Reunite, Renew, and Thrive:
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Roadmap for Reopening School

JULY 2020

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CASEL developed this roadmap with the input of a broad range of stakeholders through focus groups and one-on-one interviews that included state members in the Collaborating States Initiative, districts in the Collaborating Districts Initiative, valued collaborators, and national experts.

The numerous contributing partners—including organizations that work with chiefs and school and education leaders as well as leaders in trauma, mental health, and other student and adult support systems—bring an important perspective to this compilation of evidence-based key considerations, activities, tools, and resources. During this time of social, economic, and health turbulence, we are committed to helping schools foster supportive relationships and equitable learning environments where all students and adults feel a sense of belonging and agency and harness their social and emotional competencies to heal and thrive as anti-racist community members.

CASEL would like to acknowledge and thank the following partners for their important contributions to this resource:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Educators across the country are grappling with an unprecedented set of circumstances as they prepare to welcome students and adults back to school. We face the layered impact of schools closures (e.g., loss of school-based relationships, routines, and learning); COVID-19 (e.g., on health, isolation, stress, and trauma); economic crisis (e.g., unemployment, impact on school budgets), and persistent, pernicious racial inequities exacerbated by the pandemic and amplified by the nationwide mobilization for racial justice reflected in the Black Lives Matter movement.

At the heart of this complex process is attending to the academic, social and emotional development; physical and mental health; cognitive development; and overall well-being of all students and adults in holistic ways that do not put these concerns in competition with one another. This moment also offers an opportunity to pause and imagine how to bring together educators, students, families and community partners to co-create transformative learning experiences that cultivate the social, emotional, and academic competencies needed to contribute to a caring, thriving, and just society.

More than 40 organizations have come together to produce this roadmap to support the return to school with equity-focused SEL strategies centered on relationships and built on the existing strengths of a school community. Schools—in partnerships with their communities, districts, and states—can use these four **SEL Critical Practices** to foster the competencies and learning environments that students and adults need to reunite, renew, and thrive.

SEL Critical Practices for Reopening

Take time to cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL.	Prioritize relationships that haven't been established, engage in two-way communication, and build coalitions to effectively plan for supportive and equitable learning environments that promote social, emotional, and academic learning for all students.
Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students.	Help adults feel connected, empowered, supported, and valued by cultivating collective self-care and well-being, providing ongoing professional learning, and creating space for adults to process and learn from their experiences.
Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development.	Ensure all students feel a sense of belonging; have consistent opportunities to learn about, reflect on, and practice SEL; examine the impact of the pandemic and systemic racism on their lives and communities; and access needed support through school or community partners.
Use data as an opportunity to share power, deepen relationships, and continuously improve support for students, families, and staff.	Partner with students, families, staff and community partners to learn about students' and adults' ongoing needs and strengths, and continuously improve SEL and transition efforts.

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INTRODUCTION

Our nation is currently experiencing multiple extraordinary and intertwined events—global pandemic, economic crisis, and tremendous, ongoing mobilization against police violence and other forms of anti-black and systemic racism broadly. As a result, all of our students, families, educators, and community partners have been affected in some way. Some have missed major milestones with their friends and family members. Others have experienced enormous loss—of loved ones, of jobs, of their health and physical or psychological safety, or trust in their social institutions.

The impact of these challenges is not equal and further reveals the deep connections of the racial and class inequities in our education system to the persistent disparities in the health, economic, and criminal justice systems and every facet of our society. These intersecting inequities show up in a range of processes and outcomes—such as out-of-school suspensions, police brutality, limited employment opportunities, and lack of access to quality healthcare—that disproportionately harm Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC). As we seek to reunite and renew our school communities, we need to make sense of what led us to this point and of the many and varied ways we have experienced and can respond to this time.

To rebuild thriving schools, we need to prioritize safe, supportive, culturally sustaining, and equitable learning environments that promote the social and emotional competencies of both students and adults. This requires centering our transition plans and processes in relationship-building and authentic partnerships that honor the voices and experiences of all members of the school community. It calls on all adults to reflect on and interrupt the biases we carry as individuals and reinforce within our systems. And it will mean creating space for those underserved by previous networks of participation by paying attention to factors such as access to technology, historical experiences with and perceptions of safety, language barriers, time and scheduling demands, and multiple social networks. To truly meet the needs of students and families, we will need to think about teaching and learning in expanded (time, spaces, platforms), innovative, and anti-racist ways.

CASEL, *in collaboration with more than 40 organizations*, developed this roadmap for you, **school leaders and leadership teams**, to support planning for the transition back to schools, in whatever form that takes. We recognize that SEL is not a panacea to the complex, systemic issues we face. However, SEL offers a critical foundation for supporting students and adults in the midst of great uncertainty and stress, and a long-term path for sustaining thriving communities.

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Leveraging Social and Emotional Learning to Promote Equity and Healing

The return to school this year will be unlike any other in our history and will be emotionally charged for students and adults. This moment will call on all members or our school communities to deepen our social and emotional competencies and create equitable learning environments where all students and adults process, heal, and thrive. CASEL's five core social and emotional competencies, situated within the contexts of classrooms, schools, and communities, may feel familiar to many educators, but take on deeper significance as we navigate a very different type of schooling:

Figure 1: CASEL's Framework for Systemic SEL

COMPETENCY DEFINED	SKILLS WE NEED NOW
SELF-AWARENESS, which is the ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior; and accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well- grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."	As we process the current pandemic and racial injustices, self-awareness is critical to identifying and processing our complex emotions when things are uncertain and socially turbulent, reflecting on our strengths; understanding our cultural, racial, and social identities; and examining our implicit biases.
SELF-MANAGEMENT, which is the ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations—effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself; and the ability to set and work toward goals.	Self-management is critical now as we cope with grief and loss, develop our resiliency, and express our agency through resisting injustices and practicing anti-racism.
SOCIAL AWARENESS, which is the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures; to understand social and ethical norms for behavior; and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.	Social awareness allows us to understand the broader historical and social contexts around the inequities exacerbated by COVID-19 and ongoing individual and institutional impacts of systemic racism.
RELATIONSHIP SKILLS, which is the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups, communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.	Relationship skills are essential to help us build and maintain meaningful connections across race, culture, age, and distance; support one another during collective grief and struggle; and collaboratively find solutions to new obstacles.
RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING, which is the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms; and the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.	Responsible decision-making is particularly important as we analyze the consequences of our individual and institutional actions on others' health and safety, make decisions that promote collective well-being, and engage in collective action to form a more just and equitable society.

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As schools look to SEL as a transformative foundation for reopening, it will be important to examine not just what competencies are emphasized, but how and where learning takes place. Figure 1 (pg. 5) represents a systemic model of SEL—the rings represent the multiple settings where students form meaningful relationships and learn about, practice, and apply social and emotional competencies. This includes engaging in explicit SEL instruction, participating in instructional activities that integrate SEL into academic learning, and engaging with the entire school staff as well as community partners and out-of-school time educators in a variety of social and emotional supports.

Regardless of whether students are physically present in classrooms or community organizations, relationships with teachers, school leaders and support staff, families, and community members will shape their learning environments and their social, emotional, and academic growth.

A safe, supportive, and equitable learning environment will call on adults to:

- **Engage in practices that affirm diverse social and cultural identities;**
- **Cultivate a sense of belonging and community;**
- **Provide structures for physical and emotional safety;**
- **Use engaging, relevant, and culturally responsive instruction built on an understanding of how children and adolescents grow and develop socially, emotionally, and academically;**
- **Create space for student voice and agency;**
- **Offer frequent opportunities for students to discuss and practice anti-racism and develop collaborative solutions to address inequities; and**
- **Provide tiered supports that meet the needs of all students.**

Understanding How Students' Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning and Development Happen

Academic learning and cognitive growth are inextricably linked with social and emotional development and environments. For example, students learn best when they are focused, find information relevant and engaging, and are actively involved in learning. This requires them to have a ready and focused brain, use emotional regulation skills, and also be in an environment where they feel physically and emotionally safe, connected, included, and supported.

Trauma-Informed Lens

The attention to students' social, emotional and academic development is particularly important now, as many students and adults may have experienced extraordinary stress and trauma.

Trauma is a disruption to development that is agnostic to the event. It produces alterations in mood, focus, concentration, memory, behavior, emotions, and trust. A deep understanding of how stress and trauma affect the brain and body can help guide our response—a response that needs to be comprehensive, holistic, multi-dimensional, and specific. By incorporating both SEL and an asset-based, culturally sensitive trauma-informed lens, schools can create a foundation for supporting whole-child development.

Although students were not in buildings, and there are valid concerns of "learning loss," we also need to recognize that learning, growth, and development continued. Parents, caregivers, and educators, including in- and out-of-school time staff, created innovative ways to connect and engage students in learning, and students gained new knowledge and practiced social, emotional, and academic competencies in informal ways as they navigated current realities. Given the complexities and varied formal and informal learning experiences, it is more important than ever to deepen our understanding of how social, emotional, and academic learning and development co-occur. School leaders have an opportunity to create new types of learning experiences and adaptive systems of support that leverage students' assets to help them cope and navigate, respond to their unique needs and interests, and help them strengthen academic, social, and emotional competencies within rich and supportive learning environments.

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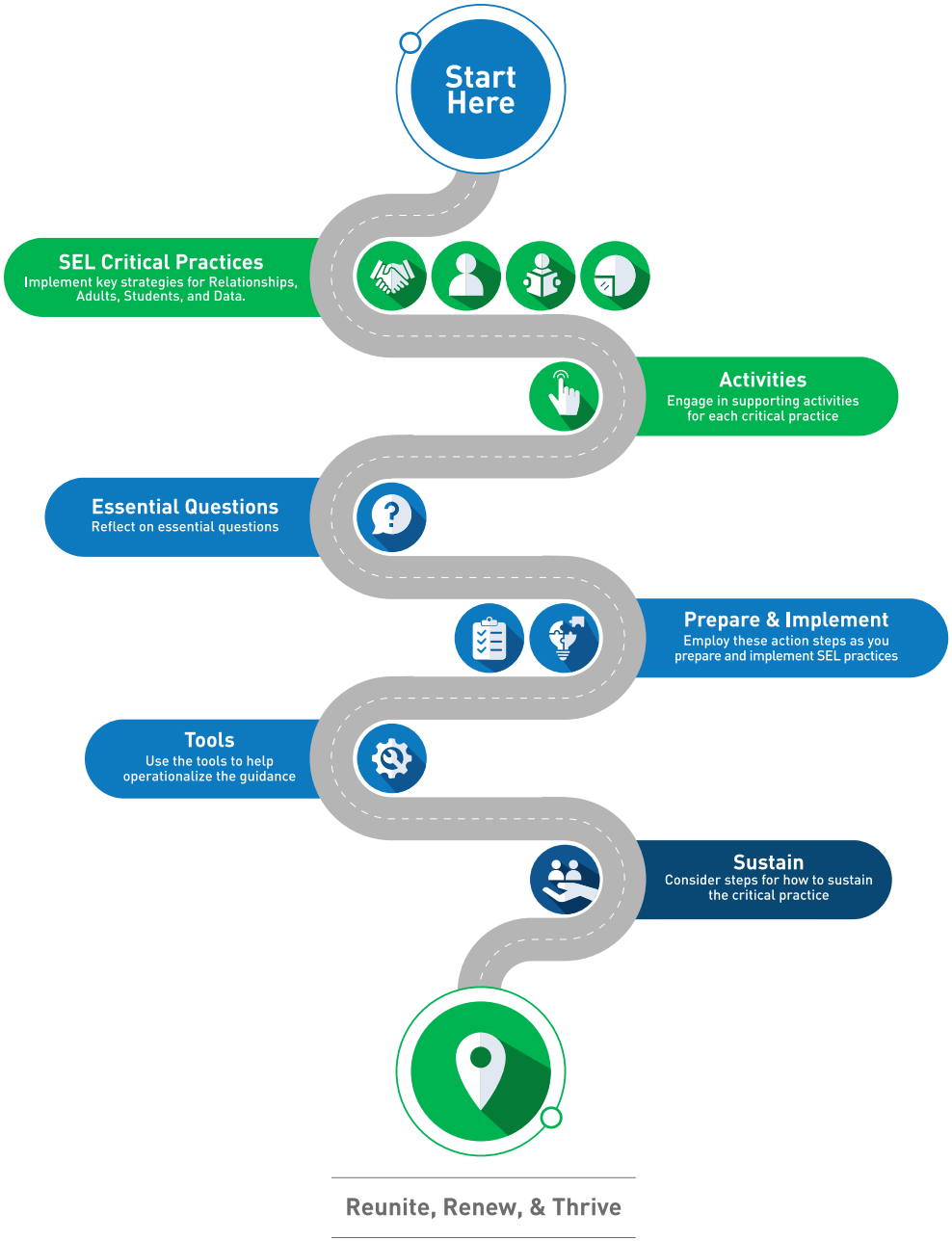
HOW TO USE THIS ROADMAP

Schools at any stage of SEL implementation can use this roadmap to build upon existing efforts around community-building, school climate improvement, student well-being and mental health, trauma-responsive learning environments, restorative practices, and social and emotional competency development. It is also intended to help you reflect and act upon what you can do that is different to leverage the historical moment we are in. While this guidance is written for schools, states and districts will also play critical roles in ensuring schools have the resources, support, and guidance needed to carry out these actions.

This roadmap offers four **SEL Critical Practices** divided into specific activities to help schools create supportive learning environments and foster social, emotional, and academic learning as we reunite and renew through a global pandemic and mobilization against systemic racism. Each **activity** provides a set of **essential questions** intended to prompt you and your school community to reflect and pause, followed by a roadmap of action steps as you **prepare** and **implement** SEL practices throughout the school year and beyond. Each activity also provides links to a curated set of user-friendly tools to help operationalize the guidance. At the end of each Critical Practice you can find recommendations to **sustain** the work. If you have printed this toolkit, you can access all linked tools at casel.org/sel-in-action/reopening-with-SEL or by scanning this code:

You can adapt the guidance and tools to meet the needs of your school community as you leverage SEL to reunite, renew, and thrive. Use this reflection activity and organizer with your team to preview the full roadmap and prioritize the activities that are the right next step for your school. We recommend prioritizing at least one activity in each Critical Practice to get started.



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Terms Used in this Roadmap

"School leaders" and **"school leadership team"**:
we use these terms broadly and encourage schools to consider distributive leadership models that include administrators, teaching and support staff, family and community partners, students, and those who have been historically left out of school decision-making.

"Anti-racist":
we use this term to refer to practices aimed intentionally at dismantling racism.

"Equity-focused":
we use this term to refer to strategies aimed at improving equity in experiences and outcomes for all students and adults, across race, gender identity, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background, family income, and other characteristics.

"Adults":
refers to all adults that connect to students whether in the school, home, or community setting;

"Educators":
refers to in-school and out-of-school staff providing instruction and support to students;

"School community":
refers to members of the broad school ecosystem including administrators, staff, students, families, community partners, and others who may be connected to the school's success.

"Staff":
refers to those who work within the school building, including teachers, administrators, para-professionals, custodial staff, school mental health professionals, cafeteria workers, and parent liaisons, among others;

"Community partners":
include youth and family service organizations, afterschool and summer programs, youth leadership initiatives, youth employment and apprenticeships, mental and behavioral health organizations, and community sports and arts organizations, to name a few.

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SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 1

Take time to cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL.

The coming school year will be characterized by a complex mix of emotions, logistical challenges, constant change, inspired activism, and economic uncertainty that will permeate all aspects of schooling. By taking the time to prioritize relationships and plan for SEL, you establish a stronger foundation for the challenging work ahead. This SEL Critical Practice will help you honor the lived experiences and perspectives of all members of the school community, and collaboratively develop a responsive plan for re-engaging students and adults in a new type of learning experience. This section will guide you through the following activities:

- Foster new relationships that elevate student and family voice,
- Use two-way communication strategies,
- Examine the impact of SEL efforts, and
- Build a broad coalition and integrate SEL into your plans.

"As we sit down and really try to figure out what is going to be a long haul of reopening slowly...we're going to need such a different approach to the traditional 'show up and sit in your seat.' We need all partners at the table together. And we need young people—and families—at the table telling us where they learn best and how they would like to learn." —Karen Pittman, President and CEO of the Forum for Youth Investment

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Take time to cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL.

1.1 Foster new relationships that elevate the voices and perspectives of students and families.

Returning to school during this unprecedented time will require new types of relationships that elevate diverse perspectives, especially if there are voices or groups who have been left out of conversations and decisions about schooling in the past. Inclusive relationship-building with all members of the school community will help schools prioritize resources, identify knowledge gaps, and ensure that transition and distance learning plans are culturally responsive and meet the needs of all learners. Take the time to build new relationships with those who have been traditionally left out of school decision-making and those who have not been well-served by existing efforts.

Throughout the roadmap, we reference multiple types of relationships—adult to adult, educator to student, student to student—that are all critical to SEL and transitioning back to school. In this activity, we are focused on supporting schools in identifying relationships with school community members that have yet to be formed or need to be amplified.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How will we connect with students and families whose voices have not traditionally been elevated? How will we use their perspectives to improve and deepen school-family-community partnership?
- How will we work to ensure that school norms, values, and cultural representations reflect and affirm the experiences of students, families, staff, and community partners?
- How will we maintain these relationships long-term to ensure rich, relevant learning experiences and supportive and equitable learning environments?

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PREPARE

- Find out which **students and families** have received individual outreach from staff and what barriers have prevented outreach to others. With staff, map out existing relationships to identify where gaps in connections exist.
- Create **cross-role teams** with well-connected community partners, staff, and family or student volunteers to double-down on **personalized outreach efforts** and stay in touch with students and families who have not been fully engaged by the school. Learn from those who were disconnected during the building closures to find out what they need to **stay engaged during future closures**.
- Prepare a variety of **creative strategies** (e.g., hosting virtual or in-person events through faith-based organizations, community groups, social media, etc.) during the summer and beginning of year to engage students and families as partners in plans for reopening. Plan for differences in technology access, languages, and other needs.
- **Connect with community partners** to see how they may be positioned to support relationship-building and identify potential new partners who have strong relationships with students and families.

IMPLEMENT

- Provide staff with professional learning, space, and time to build supportive and **culturally responsive relationships** with families and students, particularly those they have not traditionally formed relationships with.
- Work with your cross-role team and other community partners who are well-connected to students and families to lead **small-group or one-on-one discussions** about their experiences, hopes for their children's education, and ways to deepen school, family, and community relationships. For example, host in-person or virtual conversation circles, coffee chats, office hours, or other small meet-ups to give space for listening and processing.

TOOLS

- Relationship Mapping **(Harvard Graduate School of Education)** This strategy helps ensure that each student has a relationship with at least one caring adult in school. This can also be done virtually.
- Strategies for Equitable Family Engagement **(State Support Network)** This overview is organized around five categories of equitable family engagement strategies, offering summaries of research and examples of school practices.
- Tools for Educators to Listen and Learn From Families During COVID-19 School Closures **(Culturally Responsive Education Hub)** This tool includes sample emails, call scripts, and post-conversation reflection and action in both English and Spanish.
- Responsive Circles for COVID-19 **(International Institute for Restorative Practices)** This practice uses familiar restorative questions tailored to the current moment to build knowledge about the experiences of the community.
- Community-Care Strategies for Schools During the Coronavirus Crisis **(WestEd)** This brief offers guiding questions and specific strategies for building community and connectedness among staff, students, and families.
- Key Concepts for Leveraging Chronic Absence During the Coronavirus Pandemic **(Attendance Works)** This framework and list of strategies supports connecting with students and families to reduce chronic absenteeism.

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Take time to cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL.

1.2 Use two-way communication strategies to inform, engage, and listen to members of the school community.

More than ever, students, educators, and families need to hear from their leaders that they are safe and supported and feel that their own hopes and concerns are addressed. You can reassure students, educators, and families by communicating clearly and consistently about the school's transition plans and ongoing updates. Share why the school is prioritizing SEL right now to encourage healing and relationship-building, foster equitable and engaging learning environments, and create a foundation for deeper academic learning. Invite and listen to input from all school community members, then share back how you'll use their perspectives to inform SEL strategies and transition plans.

- How will we ensure clear, consistent, and culturally responsive communications that keeps all staff, students, families, and community partners informed and engaged?
- What are the most important messages that we want to communicate with all members of the school community?
- What existing channels and new feedback loops will we put in place to listen to our school community, take what we hear, and use the information to inform our actions?

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PREPARE

- Organize a renewed effort to gather **updated contact information** for all students and families (e.g., phone numbers and addresses of families and close relatives, workplaces, or other community organizations families are closely tied to).
- Identify and build on **existing communication channels** that were effective at reaching, hearing from, and responding to school community members during building closures. Address any gaps, and ensure communications are inclusive and culturally sensitive, in home languages, and **accessible** in a variety of interactive formats (e.g., newsletters, social media, virtual/in-person town halls, learning management systems).
- Outline **key communication messages** for educators, students, families, and community partners, including: important updates about transition plans, what SEL means, and how social and emotional competencies and supportive environments can support students and adults through the transition and beyond.

IMPLEMENT

- Use regular **staff communications** to reinforce the importance of SEL during the transition back and invite input on strategies the school plans to use to implement SEL.
- Create equitable and developmentally appropriate structures for **students to regularly communicate** with adults about their perspectives on what's working well and any additional needs. Consider how to meaningfully engage students through formal and informal connections, such as lunch or snack break conversations, class activities, school meetings, or community gatherings.
- Establish consistent **family and community partner communications** through, for example, virtual or in-person weekly chats with school leaders and teachers, open PTO and school planning meetings, and ongoing discussions about how to support students' social, emotional and academic learning (see 3.5).
- Make clear and identify how input and perspectives from the school community will shape how the school approaches the transition.

TOOLS

- **Establish Structures for Two-Way Communication (CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL)** This webpage includes questions for planning communications about SEL and a tool for identifying stakeholders and developing a communication strategy.
- **Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education: Culturally Sensitive Communication (Teaching Tolerance)** This selection from the publication *Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education* includes concrete strategies for culturally sensitive communication, inclusion, and connection-building among families and engagement with community problems.
- **Developing Life Skills in Children: A Road Map for Communicating With Parents (Learning Heroes)** These slides share research on how families respond to information about SEL and what kind of messaging is most effective.
- **Engage all Stakeholders in Foundational Learning (CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL)** This webpage offers essential questions for planning learning opportunities, sample presentations, articles, videos, and a downloadable planning template.
- **Impact of SEL (CASEL)** This webpage offers a variety of resources for communicating about SEL, including a customizable slide deck on the research supporting SEL.

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Take time to cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL.

1.3 Examine where SEL efforts have been impactful and where more support is needed.

During this time of disruption and rapid innovation, it's important to examine SEL efforts prior to and during the pandemic to determine strengths you can build on, school and community resources to leverage, and areas that need improvement or innovation moving forward. Determine whether strategies equitably support all students' social, emotional, and academic development and learning environments; whether school and community resources are efficiently leveraged to meet the needs of students and families; and which programs or practices you should continue, modify, or stop in the new year. Moving forward, you'll also want to establish ongoing continuous improvement processes that ensure all students and adults are fully supported throughout the year (see Critical Practice 4).

- In what ways are SEL strategies already being implemented to engage and meet the needs of students and their families—in-person and across distance? How have these strategies impacted students and families differently (e.g., by race, economic status, home language, etc.), and what inequities have not been addressed?
- How do we efficiently leverage existing school and community programs and resources to better support all students and families?
- How will we use data to identify effective strategies our school will build on this fall to create supportive learning environments and promote social, emotional, and academic learning for all students?

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PREPARE

- Develop and administer **family, educator, and student** surveys**,** interviews**, and/or** focus groups to capture their experiences with school closures, distance learning, and previous SEL efforts. Also ask about **individual needs** that will impact the ability to engage in school (e.g., loss of a loved one, housing or employment instability).
- Identify how **educators** effectively implemented SEL, relationship-building, and distance learning strategies and those who may require additional support in facilitating new types of learning experiences.
- Conduct an **inventory, audit, or resource map** of existing resources, strategies or programs for supporting student and family well-being available through the school or **community partners.**

IMPLEMENT

- Work with students and adult partners to analyze **existing data** (such as school climate, student growth in social and emotional competence, quality of SEL implementation, attendance, engagement, and direct feedback from students, families, and staff) to determine which existing SEL-related programs and practices were most effective in meeting needs. **Disaggregate data** by race, SES, language learner status, special education, etc., to uncover disparities in how students experience building closures and previous SEL efforts.
- Use the **focal student approach** to learn more about what students furthest from opportunities and success are experiencing, what they most need, and how they best learn.
- Consider how existing strategies and resources can be used in various reopening scenarios. Identify strengths, overlaps, and gaps to learn **what to continue, what to modify, and what to stop doing in the future.**

TOOLS

- Interview and Survey Your Community About the Path Forward **(CASEL)** This process, sample letters, and survey templates can be used to assess current successes and areas for additional support in your school community.
- SEL Effort Inventory and Analysis **(CASEL)** This interview protocol and inventory template can be used to review both schoolwide SEL efforts and efforts used by individuals and school partners to prioritize the most impactful practices for the coming year.
- Administer Distance Learning Surveys to Students, Families, and Staff **(Panorama Education)** These downloadable open source surveys can be used to elevate student voice, teacher/staff/administrator feedback, and family and community needs.
- For Educators: Resource Mapping Strategy **(Harvard Graduate School of Education)** This strategy helps educators identify and analyze existing school resources and programs related to SEL, climate, and well-being to make informed decisions.
- Focal Students: Equity in the Classroom **(Webinar from the National Equity Project)** This approach supports educators to learn deeply from a few students, particularly those who are not well-served by current systems, to change practices to impact a greater number of students. Consider this approach as you identify focal students who are disengaged this fall.

For more, including tools for conducting an equity audit and facilitating focus groups, see the full tool index at casel.org/sel-in-action/reopening-with-SEL.

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Take time to cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL.

1.4 Build a broad coalition to create and maintain a safe, supportive, and equitable environment for all students and adults by integrating SEL and academic supports into plans for reopening schools.

To best serve all students through a time of stress and uncertainty, schools will need inclusive decision-making processes that leverage the critical insights of those from the full community. Form a coalition that includes representation from educators, mental health professionals, community partners, families, and students to develop a plan for rebuilding safe, supportive, and equitable environments that provide robust opportunities for social, emotional, and academic learning in the multiple spaces students grow and develop (e.g., after-school, Head Start, and summer programs, see 3.5). Ensure that your coalition includes members from historically marginalized groups, including those impacted deeply by events during school building closures.

A broad coalition of diverse stakeholders will help set a vision for reuniting and renewing the school community, communicate the importance of SEL and supportive learning environments, identify core goals that resonate across the community, and guide implementation of a plan that will meet all students' needs.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are the shared priorities and goals of our students, staff, families, and community partners as they think about the upcoming school year?
- Which staff, family, and community partners need to be in the room and what roles will they assume to ensure that decisions and plans respond to their hopes and concerns?
- How will we prepare students when they return to school buildings for potentially new situations and the possibility of intermittent distance learning?
- How will we develop a sense of community and provide comfort and support to students who are struggling, even if physically distanced?
- How will we work together, within, and across systems to holistically support all students, regardless of where and how instruction is taking place?

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PREPARE

- **Invite** potential members for your transition coalition, sharing why you would like them to participate and what specific roles and responsibilities they may take on. Consider how best to give **students** a seat at the table and prepare adults to listen to them—either by including them in the broader coalition or forming a separate student committee that meets with the coalition.
- Develop a **shared vision and goals** for how the school will support students socially, emotionally, academically, cognitively, and physically during the new school year. Invite families and partners to share insights based on how they create supportive learning environments that cultivate social and emotional competencies outside of school.
- Review **feedback, data, and existing resources** as a coalition (see 1.3), and be transparent about any funding or resource limitations. Work with coalition members to problem-solve obstacles (such as thinking more expansively about existing roles), and identify strategies for addressing gaps (such as deepening or expanding partnerships with community organizations that may have particular expertise in mental health/trauma supports, virtual engagement, or other areas of need).

IMPLEMENT

- **Develop a plan** for how the school will rebuild learning environments that support all students holistically, based on your goals and resources. The rest of this roadmap will help you identify specific SEL strategies, and you can use this organizer to identify priorities and guide your planning process.
- Develop a **calendar** of when the coalition will regularly convene to review progress toward shared goals, and make adjustments as necessary.
- Provide ongoing **updates, professional learning, and support** for educators focused on the reopening plans (see 2.3).

TOOLS

- Build a Transition Coalition **(CASEL)** This worksheet can help you prepare to recruit members of a coalition to help set a schoolwide SEL vision and goals.
- Develop a Shared Vision and Goals for Social and Emotional Learning **(CASEL)** This tool provides processes for articulating a vision statement that reflects input from the full school community and using that vision to develop specific, measurable SEL-focused goals to drive transition planning.
- Youth-Adult Partnership Roadmap to Agency **(Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning)** This rubric provides a means to understand, assess, and improve youth-adult partnerships to increase agency and situate young people as full partners.
- Liberatory Design: Your Toolkit to Design for Equity **(National Equity Project and Stanford d.school's K12Lab)** This card deck adapts the design thinking process to include steps that center equity and mindsets that should underlie all work.
- Pursuing Social and Emotional Development Through a Racial Equity Lens: A Call to Action **(Aspen Institute)** This publication identifies ways that equity and social, emotional, and academic development can be mutually reinforcing bodies of work.

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SUSTAINING CRITICAL PRACTICE 1

Maintain strong relationships, deepen partnerships, and adjust plans as needed.

- Continue to connect with **family and community partners** regularly to deepen relationships, learn about their perspectives and emerging needs, and authentically bring them into decision-making as the year progresses. Meet with **students** in small groups regularly (weekly or bi-weekly) to hear their perspectives on what is working and what they want to change.
- Continuously improve **communication practices** to reach and engage school community members equitably and to establish communication routines in case of another building closure.
- Regularly **convene your coalition** to **review progress** toward goals and work together to make course corrections and respond to any changing health guidelines (e.g., if the school will be transitioning to in-person or distance learning). **Communicate back** to the larger community about how their input is translating into action.

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 2

Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students.

Educators shoulder significant responsibility in helping young people understand, process, and heal from these momentous events. But in order to effectively support students, adults will need to feel connected, supported, valued, and capable of taking on the challenges ahead. This SEL Critical Practice will help you create working conditions (e.g., time, space, professional learning) and well-designed opportunities for educators to engage in self-care, develop supportive staff relationships, and build their capacity for promoting students' SEL through equitable learning environments. This section will guide you through the following activities:

- Allow space for connection and healing among adults,
- Ensure access to mental health and trauma supports,
- Identify opportunities for innovation and anti-racist practices, and
- Provide embedded professional learning.

"In this moment of great uncertainty, it is imperative that we model grace and compassion and how we are all struggling and adjusting to this new reality. That's going to be imperative not just for the next month but for the next year, given what we are all going through." —Dr. Kyla Johnson-Trammell, Superintendent, Oakland Unified School District

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Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students.

2.1 Allow space for connection, listening, and healing among all adults in the school community.

When educators have an opportunity to engage in self-care and process their own emotions, they are more likely to co-regulate, relate, and communicate in ways that help students express and manage their emotions, make sense of their experiences, and decrease the likelihood that a stressful event becomes traumatizing. To support healing and self-care, design safe and responsive spaces for educators to build relationships, support and reinvigorate one another, and collectively process their emotions and experiences.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do we maximize supportive connections between all adults in the school community in ways that may look different from previous years?
- How can we use this moment to help tap into educators' sense of purpose to fuel their practice and support their well-being?
- How are we creating spaces for adults to focus on self-care in ways that model what we want to happen for our students?

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PREPARE

- Establish dedicated space, time, and agreements for staff to come together to build relationships and engage in **collective healing**.
- Create opportunities for quick individual **staff check-ins** with school leaders. Ensure any **new staff** are paired with existing staff members to support their welcome into the community.
- Foster a culture of **staff self-care**. For example, ask all staff to assess their current self-care needs and develop a plan, including setting realistic boundaries around work. Engage community partners in providing self-care activities (e.g., yoga, exercise, mindfulness). Encourage "self-care in the background," such as different music, fragrances, or art that provide a source of stress relief.

IMPLEMENT

- **Integrate SEL practices** into staff meetings and rituals that provide intentional, regular listening and sharing among adults (e.g., circle practices, CASEL's SEL Signature Practices, weekly prompts that deepen reflection and connection, mindfulness practices).
- Implement virtual or in-person **healing circles** or other opportunities for staff to share and process their emotions and experiences with the pandemic and the social mobilization against racism.
- Engage staff in learning how to teach, model, and practice **Constructivist Listening** (strategy for intellectually demanding/emotionally challenging conversations) in pairs or groups.

TOOLS

- Creating Staff Shared Agreements **(CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL)** This tool provides a process for co-developing agreements about how all staff will work together, communicate, and interact to achieve a shared vision.
- Educator Resilience and Trauma-Informed Self-Care: Self-Assessment and Planning Tool **(Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at AIR)** This self-care assessment asks teachers to first reflect on their current self-care practices and then helps them build a plan for the future.
- Self-Care Circle **(Circle Forward, via Greater Good Science Center)** This circle protocol can be used with adults or students to center themselves and reflect on and share ways to practice self-care.
- SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook **(CASEL)** This mini-book provides practical ways to introduce and broaden the use of SEL practices in classrooms, schools, and workplaces.
- Listening as a Leadership Strategy: Getting Started With Constructivist Listening **(National Equity Project)** These slides introduce constructivist listening and include a practice activity to try with staff.
- 5 Minute Chats With the Principal **(CASEL with support from NAESP)** This sample check-in agenda and questions can be used by school leaders when connecting individually with staff members.
- Flexibility, Listening Without Judgment Critical to Support Educators of Color **(Education Dive)** This brief article offers essential perspective, particularly for white school leaders, to build understanding of the disparate experiences of educators of color.

For more, including strategies for hosting virtual circles and reflection tools to use during meetings, see the full tool index at casel.org/sel-in-action/reopening-with-SEL.

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Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students.

2.2 Ensure access to mental health and trauma supports for adults as needed.

As staff reunite and return to school, adults will have varied experiences and stressors, and some may have additional mental health needs (including depression, anxiety, grief, post-traumatic stress disorder). It will be critical to have a system in place and identify school-based counselors and community partners to support the overall health and well-being, both physical and mental, of all staff. Supportive conditions that prioritize staff wellness for all adults (see 2.1) help prevent secondary trauma and compassion fatigue. In addition, it will be important to identify and connect those who need additional support with school, district, or community resources for more targeted mental health support.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can your school put staff well-being at the center of school culture?
- How can you best leverage community partners to support the range of needs and experiences of your staff?
- How can you model and normalize asking for support?

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PREPARE

- **Meet with all staff individually** before school begins to learn about their needs and experiences in the past months.
- Establish a **process** to identify and provide support for adults at higher risk for **significant stress or trauma**.
- **Identify community partners** that can support school staff in addressing trauma and mental health issues and promoting wellness.

IMPLEMENT

- **Establish a** tap-in/tap-out protocol for educators experiencing an immediate need that would require another staff member to briefly step-in.
- Formalize new and existing **partnerships with mental health providers** and co-plan effective ways to align on referral processes and support school staff.
- Continue to **check in** regularly on staff needs and wellness, and ensure school processes effectively connect staff with additional supports when needed.

TOOLS

- Compassion Resilience Toolkit for Schools **(Wisconsin Initiative for Stigma Elimination)** This toolkit addresses teacher compassion fatigue and how to build resilience.
- The Educator Context and Stress Spectrum **(Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at AIR)** This tool supports educators in gaining a greater awareness of how their current personal and professional context affects their levels of stress in the time of COVID-19.
- Self-Care Strategies for Educators During the Coronavirus Crisis **(WestEd)** This brief offers practical guidance for educators who face the stresses of the pandemic, school building closures, online service provision, and quarantine conditions.
- Support for Teachers Affected by Trauma **(STAT)** This online curriculum supports teachers dealing with secondary traumatic stress.
- Psychological First Aid **(National Child Traumatic Stress Network)** This six-hour online learning module features innovative activities, video demonstrations, and mentor tips from the nation's trauma experts.

For more, including information about finding mental health services and additional virtual training opportunities, see the full tool index at casel.org/sel-in-action/reopening-with-SEL.

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Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students.

2.3 Capture this moment to identify opportunities for innovation and anti-racist practices.

Although the health, racial equity, and economic challenges of these past months have been deeply painful, they have also offered an opportunity to learn from experiences with new modes of teaching and learning, confront inequities, and lead human-centered structural change. As you look toward the next school year and start to process these events, engage staff in reflecting on what they learned during distance learning and how they are processing the ongoing mobilization against systemic racism to chart a course forward. Innovate in how you engage with community partners to re-align support systems for all students and families by collaboratively identifying needs, expertise, and shared goals (see 1.4 and 3.3).

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- In what new ways can you maximize the strengths of all adults who are part of our community—in and out of school—to provide holistic support to your students?
- What have educators learned about the opportunities and challenges of distance learning, and how might these insights help improve existing teaching and learning structures?
- How can you help educators expand anti-racist practices, including learning about and building skills to reflect on their own identities and biases, and confront racial injustice where it happens?

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PREPARE

- Facilitate formal and informal conversations with educators to **share best practices** for distance or blended learning and **evaluate successes, challenges, and areas of need** that may also apply to classroom settings.
- Explore new ways to **team teachers** to play to their strengths to deliver instruction and student support, through distance learning or in person.
- Work with staff to assess adult capacity around **anti-racist practices and engaging with students as partners** in the design of learning spaces and content.

IMPLEMENT

- Build **consistent time into the schedule for staff to collaborate** with each other, community partners, and families to identify innovations for improving distance learning plans, technology use, and ways to help students develop social and emotional competencies through in-person and potential distance learning.
- Provide opportunities for staff to partner with students in the **design of inclusive and anti-racist learning spaces and content,** identifying innovative ways to approach teaching and learning, in-person and/or through distance learning.
- Work with community partners to design innovative strategies to **re-engage students, provide mentoring or tutoring, and provide enriching learning experiences,** including expanded learning time.

TOOLS

- **Leading Through the Portal to Claim our Humanity (National Equity Project)** This article highlights how the current moment marks an opportunity to practice radical compassion, confront inequities, re-order our priorities to focus on our collective well-being, and lead human-centered, structural change. If sharing this article with staff as a launch for discussion, see this related discussion guide.
- **Futures Protocol (National School Reform Faculty)** This protocol harnesses the creative energy of a team for expanding and envisioning opportunities and paths forward, focusing on collective brainstorming on the best possible future scenario.
- **Avoiding Racial Equity Detours (EdChange)** This short article describes four common ways schools and districts attempt to address equity while avoiding the discomfort of directly challenging racism and racist structures and policies, and follows with five principles to guide equity actions.
- **If We Aren't Addressing Racism, We Aren't Addressing Trauma (Simmons, via ASCD)** This blog from Dena Simmons provides critical context to push educators to "interrogate, with an anti-racist lens, the curriculum, learning experiences, and school policies to which our Black students are subject."

For more, including suggested logistical and policy reforms and a tool for more equitable education design, see the full tool index at casel.org/sel-in-action/reopening-with-SEL.

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Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students.

2.4 Provide embedded professional learning to build educators' capacity to support students' social, emotional, and academic growth.

This fall, all adults who interact with youth will need skills and knowledge to engage in culturally responsive practices and create equitable learning environments that promote all students' social, emotional, and academic competencies across new learning formats. Recognizing that educators may feel pressure to focus solely on academic content when school reopens, focus professional learning on helping educators understand that academic growth is deeply connected to developmental relationships and SEL. Professional learning can also help teachers identify and effectively implement culturally responsive practices that help encourage positive student-adult interactions, promote equitable learning environments, and facilitate academic, social, and emotional learning. Engage community partners and school-based mental health professionals to do this collective work alongside educators and other staff.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do you create the structures to provide job-embedded professional learning for educators to holistically support students socially, emotionally, and academically?
- What are educators' professional learning needs around creating equitable learning environments, engaging in culturally responsive practices, teaching SEL, and integrating SEL into instruction?
- How will we ensure scaffolded, high-quality professional learning that is supported by effective coaching, whether virtual or in-person?

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PREPARE

- Plan the **infrastructure** (e.g., time, resources, peer collaboration) for ongoing and responsive professional learning and resource-sharing.
- Define **professional learning priorities** aligned to your school's goals (see 1.4), and identify metrics that track observable, measurable progress in staff's professional development.
- Examine professional learning from **evidence-based SEL programs** and practices to create a shared understanding of social and emotional competencies and SEL practices.
- Explore resources from **community, district, and state partners** to provide professional learning, guidance, and tools on identified needs such as systemic approaches to SEL, cultural responsiveness, the impact of trauma on learning, the impact of the pandemic, and ways to confront racial inequities.

IMPLEMENT

- Provide professional learning and resources to all school staff on a range of topics (e.g., explicit and implicit bias, equity, trauma, and cultural responsiveness) to build a broader understanding and network of support.
- Create opportunities for **aligned** professional learning and resources for teachers, families, community partners, and students as developmentally appropriate. Include learning on the neuroscience of social threat and trauma and the integration of SEL and academic learning.
- Provide educators with **coaching and feedback** on their SEL practices, including enhanced opportunities for peer coaching and learning, and co-learning with families and community partners (see 4.2).

TOOLS

- **Professional Learning Plan for SEL (CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL)** This webpage includes a tool to organize a customized professional learning plan for school staff that is clearly tied to the schoolwide goals for SEL, can be assessed for effectiveness throughout the year, draws upon available resources, and includes intentional follow-up to ensure that new practices are sustained.
- **Building Trauma-Sensitive Schools (NCSSLE)** This online module and handouts provide examples of ways to incorporate trauma sensitivity into the classroom.
- **Stress and the Brain (Turnaround for Children)** This professional learning packet explains how stress impacts the developing brain and related tools (made to accompany this edition of The 180 Podcast).
- **Addressing Race and Trauma in the Classroom: A Resource for Educators (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network)** This professional learning tool defines key terms, describes developmental differences in how children may be affected by racial trauma, and offers recommendations for creating a more trauma-informed classroom.
- **Common Beliefs Survey: Teaching Racially and Ethnically Diverse Students (Teaching Tolerance, via Greater Good Science Center)** This professional learning activity leads staff to reflect on their beliefs and then critically examine commonly held beliefs about how to meet the learning needs of racially and ethnically diverse students.
- **Mindful Reflection Process for Developing Culturally Responsive Practices (Dray & Wisneski [2011], via Greater Good Science Center)** This independent reflective practice guides educators to process a challenging interaction with a student by examining their own assumptions, prejudices, and biases and consider how they affect their interactions with and expectations of their students to develop more culturally and linguistically responsive approaches.

For more, including additional learning modules about teacher and student well-being, self-care, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), see the full tool index at casel.org/sel-in-action/reopening-with-SEL.

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SUSTAINING CRITICAL PRACTICE 2

Strengthen adult connections, self-care, competencies, and capacity.

- Ensure regular **time and space for adults to reflect, heal, connect** with each other, and take care of their needs. Continue to partner with community organizations to provide culturally responsive trauma and mental health support.
- Collect ongoing **data on staff needs, wellness, professional learning outcomes, and their capacity** for supporting students (see 4.2). Track coaching and feedback via walkthrough tools or coaching logs for purposes of schoolwide data reflection and continuous improvement.
- Include **staff self-care plans** in any supervision process and establish schoolwide expectations that promote self-care such as avoiding emails or phone/video calls on evenings and weekends.
- Continue to strengthen **collaboration and professional learning** in partnership with all adults in your building to continuously improve and align practices that promote SEL. Create **professional learning communities** on the intersection of SEL, trauma-informed practices, equity, and healing-centered culturally responsive practices.

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 3

Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development.

The shifts in these last months have heightened our understanding of how students' social and emotional competencies (including how they cope with stresses, maintain relationships across distance, and make responsible decisions in unstructured learning environments) support their learning and development. Students are best able to develop and apply these competencies when caring adults work together to create equitable learning environments where all students feel like they belong and have consistent opportunities to learn about, reflect on, and practice SEL, explore their social and cultural identities, and express their voice and agency. This Critical Practice will help you intentionally build inclusive environments—even with physical distancing—that center student social, emotional, and academic development. This section will guide you through the following activities:

- Build adult-student and peer relationships,
- Weave in opportunities for SEL practice and reflection,
- Implement a comprehensive system of supports,
- Discuss the impact of the pandemic and racial inequity, and
- Collaborate with families and partners.

"SEL—that is the work. The work isn't just about the acceleration of academics—certainly we are going to need to pay attention to that. But when they get back, the first thing that's going to be on their minds and their teachers' mind is—Am I safe? And secondly, do I belong in this school? Only then are they going to think about the learning to make up. But first and foremost, we've got to establish the environment that says we care about you."—Cesar Rivera, Principal, Samuels Elementary, Denver, CO

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Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development.

3.1 Intentionally build structures that promote supportive adult-student and peer relationships.

Students of all ages are grappling with a range of emotions including anger, fear, uncertainty, optimism, and motivation. The ways in which students process their complex emotions and experiences will be influenced by whether they have at least one "secure base" to turn to. As you transition back, ensure each student has at least one trusting, supportive adult relationship at school, particularly for BIPOC students and ELLs, who often receive conflicting messages about belonging.

Positive relationships between students and adults are reciprocal, attuned, culturally responsive, and trusting. These relationships provide a sense of security and inclusion, enhance student resilience and coping, protect students from risk factors such as trauma, and contribute to higher engagement and achievement and positive long-term outcomes. Relationships are supported by learning environments that provide structures for safety and belonging. These environments include consistent, restorative discipline practices and opportunities for collaborative work that reinforce SEL and support community-building, student engagement, and equitable outcomes.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How will we intentionally build and maintain connections with each student, having a personal regard for them as individuals through in-person and virtual or distance learning?
- How can we support all staff in incorporating trauma-sensitive and culturally responsive practices to be able to build positive relationships with all students?
- How do we create school structures, including restorative practices, that ensure each student feels a sense of safety and belonging?
- How are youth, families, and communities authentic partners in fostering inclusive school climates where all students feel physically and emotionally safe, supported, challenged, and capable—no matter the instructional setting?

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PREPARE

IMPLEMENT

- Examine and **revise daily schedules and adult assignments** (including all adults in the school community) to maximize relationship-building, such as **"looping,"** student **advisory groups,** and pairing adults with students to **ensure every student has at least one adult at school who checks in with them daily**. This will be particularly important for adolescents who move from class to class.
- Identify resources and practices that are either virtual or **readily adapted to distance learning** to support adult-student and peer relationships (writing postcards, interest surveys, classroom chats, partner/team projects) and **create a sense of belonging** (e.g., ensure instruction reflects student culture, implement rigorous curriculum, and ask students about their interests and concerns).
- Reflect on **disciplinary practices** (see 4.1) and identify added supports as students transition back in person and through distance learning, developing systems for restorative practices focused on healing and recovery.
- Prioritize adult-student as well as peer relationship-building in daily schedules, especially throughout the first two weeks of school and beyond. Implement ongoing structures such as **welcoming students at the door, check-ins, advisory, morning/afternoon meeting structures, or community-building rituals** (in-person, virtual, or by phone or other means) aligned with the developmental relationships framework that can be informal, regularly scheduled, or a combination.
- Offer opportunities, if possible, for students to create a sense of **closure from their previous grades,** such as providing time for them to reflect on the past school year with their former teachers and classmates.
- Replace punitive discipline with **practices that focus on healing and inclusion** (e.g., restorative practices, peace rooms, de-escalation strategies).

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

School Discipline Impacts Relationships and Equity

Reopening schools provides unique challenges and opportunities regarding school discipline policy and practice. Both educators and students will be adjusting to new norms as they deal with their own personal stressors, anxiety, and trauma. All of these dynamics may manifest in discipline-related matters—especially when it comes to specific communities. Prior to the pandemic, far too many students, particularly BIPOC and students with disabilities, disproportionately experienced exclusionary discipline, which reflected staff stress, attitudes, and mindsets and a lack of support for students. Suspensions and other punitive practices produced negative effects, including lost instructional time, diminished academic engagement and school connectedness, and increased attendance and behavioral problems.

As we return to school this year, it's essential that discipline policies and practices foster resilience, accelerate healthy development, and minimize risks like negative stereotypes and microaggressions. While many districts have begun to implement restorative approaches, their efforts may be limited by a lack of school readiness or the failure to provide trauma-sensitive and culturally competent support to students and staff. There will now most certainly be a need to double-down on relationship- and community-building, norms-setting, restorative practices that include culturally responsive and equity-focused SEL strategies, opportunities for healing and repairing harm, and attention to minimizing suspension and eliminating corporal punishment, overpolicing, racial harassment, and microaggressions.

Suggested Resources:

- School Climate Improvement Resource Package, The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
- Addressing the Root Causes of Disparities in School Discipline: An Educator's Action Planning Guide. The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
- Fostering Healthy Relationships and Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools, Schott Foundation's National Opportunity to Learn Campaign
- School Climate Planning and Restorative Practices Implementation Guide, San Francisco Unified School District

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TOOLS

- Building Developmental Relationships During the COVID-19 Crisis **(Search Institute)** This checklist outlines relationship-building strategies during the COVID-19 crisis.
- 5-Minute Chats With Individual Students **(CASEL)** This sample agenda and questions for one-on-one check-ins with students can build connections and help respond to needs.
- Responsive Circles for COVID-19 **(International Institute for Restorative Practices)** These circle prompts use familiar restorative questions that are tailored to the current moment.
- Getting to Know You Survey **(Panorama Education)** This quick, online survey helps teachers and students learn about each other and build stronger classroom relationships.
- A COVID-19 Check-in Student Survey **(Harvard Graduate School of Education)** This survey can be shared with students to build connection and understanding.
- Creating Opportunities Through Relationships **(University of Virginia)** These free online professional learning modules support educators in developing supportive relationships with students.

For more, including detail about how to facilitate circle discussions with students, see the full tool index at casel.org/sel-in-action/reopening-with-SEL.

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Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development.

3.2 Weave in opportunities for students to develop, practice, and reflect upon social and emotional competencies throughout the day.

School leaders will need to address important concerns about the impact of school building closures on academic performance and potential "learning loss." Each student (and adult) will have experienced individual learning and growth, as well as unique loss, pain, and anxieties based on their experiences with the pandemic and with the national mobilization against racial inequities. With that recognition, we have an opportunity to elevate how students learn and develop—the ways their social, emotional, and academic development interact to determine how they engage; how each student's culture and environments influence the unique ways they grow and develop throughout life.

As students return to school, it will be important for educators to help them develop critical social and emotional skills they will need to cope and manage stress, build relationships, reflect on their experiences, express empathy for their peers, and make decisions that keep themselves and their communities healthy. Students can develop and apply these competencies through **explicit SEL instruction, SEL integrated with academic instruction, and supportive learning environments**. Explicit instruction in and practice with social and emotional skills can occur through evidence-based programs and practices, which typically provide age-specific SEL tasks. For example, younger children may need greater support in finding language to describe their emotions, while older students need increased space to identify, understand, and express their emotions as they process protests, school building closures, and lack of physical connectedness.

Educators can also embed SEL into academic content and instructional practices and promote SEL through less-structured social experiences such as recess, play, lunch, class changes, and out-of-school time programs—even if physically distanced. Educators and other adults can creatively adapt and embed SEL practices and reflection into these moments—for example, through a virtual SEL reflection room (as employed in Tulsa Public Schools).

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What actions can we take to ensure that each SEL approach affirms the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students and families we serve?
- What opportunities do we provide teachers to learn about, practice, and receive support (from administrators, coaches, and colleagues) for integrating social and emotional competencies and pedagogies into all instruction, implementing community-building strategies, and elevating students' voices?
- How can we support teachers in providing opportunities for students to reflect on their social and emotional competencies to build critical thinking skills and their own sense of identity, agency, and belonging?

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PREPARE

- Review how current **evidence-based SEL programs** and practices worked before and during the pandemic. Identify how to ensure an equity focus, as well as how to modify practices for physical distancing or remote learning (see 1.3).
- Review state or district **SEL standards or guidelines** and select developmentally appropriate SEL strategies that teachers and staff can implement in-person, through distance learning, or a blend of both (e.g., teacher-led classroom meetings for young students and student-led advisories for older grades).
- Consider how to leverage the **arts, sports, or student groups** as a means of learning, developing, healing, and practicing social and emotional competencies.

IMPLEMENT

- Maintain opportunities for students to **socialize and connect** with peers during less-structured groups times (lunch, recess, P.E.) **even when physical distancing may be necessary** (e.g., schedule virtual lunch buddies), as well as opportunities for students to reflect on social and emotional competencies through tools like learning logs.
- Continue to **build critical social and emotional skills, in distance or blended learning** (e.g., awareness of emotions, stress management, advocacy, relationship skill), and **mindsets**, using SEL standards to guide design of instructional objectives across all subject areas.
- Provide ongoing support (feedback, coaching, peer mentoring) to teachers in **building classroom community, explicitly teaching** social and emotional competencies through evidence-based programs and practices, and **integrating SEL in instructional practices** both in-person and during distance learning. For example, offer support for implementing **cooperative learning, project-based learning or inquiry-based instruction.**

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Examples of developmentally appropriate strategies for SEL instruction

Check-in on emotions

- **Lower elementary:** Choosing a "feeling face."
- **Upper elementary:** Choosing and explaining a word that captures their current mood.
- **Middle school:** Exploring complex emotions, including how they might feel two seemingly different emotions at one time.
- **High school:** Assessing how complex emotions influence one's behaviors.

Discussion of use of social and emotional competencies

In **elementary**, teachers can use virtual and in-person read-alouds to support students' social and emotional development. For example, ask:

- "How would you feel in the scenarios confronted by the characters, and why?"
- "Who do you go to for help in your own life? Who could the character in our story go to?"

For **older students,** encourage them to examine the social and emotional attributes involved in leadership. For example, ask:

- "What social and emotional competencies are you seeing in leaders right now? How are those qualities helping the country/city/state through the crisis?"
- "Which of those competencies do you feel strong in? Where do you want to grow?"

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TOOLS

- COVID-19 E-Learning Free Resources **(SEL Providers Council)** This searchable library links to SEL provider webpages where they offer free resources and curriculum to support SEL virtually and at home.
- Strategies for Trauma-Informed Distance Learning **(WestEd)** This brief offers general strategies and specific examples for how to recognize and respond to students' social and emotional needs as well as build in trauma-informed practices that will support all students.
- Tennessee Toolkit for Teachers and Administrators to Incorporate Social and Personal Competencies Into Instruction **(Tennessee DOE)** This toolkit is designed to increase administrator and teacher awareness of the instructional practices that promote SEL.
- This Time, With Feeling: Integrating Social and Emotional Development and College and Career Readiness Standards **(Aspen Institute)** This publication provides examples of how academic standards call upon students to use social and emotional skills and a rationale for embedding SEL in academic lessons.
- Sample Teaching Activities to Support Core Competencies of SEL **(CASEL)** This document draws from evidence-based programs to identify and describe some of the most common strategies used to promote student SEL.
- SEL Reflection Prompts **(CASEL)** This tool lists prompts that can be used in group or partner discussions, journals, or integrated into assignments to prompt student reflection aligned with the five SEL competency framework.
- Project Based Learning for Remote Learning **(Buck Institute for Education)** This webpage provides project ideas, recommended technology, and best practices for facilitating projects remotely.

For more, including culturally responsive practices for distance learning and CASEL's Program Guides and SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook, see the full tool index at casel.org/sel-in-action/reopening-with-SEL.

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Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development.

3.3 Identify and implement a comprehensive system of support for students with additional needs.

All students share the experiences of the pandemic, racial injustice, and economic crisis. However, their personal responses to these events can vary widely depending on their individual circumstances. Contributing factors include their age as well as their access to resources and the health and well-being of their family and friends. BIPOC students may also experience more intense stress caused by individual, historical, and institutional racism. Adults will need to understand how these kinds of trauma and stress impact students, and affect the brain and body—potentially disrupting development and affecting mood, focus, concentration, memory, behavior, emotions, and trust.

As you work to support the mental and behavioral health and wellbeing of students in a way that addresses the current traumas, develop an adaptive and responsive system of tiered supports that leverages students' assets to help them cope, navigate, and strengthen their social and emotional competencies. To do this, develop structures to identify strengths and those who need additional behavioral or mental health support—connecting with processes (e.g., referrals, screeners) you use to identify and support students' academic needs. Universal support (Tier 1) focuses on developing learning environments with protective factors at all levels, including supportive relationships and integrated social, emotional, and academic skill-building (see 3.1 and 3.2).

Partner with school-employed and community-based mental health and trauma professionals to develop processes for identifying and supporting the potentially increased numbers of students who need a wide range of targeted (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) supports. Leverage community and family partnerships to access tools, resources, and support for all students. This may also include creating and monitoring a plan that provides connections to food, shelter, technology, transportation, or other resources.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is the current structure in place to understand student assets, competencies, and strengths?
- How trauma-sensitive are schoolwide and classroom supports? For example, do they provide a predictable and flexible structure?
- What are current structures and processes to work with school counselors and school psychologists to connect students with targeted (Tier 2) or intensive (Tier 3) behavioral and mental health interventions? What is the process to continuously monitor student progress?
- How do you avoid labeling students (e.g., as "struggling," "vulnerable," or "at-risk") and relying on assumptions of students based on their past behaviors, race, or socioeconomic status? How do we avoid neglecting students who may receive less attention because they are considered "high-performing" or "quiet"?

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PREPARE

- **Identify** existing school, district, and community resources to meet the needs of students and families (see 1.3), including ensuring access to school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school psychologists, counselors, and social workers). If there are gaps in needed support, identify community partners who can assist and provide learning for all staff on how to support students, including identifying signs of developmental trauma.
- Establish or refine a **referral process** to identify students and families who may need additional support. Communicate and engage staff, students, families, and community partners in the referral process to help identify students who may be in particular need of social and emotional, mental, and behavioral health supports.
- Examine school infrastructure (e.g., staffing, budget) and capacity (e.g., staff and partner training and skill sets) to conduct universal **evidence-based screening** to identify students who need **targeted and intensive interventions**, recognizing that there may be high numbers of students identified for support. (Note: social and emotional competence assessments should not be used as screeners.)

IMPLEMENT

- Collaborate with school-employed and community mental health professionals to foster trauma-sensitive learning environments for all students, ensuring teachers receive coaching and feedback.
- Regularly gather and analyze data from referrals and/or screeners, and **examine root causes** of patterns related to inequities in resources, relationships, learning environments, and other supports.
- **Ensure appropriate staff** (e.g., mental health and trauma specialists) are available to implement next steps and address identified needs. Establish **regular check-ins** between school employed mental health professionals and students in need, especially in times of distance learning.
- Work in **partnership with families and students** who have been identified to **monitor interventions** in place to support them, make any needed adjustments, and identify the effect of those interventions on social, emotional, and academic learning.

TOOLS

- Guidance for Trauma Screening in Schools **(National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice)** This guide outlines the role of schools with regards to trauma screening, including key considerations and cautions, different screener options, intervention options, and connections to a whole-school approach.
- Why We Need Trauma-Sensitive Schools **(Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative)** This video stresses the importance of trauma-sensitive learning environments to support students.
- Trauma-Informed School Strategies During COVID-19 **(The National Child Traumatic Stress Network)** This fact sheet offers information on the physical and emotional well-being of staff, creating a trauma-informed learning environment, identifying and assessing traumatic stress, addressing and treating traumatic stress, partnerships with students and families, cultural responsiveness, emergency management and crisis response, and school discipline policies and practices.
- Trauma-Informed SEL Toolkit **(Transforming Education)** This toolkit includes everything needed to deliver a two-hour professional development session designed for educators seeking research-based strategies to create a healthy classroom environment for students who have experienced adversities and trauma.
- Teacher Training Modules **(National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement)** These professional learning modules provide a structure for supporting grieving students.
- Mental Health Resources for Adolescents and Young Adults **(Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine)** This list of online resources aimed at adolescents and young adults includes support groups, peer networks, helplines, treatment locators, and advocacy opportunities.

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Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development.

3.4 Engage students in developmentally appropriate conversations and lessons to discuss past, current, and future impacts of the pandemic and racial inequities on themselves, their families, their communities, and the broader world.

When students engage in critical conversations about their lived experiences and the experiences of others in supportive environments, they are able to develop more meaningful relationships with their peers, deepen their understanding of themselves and others, learn through authentic dialogue, and be part of anti-racist work in their communities. Either in-person or during distance learning, engage students in developmentally appropriate conversations about the history of diseases and the ways COVID-19 has (disproportionately) influenced people today, as well as the history of racial injustices and civic unrest.

Fostering critical analysis and constructive communication requires trust, open-mindedness, and willingness to learn with and from others. Analysis and discussions also require developmentally appropriate approaches as students engage in discussions reflecting the complexity of this pandemic, race and racial inequities, mobilization against systemic racism, and the effects on themselves and multiple communities. Select age-specific discussion strategies and topics to make room for respectful dialogue and expressions of critique.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do we create authentic and brave spaces for students to have conversations about the layers of struggle in our current moment and the effect that it has on them, their families, and their communities?
- How do we help students accept and process their emotions and the emotions of their peers in discussions about community stressors and injustices in a physically and emotionally safe space? How do we create an environment for discussion that does not tokenize students in racially isolated schools or classrooms?
- How are we helping students discern facts, analyze the impact, and look at bias connected to COVID-19 and the national mobilization against systemic racism in developmentally appropriate ways?
- How do we have developmentally appropriate conversations that help students understand the experience of others and develop agency over their own well-being and awareness of avenues for supporting others?

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PREPARE

- Identify **developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive lessons,** conversation protocols, and research projects that provide students with opportunities to learn about the **history of race and protest;** and to examine and discuss the influence of COVID-19 on themselves and on others, including the disparate impact of the disease.
- Explore or adapt a digital literacy framework so students are equipped to investigate ways to discern fact from fiction.
- Be aware of and be **prepared to support** those students and adults who have been directly impacted by COVID-19, racial injustices, and microaggressions.

IMPLEMENT

- Develop norms with students about how to hold conversations that may be uncomfortable, and expectations for participation. Ensure discussion norms offer choice of participation, especially accepting when BIPOC do not want to talk or share their experiences.
- Use **practices that help students talk** about the influence of COVID-19, including the disparate impact of the disease, and the influence of racial/ethnic injustice on themselves and others. including: Big Paper: Building a Silent Conversation, Barometer: Taking a Stand on Controversial Issues, and Save the Last Word for Me.
- Help **students determine strategies about how they can contribute to resilience and recovery** in their communities. For example, teachers can help students initiate an action research approach to study community well-being. For older students, examine how decisions made by individuals or groups can have large and/or **inequitable impact**, such as incorporating the comparison and contrast of data processes to determine a leader's impact on infection and mortality rates.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

	Examples of developmentally appropriate strategies for analyzing the impact of the pandemic	Examples of developmentally appropriate conversations for analyzing historical and current responses to racial inequities
Lower Elementary	Share a short news article from a reliable source or fictional story and help students process how the story makes them feel.	Lead mirror activities (drawing self-portraits, collage from magazines) that encourage positive identity and self-labeling. Support students to resist incorrect and harmful messages about themselves and others and offer (or help them find) a freedom fighter to inspire their image.
Upper Elementary	Ask students to bring in different stories about COVID-19 (offer appropriate sources) and look for ways they present information differently.	Explore timelines of ethnic studies and other social justice movements across the country. Examine place-based histories of your city and state. Students can view how people of different races and ethnicities have faced trials and triumphed in local history. Help students identify an issue that connects to their experiences today.
Middle School	Offer an opportunity for students to find conflicting perspectives about how communities are responding to the crisis and identify the influence of those perspectives on their own lives and those of others.	Understand the benefit of mutual support, support students as they investigate local issues, and find aid efforts demonstrating collective agency. Identify existing inequities that occur within the school and community.
High School	Encourage students to analyze inequities in response to the spread of the virus in the nation and around the world and draft proposals for how those responses should be improved.	Analyze media representations of social movements and community organizing. Encourage students to compare justice platforms and ethnic studies curricula to translate those ideas to their current setting. Analyze data on existing inequities that occur within the school and community.

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3.4

TOOLS

- Strategies for Teaching Fearless SEL for Societal Change **(Simmons [2019]**, via Greater Good Science Center) This SEL integration tool shows how CASEL's five SEL competencies can create the conditions for youth agency and engagement and social change and can be a key part of classroom-based learning.
- COVID-19: How Can We Make Choices that Promote the Common Good? **(Facing History and Ourselves)** This youth conversation lesson encourages students to share their views, values, and voices to strengthen the community.
- Speaking Up Against Racism Around the Coronavirus **(Teaching Tolerance)** Written for teachers to address stereotypes, xenophobia, and racism in connection with COVID-19, this article contains links to Teaching Tolerance guides for responding to hate or bias incidents and resources for educators to facilitate critical conversations about bias and stereotypes.
- Talking to Students About Race and Ethnicity **(Teaching Tolerance)** Packaged tools, webinar, and publications to support conversations with students about race, the Black Lives Matter movement, and injustice.
- Talking About Race **(National Museum of African American History & Culture)** This online portal is designed to help educators, families, and other individuals talk about racism, racial identity, and the way these forces shape society.
- Reflecting on George Floyd's Death and Police Violence Towards Black Americans **(Facing History and Ourselves)** This teaching guide will help teachers begin conversations with their students about George Floyd's death and the events that surround it, including reflection activities to prepare for teaching, creating space for emotional processing, and diving deeper with multimedia tools.
- Circle Scripts for Black Lives Matter at School **(ROCRestorative Team, Rochester City School District)** Five sample scripts for facilitating Circle discussions about race and identity, challenging racism, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

For more, including videos about facilitating classroom discussion, digital citizenship lessons, book lists, and additional lesson outlines, see the full tool index at casel.org/sel-in-action/reopening-with-SEL.

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Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development.

3.5 Collaborate with families and community partners to align strategies for supporting students' SEL at school and home and during extended learning.

This is a time to empower educators, families, and community partners to work together to strengthen connections in support of all student's growth and development. The pandemic and mobilization against systemic racism have elevated the fact that social, emotional, and academic learning and development occurs across multiple contexts—in school buildings, homes, peer groups, afterschool and summer programs, libraries, parks, recreation centers, online, and other spaces—and is a collective effort across communities. Further, the deepening impacts of racial injustice have elevated the need to more intentionally come together across schools, community partners, and families to solve critical issues within our communities.

- **Community partners** provide safe and developmentally rich settings for learning and development; are seen as trusted partners by families; and have connections to supports and services that school and families need (e.g., primary and mental health providers).
- **Families** provide an avenue to better understand the cultural assets that students bring to the table, help teach and reinforce SEL at home, and create environments that contribute to overall growth and well-being.

As school leaders, you have an opportunity to create new ways to engage educators, students, families, and community partners to foster cohesive learning experiences for youth. As you do this, prioritize making space for the voices of families and community partners from marginalized and BIPOC populations.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can we learn from and with family and community partners about how they engage youth, build supportive relationships, and promote SEL? How do we ensure that the environments of engagement are identity safe and culturally and contextually relevant?
- How can we create opportunities for school staff to work with and learn from family and community partners on coordinating SEL strategies across in-school and out-of-school time?
- How can we collaborate with family and community partners to align on goals and reimagine SEL programming to offer consistent opportunities for students to practice social and emotional competencies throughout their day, whether in classrooms, homes, or community organizations?

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PREPARE

- Identify community assets, potential partnerships (e.g., youth-serving organizations, mental health providers), effective strategies, and voices to elevate to ensure the school's SEL efforts are aligned with and **grounded in the lived experience** of the community.
- Reach out and establish mutually beneficial **partnerships** that are rooted in collaboration and a shared agenda. Work to build trust through cultural humility and reciprocity, ongoing and reciprocal communication, resource-sharing, and support.
- Identify ways that families and community partners can fully engage in the school's **planning and implementation of SEL**, as well as support SEL across settings (e.g., discussion groups). Bring everyone to the table to challenge assumptions, innovate, and integrate

IMPLEMENT

- Set up opportunities for families and the community to give **input on SEL programs and practices** through the year. Use small-group meetings, interest groups, and informal gatherings to listen to families and community partners. Be clear and transparent about the schedule, purpose, and what input will and won't shape. Begin to implement the information gathered from stakeholders in your SEL efforts.
- Engage in conversations, collaborations, and professional learning with **youth-serving organizations to align terms, frameworks, and guidance to support SEL** for students and families.
- Communicate about SEL **strategies** and **shared language** with families and learn from their home-based practices.
- Speak with youth about **peer-based** SEL practices and language and their use in school, home, and at community organizations.

TOOLS

- Recognizing the Role of Afterschool and Summer Programs in Reopening and Rebuilding **(AIR)** This document includes recommendations on ways to include afterschool and summer programming to support students' transition back to school.
- Collaboration Tools for Building SEL Across the School Day and Out-of-School Time **(CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL)** This tool includes guidelines and activities for building strong collaborative relationships between schools and community partners to align SEL practices and learn from one another.
- Building Positive Conditions for Learning at Home: Strategies and Resources for Families and Caregivers **(AIR)** Tools in English and Spanish for parents for fostering emotional health and well-being within their home.
- Making Families Feel Welcome **(Siegel, Esqueda, Berkowitz, Sullivan, Astor, & Benbenishty [2019], via Greater Good Science Center)** This brief reflection activity for school staff lists methods for making students' families feel valued and respected.
- SEL Discussion Series for Parents and Caregivers **(CASEL)** This 10-session discussion series supports schools and community partners that wish to engage parents and caregivers in conversations about the social and emotional growth of their families. Also available in Spanish.
- PTAs Leading the Way in Transformative Family Engagement **(The Center for Family Engagement)** This report outlines best practices for a PTA to engage families.
- George Floyd, Racism and Law Enforcement **(Anti-Defamation League)** This Table Talk tool provides a current event summary and discussion questions in English and Spanish for families to use at home.

For more, including guidance for supporting the well-being of caregivers, building strong community partnerships, and connecting with your local afterschool network, see the full tool index at casel.org/sel-in-action/reopening-with-SEL.

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SUSTAINING CRITICAL PRACTICE 3

Maintain safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments and continuously promote all students' social and emotional development.

- Frame **relationship-building with and among students** as an ongoing process and continue to dedicate time and space for community and communication throughout the year. Foster student mindsets that lay the groundwork for engagement and deeper learning, establish regular structures for **student choice and input into decision-making**, and open pathways for students to take **individual and collective action** to address community needs and advocate for change.
- **Monitor and assess both schoolwide and classroom** SEL programs and practices to determine their impact on student outcomes, and adjust or adopt new practices to continuously improve. Provide **feedback and coach** teachers on the implementation of SEL as well as instructional practices (see 4.2). Ask outstanding teachers to model SEL activities and mentor other teachers.
- Update and renew **student support plans** based on data from screeners, formal and informal check-ins, and families to determine if adequate and effective student supports are provided. Prioritize adequate **staffing** of personnel who are trained to support student well-being (e.g., school counselors, nurses, school psychologists), and leverage existing partnerships with community organizations that provide mental health and trauma services to fill gaps in service.
- Identify ongoing opportunities for **family and community partners** to lead or co-lead SEL implementation efforts and be receptive to their efforts to engage your school. Continue to seek feedback about how strategies are working and potential ways to modify implementation (see 4.3)

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 4

Use data as an opportunity to share power, deepen relationships, and continuously improve support for students, families, and staff.

As we approach a school year that demands innovation and responsiveness, a commitment to ongoing continuous improvement will help ensure that existing and new strategies translate into optimal and equitable outcomes. The process of continuous improvement will involve partnering with the broader school community to collectively examine and address students' and adults' ongoing needs and strengths. Collect, reflect on, and share both quantitative and qualitative data that elevate the feedback and experiences of students, families, community members, and staff, as well as data about the implementation (e.g., SEL program/practice implementation, transitional strategies that support returning to school) and outcomes (e.g., academics, student and adult social and emotional competence, well-being, perceptions of climate, prosocial behaviors, attendance). This Critical Practice will help you establish equitable continuous improvement processes to identify and address challenges, build upon successes, innovate, and collectively problem-solve. This section will guide you through the following activities:

- Elevate student voice in reflecting and acting on data,
- Support educators in reflecting on instruction and environment,
- Partner with families and community members to improve experiences and outcomes.

"We need information on how kids are doing. We have to do it in a way that's not super stressful, that's very actionable for teachers and parents. We need to know how kids are doing from a social-emotional well-being standpoint…Kids have a lot to say about their experience—their experience of school, their experience of the community—and what they need." —John King, President and CEO, Education Trust

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Use data as an opportunity to share power, deepen relationships, and continuously improve support for students, families, and staff.

4.1 Elevate student voice in reflecting and acting on data around their learning and engagement.

Partner with students to understand how they experience school and how that can inform plans to improve learning and engagement. In developmentally appropriate and authentic ways, examine data, identify strengths and issues, and develop plans together to achieve individual and schoolwide goals. Engage students in discussions to examine root causes and broader systemic barriers to attendance, learning, or engagement (such as punitive or exclusionary discipline policies or practices that lack cultural responsiveness) and co-create solutions to address these problems.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can we build structures to ensure student voice in decision-making on their own learning and school practices and priorities?
- How can we work with students to understand meaningful sources of connection, learning, and growth during in-person and distance learning?
- How can we examine root causes of any student disengagement (past or current) in combination with academic data? Are the reasons the same? Similar? New?
- How might we rethink previous policies and mindsets about student attendance or engagement to focus on learning over seat time?
- How might we work with students to ensure responses to absences or challenging behavior are focused on reconnection, identifying root causes and barriers, and mitigating obstacles to engagement?

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PREPARE

- Identify what data you already collect on students' school experiences and outcomes, including **school climate/belonging, students' social and emotional competence, attendance, and discipline.**
- Collect data that elevates students' perspectives, experiences, and outcomes. For example, use **assessments or surveys** to capture data on students' levels of engagement, perspectives on learning and school/classroom environments, and their strengths (including their social and emotional competencies) and needs.
- Build structures that position **students as partners** in data reflection and school improvement, prioritizing voices of marginalized students and BIPOC. Structures may include student government, student-led conferences, democratic classroom practices, lunch break conversations, or youth participatory action research. Students should not just help identify the issues but also help identify and implement solutions.

IMPLEMENT

- Examine **root causes** of patterns and disparities in data, engaging students in developmentally appropriate conversations about barriers that may inequitably impact student outcomes and experiences.
- **Partner with students on practice and policy changes** to improve student experiences and outcomes, such as eliminating policies that punish or exclude students for non-attendance or providing additional support to those who may have been most impacted by the social, health, and economic challenges of this period.
- Incorporate key insights into evolving plans by **sharing and analyzing anonymized student data and reflections** during staff (see 4.2) and community partner (see 4.3) meetings.

TOOLS

- Understand and Improve Students' Learning Experiences **(PERTS—Project for Education Research that Scales)** Copilot-Elevate helps educators customize a short survey to learn how students are experiencing school, review results to see how experiences are promoting or hindering equitable learning, learn new practices to try with students, and track improvement over time.
- Strategies for Gathering Student Feedback **(CASEL)** Choose from or adapt these methods for hearing from your students about their learning experience in the new school year, whether instruction and learning is taking place at school or elsewhere.
- Examining Your School's Climate **(Teaching Tolerance)** This short school climate questionnaire and social mapping activity can be used to work with students to analyze differing perceptions of school climate.
- Reflecting on School Discipline and SEL Alignment **(CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL)** This organizer and checklist can be used to review and update policies and procedures to better align with your school's SEL vision and promote skill-building.
- YPAR Hub **(Berkeley University)** This website provides resources that help schools set up structures for Youth Participatory Action Research, which supports young people in conducting research to improve their lives, communities, and institutions.

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Use data as an opportunity to share power, deepen relationships, and continuously improve support for students, families, and staff.

4.2 Support educators in reflecting on data around their own instructional practices and learning environment, especially when trying out new strategies or modes of teaching.

With new demands on all educators, adults will need structures to support reflection on how new practices create (or don't create) robust learning experiences for students and how mindsets and biases may influence how they respond to student behavior or need. You can facilitate critical reflection and growth by providing professional learning and support (see 2.4) and by creating space for educators to examine their own data (e.g., instructional practices, classroom climate) individually and with peers.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can we foster a sense of trust and shared purpose so educators feel comfortable giving and receiving feedback, collaborating on data, and innovating on their practice?
- How do you support staff to develop an asset-based understanding of data that focuses on students' competencies and strengths?
- What coaching model can support educators in continuously improving practices to better support students' social, emotional and academic growth across different learning contexts (e.g., in-person, distance learning)?
- How can we as leaders model humility, vulnerability, growth mindset, and our own self-reflection to promote a culture of continuous improvement?

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PREPARE

- **Discuss the importance of collecting data** to understand and continuously improve support for students and adults in new learning environments. Co-create a set of **data reflection** norms, including use of self-awareness and social awareness skills to receive feedback.
- Work with educators to determine what data should be gathered to help them reflect on practice and measure progress toward goals, including peer observations and student perception data. Together, build out a **schedule to collect this data and facilitate reflection.**
- Provide resources that help teachers self-reflect on their own teaching practices that promote social and emotional development.

IMPLEMENT

- Create time and space for groups of staff to convene around data review and **collaborative problem-solving**, Use a structured process that promotes equity of voice to examine and act on data for improvement. Encourage educators to analyze data by **subgroup**, such as race, SES, language learner status, special education, gender, or gender expression.
- Create **peer observation or peer coaching** opportunities, when possible, for teachers to support one another as they implement new practices in classrooms, distance, or blended learning.
- Use **common planning periods** to analyze data from surveys and diagnostic assessments to inform integrated social, emotional, and academic learning plans.

TOOLS

- SEL Through Distance Learning: Teacher Self-Assessment **(CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL)** This self-assessment provides insight into strengths and areas to develop as educators promote SEL through distance learning and at-home assignments.
- PIRL: Preparation, Interaction, Reflection and Logistics Tool **(Denver Afterschool Alliance)** This 24-item rubric can help you improve online, live sessions on platforms where youth are engaging with an instructor and their peers.
- SEL Look-Fors in Blended Learning **(CASEL)** Use this tool to reflect on a learning activity you have designed or led after it has taken place, or ask a colleague to use it as they observe you.
- SEL Teacher Self-Check Tool **(Transforming Education)** This tool encourages educators to reflect on their own progress toward cultivating positive environments and integrating SEL in a way that is responsive to students' needs and aligned with academic instruction.
- Problem of Practice Protocol: Teaching During a Pandemic **(CASEL, adapted from School Reform Initiative)** Use this protocol with a small group of colleagues to share, process, and collectively problem-solve around challenges of the moment.
- How Can Educators Tap Into Research to Increase Engagement During Remote Learning? **(Rice & Kipp, EdSurge)** This article provides ideas for measuring behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement in virtual settings and concrete ways that teachers can boost engagement through their own practices by engaging families, and facilitating connections between students.

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Use data as an opportunity to share power, deepen relationships, and continuously improve support for students, families, and staff.

4.3 Partner with families and community members to continuously improve experiences and outcomes.

Families are children's first teachers and they, along with community partners, bring deep expertise about children's lived experiences, their culture, and the issues they care about. Their perspectives are critical to more deeply understand the impact of SEL efforts. As you engage with your community around data, pay attention to power dynamics in traditional data collection and continuous improvement processes that can lead to incomplete interpretations of data and biases in decision-making. Engage families and community partners in collecting, reflecting upon, problem-solving, and taking action from data.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can we tap into the unique knowledge that families and community partners have about young people?
- How can we use data processes and continuous improvement (e.g., collect, analyze, interpret, innovate on practices) to share power and be inclusive of families, and community members in decision-making?
- How can we collect data in ways that are timely, transparent, and non-intrusive and illuminate disparate experiences?
- Whose voices may be left out of the data collection and analysis process?

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PREPARE

- Partner with families and community partners to gather data. Community members can design tools, facilitate **focus groups** or brainstorm other creative approaches to collect data on family and community perspectives on what is most essential for the wellness and success of the school community moving forward.
- Consider what **additional data** you may need based on your goals for data collection (e.g., influence of SEL practices on engagement and/or academic learning) (see 1.3).

IMPLEMENT

- **Review** implementation (school and classroom practices) and outcome (student social and emotional competencies, school climate) data through formal and informal processes with your families and community partners to guide instruction and improvement. Encourage people to reflect on what they are learning by asking: Does what was shared mostly match your experience? Do you see yourself reflected in the data?
- Invite **families and partners to provide input**, using multiple approaches, on curriculum, instruction, and community-building strategies for re-opening. Ensure input from those who are historically marginalized.
- Share **depersonalized, schoolwide data** with the school community, invite them into interpretation processes, and explain how the school will be acting on shared insights

TOOLS

- Examining Transition Data With an Equity Lens **(CASEL)** This data reflection protocol and key questions can be used as part of a data review routine, with an eye toward how decisions impact equity and outcomes.
- Why Am I Always Being Researched? **(Chicago Beyond)** This guidebook was made to help shift the power dynamic between those doing the research and the communities who are the subjects of research to address unintended bias and restore communities as authors and owners.
- School Climate Survey Compendium **(National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments)** This webpage gathers valid and reliable surveys, assessments, and scales of school climate to help educators identify and assess their conditions for learning.
- ED School Climate Surveys **(U.S. Department of Education)** These adaptable school climate surveys and web-based platform are free to download and administer and provide user-friendly reports in real-time; they also include a subscale on the experience of cultural responsiveness.
- SEL Assessment Guide **(Assessment Work Group)** This interactive tool helps educators select and effectively use currently available assessments of students' SEL competencies.
- Tracking Your School's Progress Towards Implementing Schoolwide SEL **(CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL)** Use the implementation rubric and planner to engage in a full review of your current SEL implementation and establish goals; then use the walkthrough protocol to look for signs of high-quality SEL implementation by observing for the indicators of schoolwide SEL.

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SUSTAINING CRITICAL PRACTICE 4

Leverage ongoing partnerships with school community members to continuously improve SEL efforts.

- **Collect data at planned intervals throughout the year** to monitor needs, supports, and relationships of staff, students, and families in schools, in distance learning environments, or blended formats. Data collection efforts should also include assessing progress towards social and emotional competence goals and overall school climate.
- Support teachers in **revisiting goals and continuing to learn** about what is working well with shifts between virtual, modified in-person, and blended learning with changing guidelines for health and safety. Facilitate teacher, student, and family reflection to identify what is contributing to successes. Invite **teacher action research projects** as they adopt new practices to study the impact of technology, community-building routines, and anti-racist approaches.
- Consider what **additional data**, such as implementing more formal social and emotional competency measures, would help inform action steps to meet your goals. If some but not all students are attending school in person, compare outcomes between groups to **highlight both inequity and success stories** for continuous improvement.

MOVING FORWARD

On behalf of all the partners and contributors who developed this roadmap, we want to thank you for your commitment to SEL and the critically important work ahead. Although the environments and the ways that instruction occur have changed and will continue to shift, we know that learning and development continues. Young people are resilient and adaptive, and it is our collective responsibility to create the conditions for each student to be able to heal and thrive. All adults—school leaders, educators, community partners, and others—will play an enormous role in shaping the relationships, environments and experiences that foster social, emotional, and academic development across the multiple contexts where students live and learn. We recognize a lot of work needs to happen to support all students and adults as we navigate a moment of incredible complexity.

Now, more than ever, we will need to take care of ourselves and our colleagues, strengthen our partnerships, pool resources, develop common goals, and identify opportunities to work together to support all members of our school community and sustain this work over time. We hope this roadmap helps you leverage SEL in this moment to build a coalition and transformative path forward.

We invite you to share your own journey with this SEL Roadmap.
Use hashtag #SELroadmap.

@caselorg

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Info@casel.org

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