**

- Be specific enough to **convey what students should learn**, but broad enough to allow for a **variety of approaches** to teaching and aligning curriculum
- Build on previously acquired skills or goals and **align with the next phase** or stage of standards
- Be specific enough to allow for classroom assessments to **measure student progress**
- How might standards be strengthened with strategies to support high-quality implementation, including adoption of **evidence-based programs**, employment of **assessments** that allow teachers to monitor student progress, and use of high-quality **professional development**?
- Should **guidance documents** be created or should existing policies be revised to integrate SEL in addition to/rather than standards?
- How can we **build on work underway in Delaware**, such as grading on non-academic skills, effort, and habits?

### Additional Resources

- The Collaborating States Initiative (CSI) Recommended Process for Developing State Policies and Guidelines to Support Social and Emotional Learning:  
[http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CSI\\_Recommended\\_Process\\_final-2-23-17-FINAL\\_1.pdf](http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CSI_Recommended_Process_final-2-23-17-FINAL_1.pdf)
- A Process for Developing and Articulating Learning Goals or Competencies for Social and Emotional Learning  
[http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Process\\_Developing\\_Articulating\\_Learning\\_Goals\\_final-2-22-17.pdf](http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Process_Developing_Articulating_Learning_Goals_final-2-22-17.pdf)
- Key Features of High Quality Standards and Guidelines to Support Social and Emotional Learning  
<http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Key-Features-final-2-22-17.pdf>

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<sup>i</sup> Examples standards adapted from existing adopted standards in various other states, such as Illinois, and are meant to be illustrative, not a recommendation

<sup>ii</sup> Education Week. (2016). Social-Emotional Learning: States Collaborate to Craft Standards, Policies.  
[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rulesforengagement/2016/08/social-emotional\\_learning\\_states\\_collaborate\\_to\\_craft\\_standards\\_policies.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rulesforengagement/2016/08/social-emotional_learning_states_collaborate_to_craft_standards_policies.html)

<sup>iii</sup> Dusenbury, L., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). State Efforts to Promote Social and Emotional Learning in Students. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. <https://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/State-Efforts-to-Promote-Social-and-Emotional-Learning-Jan-2017-1-16-17.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. 2017. K-12 SEL Standards in the 50 States – February 2017.  
<http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/K-12-Learning-Goals-for-SEL-Feb-2017.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Delaware State Board of Education. (2014). Early Learning Update.  
<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=190001&AID=6867&MID=329>

<sup>vi</sup> Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. 2017. K-12 SEL Standards in the 50 States – February 2017.  
<http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/K-12-Learning-Goals-for-SEL-Feb-2017.pdf>

<sup>vii</sup> Adapted from: O’Conner, R., De Feyter, J., Carr, A., Luo, J. L., & Romm, H. (2017). A review of the literature on social and emotional learning for students ages 3–8: Implementation strategies and state and district support (2017). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic. <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.