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K–12 Social and Emotional Learning Across Washington

A Statewide Landscape Scan

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About Education Northwest

Founded as a nonprofit corporation in 1966, Education Northwest builds capacity in schools, families, and communities through applied research and development.

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Key Findings

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is increasingly visible—but broadly defined—in K–12 education across Washington

- There is growing interest in SEL from educators and other stakeholders.
- Many districts statewide are addressing SEL in their mission, goals, and strategic plans, yet few are adopting SEL-specific policies or procedures.
- About two-thirds of surveyed districts are engaging in activities to support student SEL, and almost all surveyed districts are working on positive climate.

Participants report that school staff members, families, and community partners have a role to play in promoting SEL

- Various school- and district-level staff members are responsible for SEL.
- Many districts offered professional development in support of their SEL efforts, most commonly to school staff members.
- Although there is increasing recognition of the need to support educators in their own social and emotional development, districts vary in whether and how they approach this work. This includes support for school staff wellness, sense of belonging, and awareness of personal bias.

Many districts are using data to assess or monitor their progress in SEL

- A little more than half of surveyed districts used student surveys, staff surveys, or classroom observations to monitor progress in SEL.
- A shared framework for SEL in K–12 education is not yet in use across Washington state, and the lack of common language and framework was cited as a barrier to implementation.
- Fewer than half of the surveyed districts are using Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) resources to support their SEL activities.

There is a need for more culturally responsive SEL language and frameworks

- About a third of interview and focus group participants suggested that widely used SEL language and frameworks do not resonate with diverse communities.
- The growing practice of assessing student-level SEL may be problematic, given the dynamic state of the research and questions about the cultural responsiveness of indicators and measures.

The quality and depth of SEL implementation is uneven, with more professional development and guidance needed across the state

- Lack of funding and time were commonly cited as barriers to implementation.
- Participants raised various issues associated with implementation quality, with many districts using "homegrown" models with limited demonstrated effectiveness.
- There is strong agreement that both pre-service training and ongoing professional development related to SEL are necessary to improve implementation.
- Educators are seeking various local resources to support SEL implementation at the district, school, and classroom level.
- Use of existing SEL resources vary by district size, location, and financial resources.

Many participants highlighted the need for a systems approach and strategic investments in infrastructure to support quality SEL at the state, district, and school level

- State and local education leaders can do more to make clear that SEL is fundamentally important to education by developing relevant policies, procedures, and infrastructure.
- Participants called for more collaboration across state agencies—and within OSPI—to develop a more integrated, cohesive approach to SEL.
- Interview and focus group participants raised the issue of family and community involvement in supporting SEL and influencing SEL policies and procedures.

Recommendations

- Clarify SEL goals and expectations for students and adults.
- Disseminate resources to improve SEL implementation quality.
- Invest in infrastructure and a systems approach to reduce fragmentation and ensure equitable access to resources.
- Build the capacity of educators to collect and use formative data at the setting and student level to inform the continuous improvement of SEL practice.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

From September to December 2018, Education Northwest conducted a landscape scan of social and emotional learning (SEL) activities across Washington state. The purpose of this landscape scan is to provide the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the legislatively appointed SEL Indicators Workgroup[1] with information regarding activities and trends related to SEL for K–12 students across the state. This landscape scan is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This report summarizes the results of the scan. The first chapter summarizes the context for SEL and our landscape scan approach.

National and local context

There is growing recognition of the central importance of SEL for student engagement and success (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Farrington et al., 2012; Jones & Kahn, 2017). Research has linked student SEL capacities to important outcomes across the life span, ranging from academic achievement to developing positive relationships with adults and peers to reduced rates of incarceration in adulthood (Domitrovich, Durlak, Staley, & Weissberg, 2017). Given this importance, schools and districts have increased their attention to student SEL, whether by taking a schoolwide approach to creating a positive climate for all students (Greenberg, Domitrovich, Weissberg, & Durlak, 2017) or by implementing targeted SEL interventions in classrooms (Yeager & Walton, 2011). Similarly, research continues to reveal that adults' SEL capacities are related not only to adult outcomes, such as reduced educator exhaustion and stress (Jennings et al., 2017), but also to student outcomes, such as improved sense of belonging in school (Willms, 2003).

Recent statewide efforts related to SEL in Washington

Statewide SEL frameworks are gaining traction as a way for state education agencies to offer guidance on SEL practice (Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017; Jones & Bouffard, 2012). A member of the Collaborating States Initiative,[2] Washington is one of 16 states that have developed statewide guidance for SEL in K–12 education (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017). The following is a summary of recent efforts led by OSPI:

2016: The Washington SEL Benchmarks Workgroup released a report[3] that specified a set of SEL standards and benchmarks for the state in six key areas: self-awareness, self-management, self-efficacy, social awareness, social management, and social engagement (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2016).

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[1] http://www.k12.wa.us/WorkGroups/SELB.aspx

[2] https://Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.org/collaborative-state-initiative/

[3] http://www.k12.wa.us/Workgroups/SELB-Meetings/SELBWorkgroup2016Report.pdf

2017: The Washington Legislature allocated resources to OSPI to develop content and organize training and professional development through an online SEL learning module.[4]

2017 to 2019: To build on and extend the work of the Washington SEL Benchmarks Workgroup, in 2017, the Legislature passed ESSB 5883 Sec 501 (31), which directed OSPI to convene a new work group to identify and articulate developmental indicators for each grade level for each of the SEL benchmarks, solicit feedback from stakeholders, and develop a model of best practices or guidance for schools on implementing the benchmarks and indicators. A legislative report from this work group is expected in June 2019. Education Northwest is providing technical assistance to this SEL Indicators Workgroup through Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northwest.

Landscape Scan Approach

A wide range of SEL efforts are taking place in K–12 districts across Washington state. However, there is no mechanism for tracking SEL efforts statewide or the lessons learned from this work that may be useful for OSPI in developing statewide guidance. The purpose of this landscape scan is to provide a snapshot of the work taking place, as well as emerging issues and trends in the field. This scan is designed to provide additional systematically collected data to supplement—not replace—efforts by the SEL Indicators Workgroup to gather input from families, educators, youth workers, and system leaders.

The landscape scan is organized around three main goals: determine the status of SEL in districts across Washington, describe trends in where schools and districts go for SEL-related resources, and identify district priorities for additional support. The following questions, developed in collaboration with OSPI and the SEL Indicators Workgroup, guide the scan:

1.   What types of SEL efforts are underway in districts across Washington state?
2.   How, if at all, are districts using existing OSPI resources for SEL?
3.   Where do districts go for resources and partnership around SEL?
4.   What are districts' priorities for strengthening their SEL efforts?

Although the scan focuses primarily on districts as the unit of analysis, we recognize that innovative and important SEL work is taking place in individual schools and community-based organizations, often in partnership. In 2018, the Youth Development Executives of King County (YDEKC) produced a scan of efforts by school districts and youth programs in the South King County region to promote SEL through a "whole child development, whole day" approach. Our team consulted with YDEKC staff members in developing the approach and instruments for this statewide scan, and we interviewed several participants who could also speak to SEL both during the school day and during expanded learning time.

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[4] http://www.k12.wa.us/StudentSupport/SEL/OnlineModule.aspx

Methods

We reviewed recent SEL landscape scans from various approaches (Bridgespan Group, n.d.; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017; Harder+Company Community Research & Edge Research, 2017; Henig, Riehl, Houston, Rebell, & Wolff, 2016; Jankowski & Makela, 2010), as well as landscape scans by Education First (2017) and YDEKC (2018). From this review, we found that many landscape scans follow a general pattern in which they identify objectives, scope, and pertinent information to gather; conduct a web search; create and administer a survey and/or focus groups and interviews; and synthesize findings.

For this scan, we did a preliminary web search that helped refine our survey and interview questions. We then administered a survey to all districts, charter schools, and tribal compact schools in Washington. To find information on districts that did not respond to the survey, we analyzed their websites. To provide context for our survey and website analysis, we conducted interviews and focus groups with various stakeholders (e.g., community-based organizations, OSPI staff members, and scholars). This report presents the synthesis of findings across these data sources.

Survey

Education Northwest, OSPI, educational service districts (ESDs), and SEL Indicators Workgroup members invited district staff members to complete the survey. The survey was comprised of 31 questions that addressed several topics related to SEL: district mission, goals, and strategic plans; district policies and procedures; approaches to supporting student SEL, such as targeted SEL interventions or positive school climate programs; approaches to supporting adult SEL, such as professional development or mentoring; resources used for SEL; SEL implementation challenges; and recommendations about SEL to OSPI. We received 309 survey responses, including partial and fully completed surveys; 168 of the fully completed surveys came from unique, unduplicated districts. Respondents from four districts indicated that neither their district nor any of their schools were addressing SEL and were exited from the survey (they are included in the count of overall survey respondents but not in any other counts). These four responses all came from small districts (table 1).

Table 1. District responses to survey

Total responses (including duplicate and incomplete surveys	309
Total unique districts with fully completed surveys	168
Districts without SEL approaches for students or adults	4

Completed surveys came from all nine of the state's ESD regions, as well as one tribal compact school and two schools whose districts were unidentified (figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of fully completed surveys from each ESD in Washington state
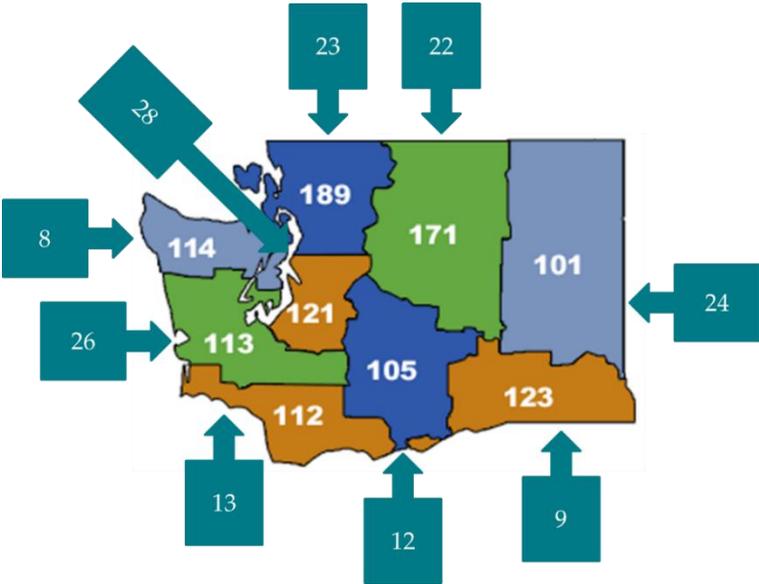
Overall, 75 percent of respondents identified themselves as district administrators. Other roles were educational staff associate (6 percent), student support staff member (5 percent), and "Other" (14 percent).

The data analysis team completed a mix of quantitative and qualitative analyses. For the quantitative analysis, we computed overall frequencies of responses, as well as cross-tabulated responses by district size (small, medium, or large) using Stata analysis software. We used the Washington State School Directors' Association definition of small districts (fewer than 2,000 students), and we defined medium districts as 2,000 to 9,999 students and large districts as 10,000 or more students (table 2).

Table 2. Washington districts and survey completers by size

	Number of districts statewide	*Number of districts with a fully completed survey*
Small	212	83
Medium	75	56
Large	33	26
Unknown[5]	N/A	3

Sources: 2018 OSPI enrollment data[6] and Education Northwest analysis of landscape scan survey data

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[5] We were unable to match student enrollment data to three districts that completed the survey. These districts are included in overall analyses but not in comparisons based on district size.
[6] http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/enrollment.aspx

In addition, we conducted content analysis of open-ended survey question responses. We coded responses and developed themes based on patterns in the codes using the qualitative software analysis tool ATLAS.ti. For our mixed-methods look at the survey data, we used Microsoft Excel to calculate frequencies of survey responses and codes by district size to explore variations among districts of different sizes. We flagged any codes that appeared proportionally more or less frequently than we would have expected based on the distribution of districts by size, using 15 percentage points as our benchmark for a meaningful variation from the expected distribution. For example, 15 percent of survey completers came from large districts. If 30 percent of the respondents for a code came from large districts (thus, 15 percentage points more than expected), we flagged that code and reviewed all associated open-ended survey responses separately for respondents from large, medium, and small districts to pinpoint differences among them.

Document review

For districts that did not complete a survey, we reviewed their websites for evidence of SEL in their mission, goals, and strategic plans, as well as any SEL policies, strategies, models, measurements, or professional development used at the district level. Areas of the district websites that were reviewed were the "Home" page, the "About" page, school board work, strategic plan, district handbook, school handbook (if district comprised one school), and any other subpage that may have referenced SEL practices (e.g., "District Culture").

For the mission, goals, and strategic plans, districts were coded as not listing them on their website, listing them but not referencing SEL, referencing SEL indirectly, or referencing SEL directly. Policies, strategies, models, or measurements were recorded by name. Professional development, where evidenced, was recorded based on the recipient(s).

Interviews and focus groups

To understand statewide trends in more detail, we collaborated with OSPI and the SEL Indicators Workgroup to identify individuals and organizations with experience supporting SEL and education issues in multiple communities. Interviews and focus groups with 37 individuals provided more in-depth insight and contextualized information about SEL activities, needs, and issues across the state.

The interview sample comprised six representatives from nongovernmental organizations, two higher education representatives, two grantmaking representatives, and one representative from a statewide public agency. The nongovernmental organizations included intermediaries and other groups that specialized in supporting educators and youth workers on issues such as SEL, out-of-school time programming, and culturally specific education. Many interview participants represented organizations with a statewide focus.

The interview protocol addressed three main issues: general trends in SEL work for K–12 students in Washington state, examples of schools and communities that are making progress in SEL, and emerging issues and opportunities to deepen and expand this work. Interviews were conducted via phone and lasted 40 to 60 minutes.

In three focus groups, 26 participants discussed their shared experiences related to supporting schools and districts on SEL-related issues. First, we conducted a virtual focus group with eight staff members from seven districts and one ESD. This focus group explored in more detail key themes that arose in the statewide district survey. We also conducted two in-person focus groups with 18 staff members from across OSPI programs and departments. Like the interviews, these focus groups explored statewide issues and trends, with an additional focus on understanding the ways SEL intersects with work across OSPI. Focus groups lasted 60 minutes, and all were recorded via audio and written notes (two were transcribed in full). Thematic analysis was conducted using ATLAS.ti using a prior coding scheme.

Limitations

This landscape scan is intended to be a point-in-time snapshot of high-level issues and trends related to SEL across Washington. Additionally, the scan was conducted during a time when SEL research, policy, and practice were quite dynamic. This report aims to provide insight into the current state of the field in Washington state.

There were constraints on the scope and depth of information we were able to collect and analyze during a four-month period. Although we analyzed the websites of districts for which we did not receive survey responses, public information about district SEL strategies and activities was not always available. The individuals who took part in interviews and focus groups were invited to participate because of their experience with issues related to SEL for K–12 students. Therefore, this report does not intend to represent the diversity of stakeholder perspectives regarding promising practices, concerns, and lessons learned across the state. As much as possible, we provide context to help the reader understand the limitations of the data.

Chapter 2. Status of K–12 SEL in Washington

In this chapter, we draw on multiple forms of data to describe stakeholder perceptions of the status of SEL for K–12 students across Washington.

SEL is increasingly visible—but broadly defined—in K–12 education across Washington

There is growing interest in SEL from educators and other stakeholders

Interview and focus group participants reported increased discussion about the role of schools in promoting social, emotional, and academic development. More educators are beginning to see the relevance of SEL for student learning and view SEL as part of effective practice.

Social and emotional learning … it is being talked about as sort of its own content area now, like this is a content area that kids need exposure to, much like science, much like music, but also that it is a skill set both of adults and students.
Interview participant

In focus groups, OSPI staff members reported an increased demand from districts for professional development related to SEL. Similar trends are evident in out-of-school time programs, with new efforts in place to help programs be more intentional and go deeper in promoting SEL.

Participants also reported that interest in SEL goes beyond educators and youth workers; recent support from the Washington Legislature was viewed as demonstrating an investment in SEL in education. As one participant suggested, the policy "pendulum is swinging" to support attention on SEL in schools:

> *I sense a little bit more willingness in the general population to try to support young people's socio-emotional development, including having time at school focused on young people getting along with one another.*
> Interview participant

Many districts statewide are addressing SEL in their mission, goals, and strategic plans

Overall, 91 percent of districts reported that SEL is reflected in their mission, goals, or strategic plans (figure 2). More than 75 percent of the districts that did not include SEL in their mission, goals, or strategic plans were small districts with fewer than 2,000 students (see appendix A for the entire set of quantitative survey results, including cross-tabulations by district size).

Figure 2. District reports of SEL in mission, goals, or strategic plans (N = 161)
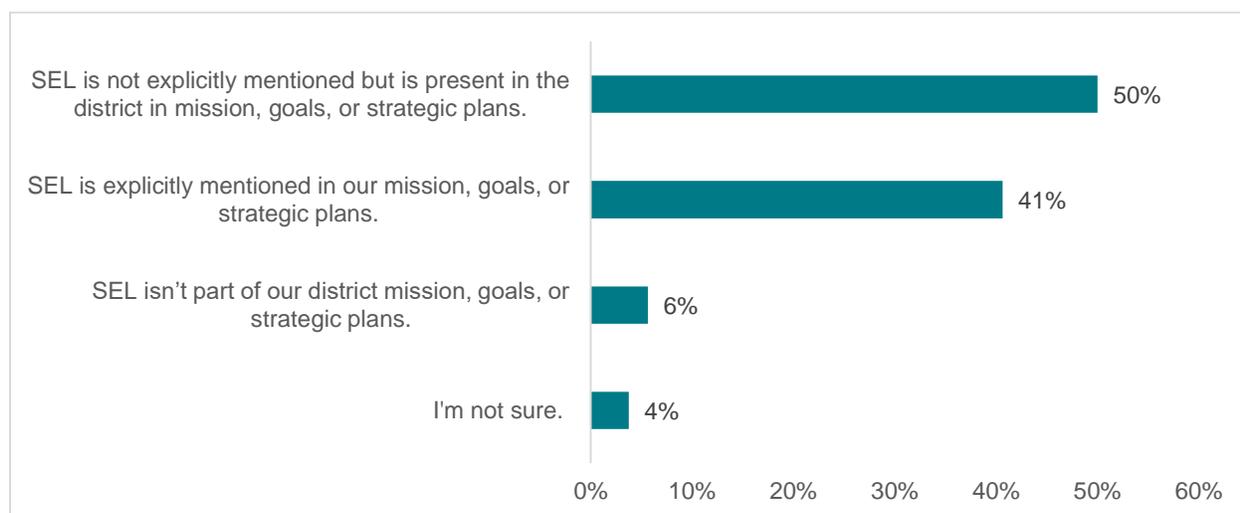
Source: Authors' analysis of Education Northwest landscape scan district survey data.

Half of the survey respondents indicated that SEL is *implicitly* referenced in their district's mission, goals, or strategic plans. In a follow-up open-ended question, respondents described ways in which SEL was implicitly present in these documents. Descriptions covered a range of concepts that respondents associated with SEL, such as supporting the whole child, security, climate, health, and behavioral health.

> *[SEL] is implicit in phrases such as "a purposeful, secure environment" and "culture of trust, mutual respect, and stability."*
> District survey respondent

> *Embedded within our climate and culture goal.*
> District survey respondent

> *[District] will host a comprehensive, school-based health services center, including medical doctor, nurses, dentist, dental hygienist, public health doctor, pediatric psychiatrist, social worker, behavioral health counselors.*
> District survey respondent

Other survey respondents gave examples of how SEL is *explicitly* addressed in their district's mission, goals, or strategic plans.

> *[We have a goal that] drives our board, superintendent, and each building improvement plan: Build a system of support to ensure the social, emotional, and academic success of each of our students.*
> District survey respondent

The district three-year plan is to build a PK–12+ MTSS [preschool to grade 12 multi-tiered system of support] structure, including both academic and SEL.
District survey respondent

Analysis of district websites provided additional information about the remaining 125 districts that did not complete the survey. For the 76 districts that provided their mission, goals, and/or strategic plans on their website, we found that 38 addressed SEL practices directly and 10 indirectly referenced SEL. In other words, 38 districts directly mentioned social and emotional well-being or learning, and 10 districts indirectly referred to teacher supports and/or student empowerment, confidence, and other attributes that would be supportive of SEL.

Alternatively, 28 districts did not address SEL in the mission, goals, and/or strategic plans provided on their websites. As the above descriptions of district approaches to SEL indicate, the wording of missions, goals, and strategic plans can be broadly interpreted as supportive of SEL yet not be evident to those outside the district. Additionally, not all these districts had a strategic plan available for viewing. Therefore, SEL may still be present in these districts but not readily evidenced in the information available on their website.

Few surveyed districts are adopting SEL-specific policies or procedures

Only 14 percent of district survey respondents have adopted SEL-specific policies or procedures. However, an additional 27 percent reported that SEL is included in other policies and procedures. Open-ended responses illustrated the array of policies and procedures into which SEL figured implicitly.

The Education Board has adopted related policies and procedures for the care and handling of admission denials, discipline hearings, appeals, limiting suspensions/expulsions, and providing services to those children/students in need.
District survey respondent

It is building based through individual SIP [school improvement plan] plans.
District survey respondent

Suicide prevention and transgender.
District survey respondent

Washington districts are engaging in a variety of SEL-related activities

Overall, 93 percent of survey respondents reported that their district or at least one school in their district is working to address SEL for students or adults. Stakeholders viewed a variety of activities as promoting SEL (e.g., positive behavior supports, discipline practice, mental health supports, anti-bullying activities, and student leadership activities). Yet, it's unclear to what degree they are implementing these activities as a fundamental part of learning for all students or as interventions targeted to students identified as needing support.

About two-thirds of surveyed districts are engaging in activities to support student SEL

Survey respondents most commonly reported focusing on SEL intervention programs or activities, instruction, and curricula. Most of the districts not engaging in districtwide efforts for SEL were small districts, and a little more than half of respondents who reported only school-based SEL efforts were from midsized districts (appendix A).

In the survey, focus groups, and interviews, participants noted that the nature of these activities varied by grade band. They reported that elementary schools were more likely to adopt SEL-specific programs or activities, and middle schools and high schools were more likely to integrate SEL into broader activities focused on academics or school climate.

When asked to provide examples of specific models most commonly in use, most interview and focus group participants cited Second Step, and fewer than half cited positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS); recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotions (RULER); and CharacterStrong. Survey respondents named 89 curricula and approaches in use across the state—only 18 of which were used by 10 or more districts (the plurality of curricula and approaches were used by only a single district). The most common approaches identified in the survey (in descending order) were PBIS, Second Step, CharacterStrong, and RULER. Midsized districts were more likely to use PBIS than other districts, and most of the districts using RULER were large (appendix A). Small districts were less likely to use Second Step or RULER.

Figure 3. District reports of activities focused on student SEL (N = 162)
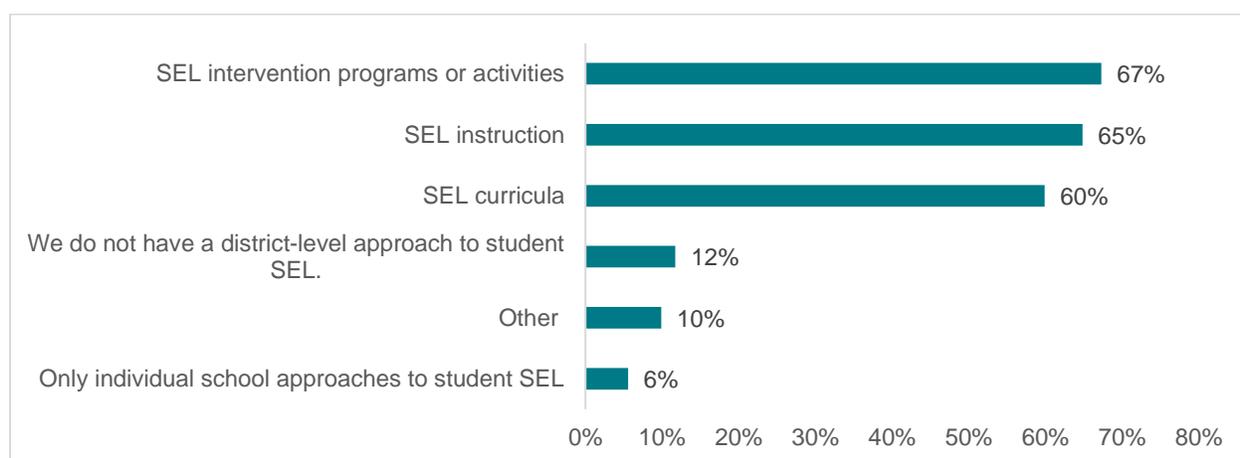
Source: Authors' analysis of Education Northwest landscape scan district survey data.

For districts that did not complete a survey, 13 mentioned PBIS on their website, a few mentioned Second Step, and a couple mentioned CharacterStrong or Safe & Civil Schools.

Almost all surveyed districts are working on positive climate, although strategies vary

Survey respondents most commonly reported the use of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and specific strategies, such as trauma-informed practices, community and family

engagement, and restorative justice (figure 4). Only small districts reported not having an approach for positive school climate, and they were also less likely to use racial equity policy or equity practices (appendix A).

Figure 4. District reports of activities focused on school climate (N = 161)
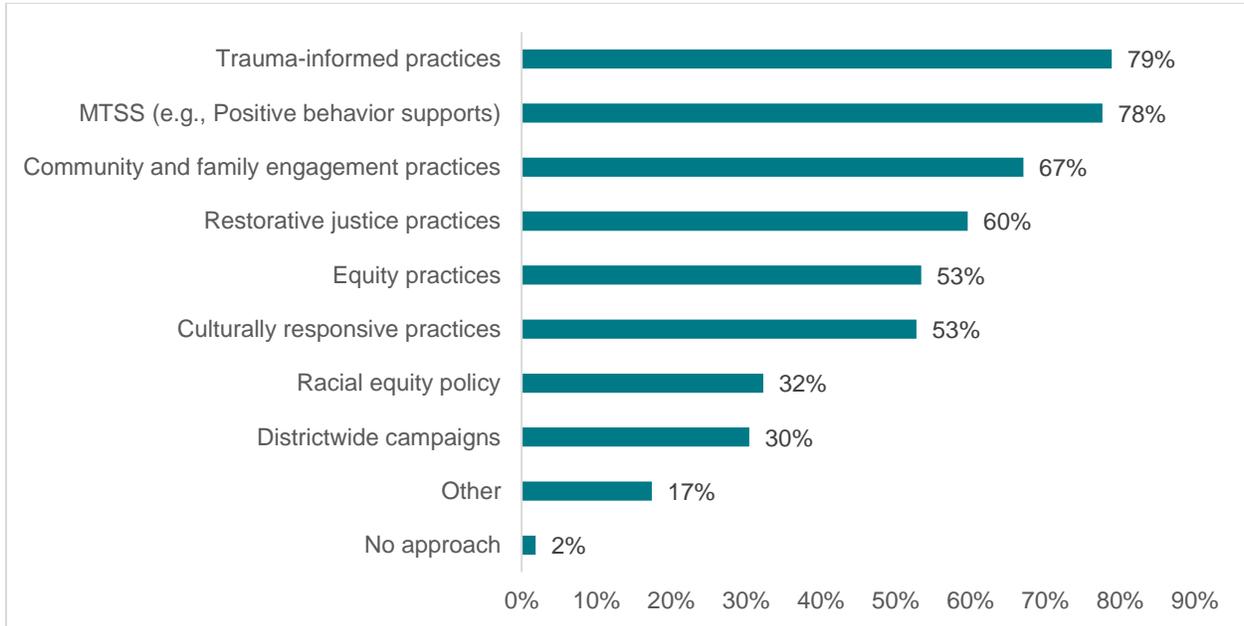
Source: Authors' analysis of Education Northwest landscape scan district survey data.

For districts that did not complete a survey, their websites included limited mention of SEL-related practices (most commonly restorative justice practices). Many district websites had anti-bullying policies prominently displayed, but only a few provided details on anti-bullying programming or strategies. Interview and focus group participants most frequently cited restorative justice practices, trauma-informed practices, and culturally responsive practices as strategies to promote SEL and positive school climate.

Participants report that school staff members, families, and community partners have a role to play in promoting SEL

Various school- and district-level staff members are responsible for SEL

Survey respondents were asked to identify district-level staff members whose work supported SEL. For the most part, respondents instead mentioned *school*-level behavioral and mental health providers, as well as health providers (such as nurses). Some respondents noted district-level personnel, committees, or teams that integrated SEL into their work, such as directors of student support or MTSS implementation teams. Fewer than 20 respondents reported that their district had a coordinator, director, or coach whose main role was to support SEL implementation. Unsurprisingly, large districts were most likely to report having district-level roles to support SEL, and small districts were unlikely to do so.

In interviews and focus groups, participants often emphasized that SEL is not the sole province of school counselors; they said diverse school staff members—such as front office workers, janitors, bus drivers, paraeducators, and teachers—can promote SEL. They also cited the importance of families and community partners, such as out-of-school time program personnel.

Many districts offered professional development in support of their SEL efforts, most commonly to school staff members

District survey responses showed that school staff members had the most access to SEL professional development compared with district staff members, families, community partners, and other stakeholders (figure 5). Professional development on supporting safe, positive climate; using SEL curricula or strategies; and supporting student SEL was more commonly offered than professional development on integrating SEL with academic content or supporting adult SEL. Relatively few small districts offered professional development to families.

Figure 5. District reports of SEL-related professional development opportunities (N = 153)
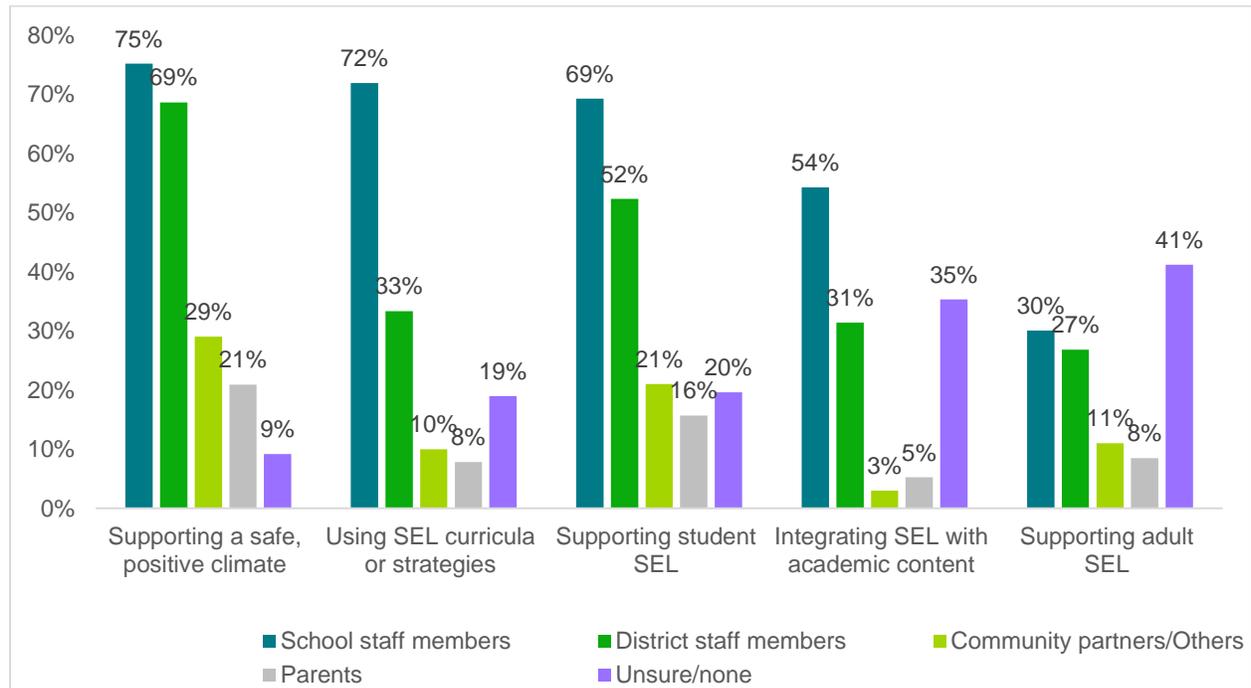
Source: Authors' analysis of Education Northwest landscape scan district survey data.

For those districts that did not complete a survey, we reviewed their websites and found few examples of SEL-related professional development.

Although there is increasing recognition of the need to support educators in their own social and emotional development, districts vary in whether and how they approach this work

In focus groups and interviews, more than two-thirds of participants suggested that students benefit when adults also receive for support for their personal SEL. They also suggested that attention to adult SEL is essential for adults to model the SEL behaviors they wish to see in students. Participants described efforts to promote staff members' sense of belonging and wellness in schools, as well as initiatives to help educators understand how their personal biases influence their interactions with students so that they may be more responsive and inclusive.

I think one of the things that sometimes gets glossed over in the conversation around social-emotional learning is the social-emotional capacity of the educators, and the compassion fatigue that the educators experience. Is an educator really in a position to fully absorb and be able to implement this stuff if they're not in a place to be able to do that for themselves?
Focus group participant

In addition to professional development for school staff members, more than half of the surveyed districts employed other strategies to support adult SEL—most commonly teacher evaluation or mentoring (figure 6). Small districts were least likely to offer SEL supports for families or social support networks for teachers (appendix A).

Figure 6. District supports for adults SEL (N = 161)
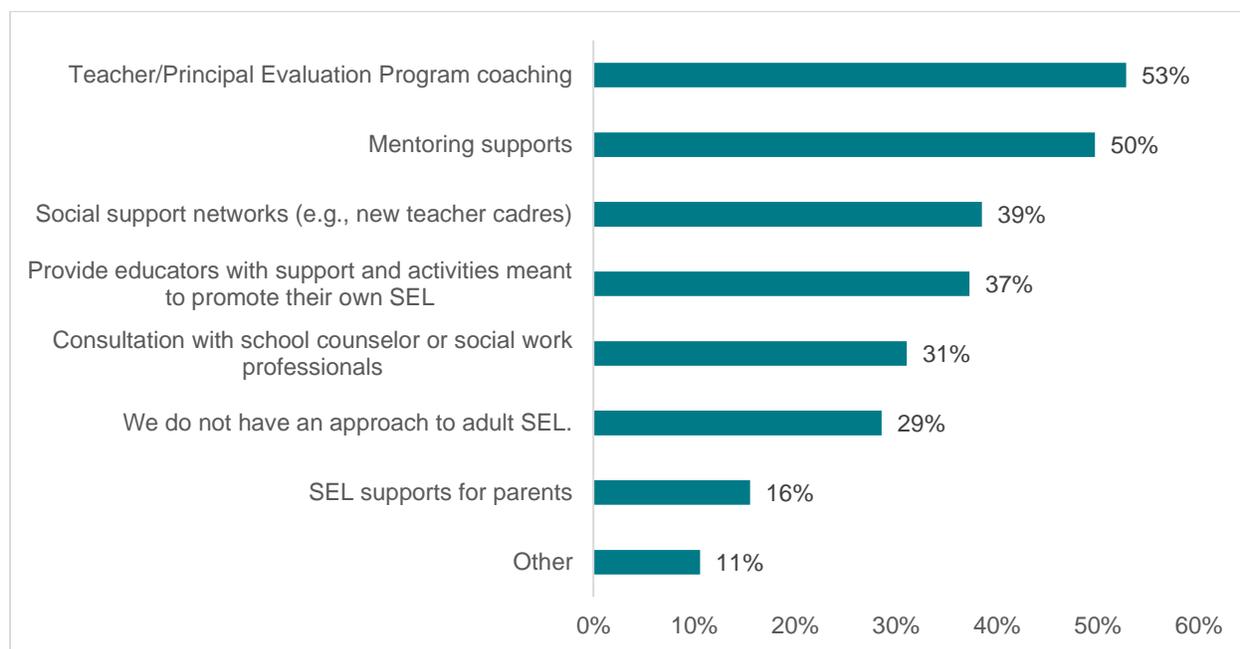
Source: Authors' analysis of Education Northwest landscape scan district survey data.

Many districts are using data to assess or monitor their progress in SEL

A little more than half of surveyed districts used student surveys, staff surveys, or classroom observations to monitor progress in SEL

In the survey, many districts reported using data to assess or monitor the progress of their SEL—only 16 percent reported no SEL data use. A little more than two-thirds of the districts that reported "None of the above" were small districts (appendix A). Proportionally few small districts indicated the use of staff surveys, as well.

Figure 7. District methods for monitoring progress on SEL (N = 157)
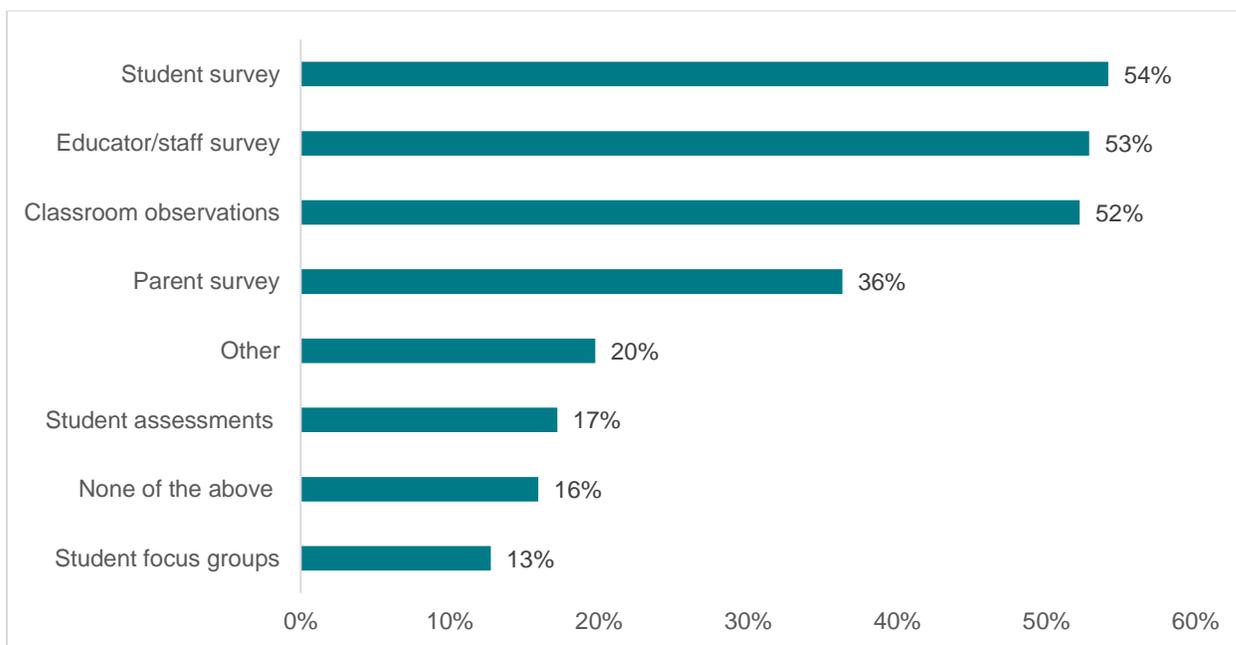
Source: Authors' analysis of Education Northwest landscape scan district survey data.

In a follow-up open-ended survey question, respondents noted specific measurement tools in use and ways in which they are using data. Districts diverged widely in the extent to which they use assessments, whether standardized or commercially available (such as assessments included with PBIS programs), and homegrown measures. For example, one district reported administering a homegrown climate survey, the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment, the state Healthy Youth Survey, observational checklists from a SEL curriculum, and two observational tools for instruction (the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, or CLASS, tool and the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning, or 5D, tool). Districts deploying such varied assessments sometimes noted additional funding streams, such as grants, to support their work.

> *We use the WRICS discipline tool. We calculate how many problems that we have with different areas. Our hopes are that we will receive less with the intervention that we are providing.*
> District survey respondent

[At the elementary school], we use student response surveys to elicit information from students about how safe and connected they feel. We administer this twice a year to all third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students. Our building leadership team looks at the fall results and develops reasonable goals to improve the climate and feeling of safety amongst students in our school. The MS/HS administers the Healthy Youth Survey and uses results to also establish points of emphasis to support students in their feelings of safety at school.
District survey respondent

Districts that did not complete the survey had limited evidence on their websites of SEL measurement and data use. However, a few district websites mentioned the Healthy Youth Survey, climate surveys, and family surveys addressing SEL.

Educators are collecting both student-level and setting-level data related to SEL

Open-ended responses on the district survey suggest that although some districts are assessing the SEL of individual students, others are assessing SEL through measures focused on features of the learning environment. These include student, staff, and family perceptions of school climate, as well as data regarding discipline practices.

In interviews and focus groups, a few participants described the use of practical and formative measures for reflecting on and refining adult practices in support of student SEL. Examples of formative measures of student SEL include the WaKIDS Assessment and Zones of Regulation Check In. Participants also cited the use of school climate surveys and continuous improvement models, such as the SEL Program Quality Assessment, as promising examples of measures that focus on features of the learning environment.

Chapter 3. Emerging Issues and Opportunities

In addition to noting the growing awareness of the importance of SEL to learning, landscape scan participants identified opportunities to strengthen adult capacity, implementation quality, assessment, and equity. In this chapter, we explore some of these issues and priorities for additional resources and supports.

A shared framework for SEL in K–12 education is not yet in use across Washington state

Less than half of the surveyed districts are using OSPI resources to support their SEL activities

Although OSPI has drafted a set of standards and benchmarks for SEL, it has not yet been formally adopted, and survey results do not suggest that many districts are aligning their efforts with this proposed framework. A little over a third of surveyed districts reported using the 2016 Washington SEL benchmarks and standards, and only 11 percent reported using the professional development modules on OSPI's website (figure 8).

Figure 8. SEL resources commonly used by districts (N = 152)
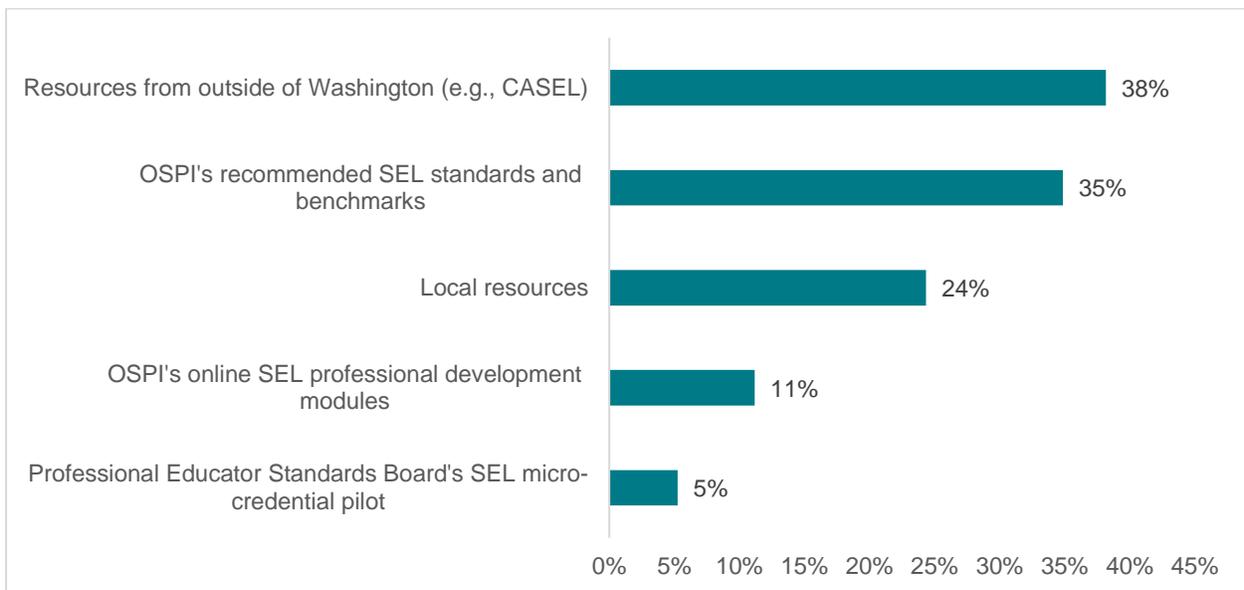
Source: Authors' analysis of Education Northwest landscape scan district survey data.

Relatively few districts reported using noncurricular resources to support their SEL implementation. Small districts were least likely to indicate the use of all resources, except those developed locally (appendix A). Midsized districts most often used OSPI's online SEL professional development modules.

When asked a follow-up question about *how* they use local resources, about two-thirds of responding districts said they partnered with local resource providers to offer professional development, technical assistance, or coaching. Just over 60 percent said local partners were direct providers of SEL supports and services for students.

Lack of common language and frameworks is a barrier to implementation

On the survey, districts described a wide range of programs, policies, and interventions as being associated with SEL. Some districts positioned SEL within a comprehensive (MTSS). Others described a specific curriculum, strategy, or policy

The upper leadership needs their own knowledge and skills enhanced. They do not currently fully understand that SEL is not the same as PBIS and that both are different than MTSS—although reliant on MTSS structure to serve the most students well.
District survey respondent

Two-thirds of interviews and focus group participants said this diversity in how educators think and talk about SEL posed a barrier to effective implementation. They expressed concern that educators may use a single strategy or model— such as trauma-informed practice or PBIS—and then "check the box" that they are promoting SEL.

> *It's really all over the map. And I would say there isn't necessarily a consistent method. Some of them might be doing prepackaged social-emotional learning curriculum. Others might say, "We're supporting the social-emotional learning needs of our students by providing them resources—housing support, food support ..." Others might try and incorporate what they believe is social-emotional learning into an advisory class or basically more like life skills class. But there isn't necessarily a consistent or a one-size-fits-all or any singular strategy that a lot of them are using.*
> Focus group participant

Interview and focus group participants often said there is conceptual confusion of what SEL is, who benefits from SEL, and where SEL occurs. They expressed concern that many educators view SEL as an intervention strategy for specific populations rather than a "Tier 1," "universal," and "upstream" issue that is relevant for all students. Due to this lack of understanding, participants suggested that some educators do not see SEL as part of their role or responsibility.

> *I think there's just a lot of churn out there around what do these words all mean? What does it mean for me as an instructor of math, or as an instructor of science, relative to how I'm going to help my kids be successful and engage in my classroom?... I think part of it is just a lack of understanding of what these things really are and how they can be mutually reinforced in a classroom in just everyday operations with kids. It doesn't have to feel like another add-on.*
> Focus group participant

Almost all interview and focus group participants identified a need to better explain how SEL relates to learning and school climate. Many suggested more intentional integration of SEL with culturally responsive, restorative, and trauma-informed practices.

A few participants called for expanding notions of SEL from just student competencies to include a more explicit focus on adult capacity to support student SEL and the broader learning environment.

> *Oftentimes, when we define SEL, not everyone is going to include climate and culture or the learning environment as part of that conversation.*
> Interview participant

> *I think the SEL work in most places tends to focus on what we need to build or fix in kids. I think even the focus in Washington state on building competencies or standards is a manifestation of that—when actually, I think where I've seen the most traction, when schools or systems are really moving on these issues, it's because they're focusing on the competencies that you build in educators and the way that the learning environment needs to change to be responsive to all young people.*
> Interview participant

There is a need for more culturally responsive SEL language and frameworks

About a third of interview and focus group participants suggested that widely used SEL language and frameworks do not resonate with diverse communities

Participants noted that since aspects of SEL may be expressed differently across cultures and contexts, the language and frameworks that are used to describe SEL must be inclusive of these differences. This includes consideration of not only cultural differences but the impact of historical trauma and oppression on specific communities.

One participant described the need for Washington to adopt SEL frameworks that are not only culturally responsive but also acknowledge shared experiences of oppression and trauma within some communities, and the need for educators to understand the impacts of oppression and historical trauma on children.

Similarly, participants expressed strong concern about the negative consequences for students of color and immigrant or refugee students when SEL expectations reflect the perspectives of dominant cultures. Although "conversations are happening," participants described a need to more deeply consider SEL with an equity lens, as well as awareness of the unintended consequences of promoting SEL models, curricula, and practices that were not vetted in diverse communities.

> *We need more of a pluralistic approach about what SEL looks like across cultures. And right now, we have just one. And so that's where I think we need to go. And I do think that*

compared to other states, what I've seen, is that the [Washington] benchmarks [have] done a better job of thinking about this. But I don't think the programs that we are implementing… have really thought about it in depth. The unfortunate thing is that there's really big consequences to that … especially for youth of color.
Interview participant

The growing practice of assessing student-level SEL may be problematic, given the dynamic state of the research and questions about the cultural responsiveness of indicators and measures

Three-quarters of interview participants and several focus group participants expressed worries about the assessment of student-level SEL in schools. Participants feared students from historically marginalized communities may be further marginalized by being assessed against indicators that are not in line with their cultural values.

[There are] concerns about the potential for [Washington] SEL benchmarks or indicators to be used as a weapon or as an assessment tool that maybe isn't culturally responsive. That's a main concern that has been expressed—not just by parents and community-based organizations but others.
Focus group participant

In addition to expressing concerns about indicators, participants highlighted issues with the measures themselves. Some suggested that the state of the research on SEL measurement is emergent or "underdeveloped." There was also concern that practitioners need training to understand how to interpret the results of student SEL assessments, given the limitations of the measures and how they are reported.

> *There's a huge variation in how much folks know about how best to use the data … Oftentimes, I hear folks talking about using single items to make decisions about practice, where we really should be talking about things at the construct level … What do I do with it when I find out that bullying is a problem at my school? What does it mean when it says that 60 percent of kids have an issue with that? And so that translation into practice is another area where I think that we need a lot more work.*
> Interview participant

In another example of the need for training and better measures, a participant expressed concerns that adults are assessing student SEL based on their own experience and worldview rather than using objective evidence. Participants also highlighted the need for more research on SEL, with a wider diversity of communities, to understand how well current models and measures resonate across cultures. At least one participant noted that that SEL indicators and measures may not be inclusive of students with special needs, such as students that are nonverbal.

The quality and depth of SEL implementation is uneven, with more professional development and guidance needed across the state

Lack of funding and time were commonly cited as barriers to implementation

When asked to identify their highest-priority needs to support SEL, over 60 percent of survey respondents chose additional funding for SEL, and over 50 percent chose more time for adults to build their capacity to support SEL (figure 9).

Figure 9. Districts' highest-priority needs for implementing SEL (N = 152)

Source: Authors' analysis of Education Northwest landscape scan district survey data.

Responses to open-ended survey questions illustrated these concerns. Survey respondents noted that although educators may want to implement SEL, teachers have "full plates" and may prioritize students' academic work over SEL due to the accountability pressure placed on core academic subjects. Districts emphasized the need for time to teach SEL, as well as time for adults to develop their capacity to promote SEL with students.

> *Please fund this initiative—we are having a hard time carving out time for people to work on this, with so much accountability around academic performance.*
> District survey respondent

Our teachers are stretched. The high stakes of education make it difficult for them. Time and money for professional development continue to be a barrier. We are trying to manage the immense PD needs of our staff.
District survey respondent

As with many critical topics, time with our educators is a critical resource. As promising practices, such as SEL, are more clearly defined as critical areas for schools to address, we are challenged with prioritizing the limited time we have with staff beyond the student time. As we have adopted instructional models and supports to implement SEL, it is also of note that these resources require a fiscal commitment, as would a regular model of progress monitoring.
District survey respondent

Focus groups and interview participants also described time-related challenges. They said educators and youth program staff members feel overwhelmed by the demands of their work, as well as the diversity of frameworks, models, and practices related to SEL. They expressed concern that educators consider SEL "one more thing" to add to their already full workload.

For me, sometimes it's just sitting down and having some time to sense make about "What does SEL look like in the work that I'm doing? What are those key themes around best practice that need to be woven into what I already do?"—as opposed to feeling like, just like in schools, another thing I need to add to my plate. No, SEL isn't another thing. It should be incorporated into what you're already doing. And I'm wondering if that's just the gift of time and some intentionality around "you need to do this," and it's for the best. It's the best work.
Focus group participant

Participants raised various issues associated with implementation quality, with many districts using "homegrown" models with limited demonstrated effectiveness

Across the data sources, participants frequently expressed concerns about implementation fidelity. Several interview and focus group participants said that without clear implementation guidance, many schools and districts were adopting "homegrown" approaches to SEL that were not reflective of the evidence base or the diverse experiences of their students. Some suggested that such approaches are, at best, ineffective and may be harmful to students.

Participants also noted that even when schools use an evidence-based approach, they often modify it in ways that limit effectiveness. SEL strategies can be complex, requiring

One of the other things that I see a lot is a kind of deflation event that happens in schools. It'll be, "Yeah, we tried that, but it was really hard for us to figure out how to implement, or we weren't seeing the benefit that was coming back. So, it kinda fell by the wayside." … You get initiative overload that sits on top of the fact that these are complex practices often to really embrace.
Interview participant

adults to shift their mindsets and behavior. Some participants said schools may too swiftly abandon promising practices when they are not seeing the anticipated effects.

> *I think some feeling of "I've done that; it didn't work," and so feeling it's just not worth the investment to do the work and maybe not seeing the outcomes. Maybe they [schools] say they're doing it, and we see really high discipline rates, so are they really doing it? Lack of understanding of what "it" is, and is it a thing that can be done and checked off a list without the system and the feeling behind it?*
> Focus group participant

Less commonly, interview and focus group participants suggested that active resistance from educators and communities presented a barrier to quality SEL implementation.

There is strong agreement that both pre-service training and ongoing professional development related to SEL are necessary to improve implementation

Professional development emerged as a priority on the district survey, with over half of respondents listing time for adult skill and knowledge development as a top priority (see figure 9). In addition, almost a third specifically highlighted pre-service coursework.

Interview and focus group participants overwhelmingly called for more attention to building the capacity of educators, expanded learning opportunities (ELO) providers, and others to support student SEL. In terms of content, they said adults need help in understanding child and adolescent development; figuring out how to integrate SEL into all aspects of their work through simple, "high-impact" strategies that they can make part of their repertoire; building specific SEL skills; and promoting inclusive learning environments.

> *I think that people can see these connections a little bit better if the professional learning was more connected throughout with a theme instead of one-off things. I'd like to see how SEL is connected to academics and is connected to discipline and is connected to EL. I just think that that would help us a lot.*
> Focus group participant

> *I really think that figuring out what five key fundamental things that teachers or ELO folks may already be doing anyway, and then you begin to integrate additional practices, ideas into that base thing, so it doesn't feel like one more thing added onto my plate. What it feels like is, you're a soccer player, you got a new move that you learned, but you're still playing soccer. I think something like that, that is low-stakes and simple yet high impact, would be really beneficial.*
> Interview participant

> *I think that just comes back to the lack of confidence or competence in being able to perform those kinds of activities in a classroom where we're asking teachers to be experts in content—and also to have social worker skills—and they're not getting that training.*

As mentioned above, participants stressed the importance of helping adults integrate SEL into their everyday practice. In describing effective professional development strategies, participants often suggested ongoing coaching and practice with feedback for adults as they increase their awareness, confidence, and skills. Participants also expressed concern that "one-off" trainings were not enough to help educators strengthen this aspect of their practice. A few cited the value of using professional learning communities to support this work.

Educators are seeking various local resources to support SEL implementation at the district, school, and classroom level

Across the data sources, participants identified a need for various types of implementation guidance. When asked about resources on the online survey, districts had the option to indicate not only resources they used (see figure 8) but also which resources they weren't using but wanted to learn about. In general, respondents were more interested in using state and local resources than national ones (figure 10).

Figure 10. SEL resources districts want to learn more about (N = 152)
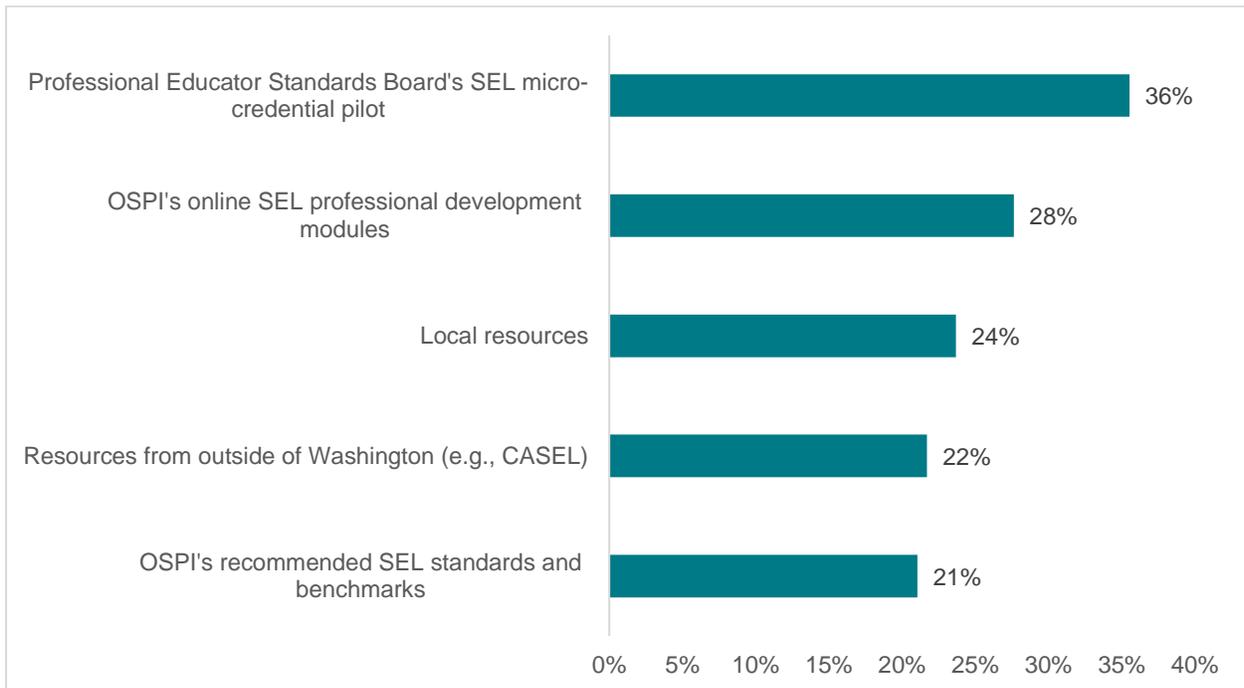
Source: Authors' analysis of Education Northwest landscape scan district survey data.

Survey respondents were generally positive about the Washington SEL benchmarks and standards, but they asked for additional guidance to translate these resources into school and district policies and practices. Common requests for guidance included support for integrating the SEL standards with academic standards and content, providing examples of what SEL looks like for students in various grade bands, and resources for measuring progress.

> *We find SEL standards and benchmarks very relevant. What would be helpful is to have some quick tips or a one-page access to the benchmarks that are not found in the handbook online.*
> District survey respondent

> *We need some guidance on creating a K–12 scope and sequence using the standards and benchmarks.*
> District survey respondent

> *Clear ways to integrate with other instruction would make [using the SEL standards and benchmarks] more efficient.*
> District survey respondent

> *Grade-level indicators would make them more useful so that we can ensure vertical alignment. A recommended universal screener would also make them more useful.*
> District survey respondent

> *Having the benchmarks translated into different grade band "look fors" would be helpful.*
> District survey respondent

> *More resources and best practices for districts and use as a metric for determining school success.*
> District survey respondent

In interviews and focus groups, participants echoed this call for further guidance in selecting, integrating, and adapting frameworks, strategies, and models. They said districts are inundated with new SEL-related programs and suggested that OSPI consider a way to vet and recommend quality resources aligned with Washington's standards.

Several participants expressed enthusiasm for the implementation guides that are being produced by the SEL Indicators workgroup to both support and align practice across the state. As part of this work, a few participants suggested a need to better document and share lessons learned from local districts and their partners.

> *Because we're a state that has local control in 295 school districts, I know that there's really great work happening in pockets that I'm not aware of. So how do we start to identify that and really start to highlight some of these best practices?*
> Focus group participant

Use of existing SEL resources vary by district size, location, and financial resources

About half of the interview and focus group participants suggested that there are disparities in how districts can support SEL. For example, participants said in-person professional development opportunities for SEL are typically offered in the more populous parts of the state and may be difficult for more remote districts to access.

Survey data supported the assertion that smaller districts are using fewer resources for SEL. As noted above, small districts used two of the most common SEL curricula in the state—Second Step and RULER—less often than expected (appendix A). Small districts also used freely available resources (such as OSPI's recommended standards and benchmarks; OSPI's online modules; and materials from national entities, such as CASEL) disproportionally less than other districts. Finally, compared with other districts, small districts were disproportionally more likely to report that they were not providing professional development opportunities on supporting student SEL or using SEL curricula.

Several participants expressed concern that in districts with few financial resources, staff members may have more limited training opportunities and students may have less access to SEL-specific programming.

> *What we see is that there's actually interest around doing this work, but not everybody is able to do it because there are different barriers, and that starts to get at some of the equity issues that we see. So, the schools, districts, and communities that have access to funds -or the ones that can devote some time to applying for grant money- are getting grant money to do all this work. And those that don't, are not… But without a real intentional, coordinated effort and the infrastructure to support the work, you just don't see the fidelity with implementation and the full impact of the work.*
> Interview participant

Given these differences in access to and use of SEL resources, some participants proposed a statewide infrastructure to ensure sustained and equitable access to training and resources for quality practice.

Many participants highlighted the need for a systems approach and strategic investments in infrastructure to support quality SEL at the state, district, and school level

State and local education leaders can do more to make clear that SEL is fundamentally important to education by developing relevant policies, procedures, and infrastructure

Survey respondents, as well as some interview participants, called for more consistent SEL leadership at the state and local level. Regarding the former, survey respondents recommended that OSPI set some accountability requirements for school leaders.

Setting a clear, expected direction that SEL is a general education/basic education initiative and holding the general ed/basic ed leadership accountable for implementation. It has been too long placed in the role of the SPED/student services realm, so districts and staff do not see it as a part of the basic ed we should provide to students. We spend a lot of time trying to unwind that belief—time we should be spending on educating staff to meet student needs in the area of SEL. Clear, explicit accountability from OSPI that we are to teach SEL in an integrated way, that is a basic ed expectation, clear direction in how that should happen and support in coaching/teaching adult staff to do that would be my No. 1 request.
District survey respondent

Focus group participants from school districts said they used the statewide standards and benchmarks to garner resources and support for SEL in their district. A few interview participants and survey respondents wondered whether formal adoption of the SEL standards and benchmarks as a mandate would encourage more widespread adoption.

We are waiting for full state adoption [of the SEL standards and benchmarks]. I thought they were still in draft form, with the indicators being developed by the work group.
District survey respondent

I don't know if folks are going to latch onto it unless [it] is mandated in some way. So, I think that's one thing—is what is the weight of these standards and all these efforts going into the standards and its implementation guide? How are we gonna ensure that folks are using it?
Interview participant

In addition to SEL-specific policies, participants raised a need for an integrated system of supports at the state and local level for SEL professional development, quality practice, and data use. Participants noted the need for OSPI to model this by further integrating SEL with academic content, both in terms of standards and the professional development provided to staff members.

One of my concerns from the very beginning was that we were creating a stand-alone set of standards called SEL standards, which immediately will be perceived among administrators as one more thing to do. And so, I think it's really critical as we continue this conversation that the strategies we talk about are infused within all learning environments. Whether we're talking about the arts or social studies or math, it's the responsibility of all teachers to address that approach to teaching, which isn't a separate set of standards themselves.
Focus group participant

When highlighting examples of bright spot schools and districts, participants mentioned the value of having all staff members trained in SEL to reinforce the idea that everyone has a role to play in supporting SEL and to help build a common language among district and school staff

members. Other examples of taking a systems approach at the district level included use of MTSS frameworks at schools to integrate SEL into multiple aspects of the school day.

Participants called for more collaboration across state agencies—and within OSPI—to develop a more integrated, cohesive approach to SEL

More integration—including further incorporation of SEL into frameworks such as MTSS and efforts to promote positive school climate, culturally responsive practices, mental health, and trauma-informed practices—was a priority for participants. They said this is essential to having educators understand that SEL is not a stand-alone practice.

> *Make it part of the whole plan—Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and reaching all learners, including those on the fringes, like Highly Capable and Students with Disabilities. Make sure that your Center for the Improvement of Student Learning department and Office of System and School Improvement department and student services and assessment department are all working on it together. Small districts like ours do not have capacity within our systems to absorb separate initiatives. Involve Washington Education Association, or else teachers won't feel it is part of their professional responsibilities.*
> District survey respondent

Participants also called for OSPI to further collaborate with institutions of higher education, as well as the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), to ensure SEL is part of pre-service training and ongoing professional development.

> *Given the necessity for staff to have ongoing training, and given the new special education funding situation, it is important to provide funding for paraprofessional training and certificated staff training. OSPI should also talk with colleges and universities in the state regarding the number of pre-service classes undergraduates receive.*
> District survey respondent

> *A lot of lack of knowledge and understanding and feeling competent to do something can be addressed by providing training and some professional development … Knowing that this [SEL] is becoming more research-based as a best practice for helping all kids, I think that's going to be a bigger part of our [OSPI's] role in the work—is to try to be trainers of trainers of trainers … partnering with PESB and with educator preparation programs, whether it be administrators, counselors, social workers, whoever. That that becomes a systemic part of their education and training also so that we are building our next generation of leaders and educators with knowledge of what all of this is and the importance of the work and the role they can play.*
> Focus group participant

A quarter of interview and focus group participants described siloed efforts within OPSI and across state agencies on SEL-related issues. They said further collaboration would reduce the number of meetings stakeholders need to attend and increase the impact of their work by considering students within the broader context of their families and communities. Most commonly, participants suggested that OSPI partner more closely and intentionally with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families on issues such as early learning, foster care, and juvenile justice. A couple of participants also suggested that OPSI partner with the state Division of Behavioral Health. By working in tandem with staff members from these agencies, participants suggested that the state could better provide support for SEL from early childhood into emerging adulthood.

> *We've got a lot of kind of silos and different tracks. And that starts to get really, really expensive when we don't look at how things can coordinate and complement each other. And look at other systems that intersect in a kid's life outside of education and how maybe that can be more of a collaborative effort.*
> Interview participant

To address these issues, there was a call for more "multiplayer convening" led by organizations across sectors. One participant suggested more collaboration between private and public agencies to jointly sponsor events on SEL-related topics, especially in more remote areas of the state where trainings are offered less often. This strategy would maximize resources and increase access to training.

Interview and focus group participants raised the issue of family and community involvement in supporting SEL and influencing SEL policies and procedures

About a third of interview and focus group participants highlighted a need for schools to collaborate more closely with families in the design and implementation of their SEL efforts. Participants described families as key partners in supporting student SEL, as well as advocates for ensuring SEL activities are in line with their values and experiences. In addition, a couple of participants expressed a need for resources to support adults in their social and emotional development.

> *I always worry, especially with regard to social-emotional learning, just because it's so relational, that schools are missing an opportunity to leverage family and community resources on the ground, on the front end of their implementation. And really building off of the strengths that families and community organizations - who have relationships with kids -could really bring as they're working on implementing social-emotional learning strategies in the systems of support… Not having families and communities connected at the beginning, I think, hinders schools' abilities sometimes to really make more progress because you're catching up, and … the effort isn't always informed in culture and responsiveness.*
> Focus group participant

Not sure how OSPI can help with this, but we need to connect more with community and family. What we hear from families is very disconnected from what we're trying to do ... If their perceptions of certain teachers don't align with the bigger picture of what we're trying to do, that's a disconnect for us.
Focus group participant

In addition, a few participants expressed concern that families and diverse communities were not adequately represented in OSPI's development of statewide SEL standards and resources, and questioned when parents and community members would be activated to inform OSPI's work.

Several participants discussed opportunities to strengthen school-community partnerships, especially in terms of the alignment of practices between school day and expanded learning organizations. They described the Tacoma Whole Child Initiative as a model for aligned professional development and practice between in-school and out-of-school time providers. There is a need to "leverage the unique strengths" of the in-school and out-of-school time sectors. However, participants also noted that it takes time, capacity, and relationship-building to facilitate meaningful collaboration among families, schools, and community-based organizations.

Although folks understand that they need to include families, community partners, [and] youth programs into these learning environments or educational systems, they don't always have the bandwidth to prioritize that or to figure out how to do that. So, we're seeing when we talk to folks, that, yes, they want to integrate more partners and align with what community partners are doing. But they don't have the support to do that.
Interview participant

Washington districts' issues and opportunities are in line with issues emerging nationally

Much of the feedback we received from Washington educators and other stakeholders in this statewide landscape scan reflects the findings from national reviews of SEL practices, and reinforces issues identified in the regional scan conducted by the Youth Development Executives of King County:

- The lack of a common language and shared framework Washington has experienced has also led to national calls for greater conceptual clarity (Education First, 2017), as well as a desire for stable leadership providing clear communication on SEL practices (Youth Development Executives of King County, 2018).
- Equity is also at the forefront of "next steps" for SEL regionally and nationally, and the connection between SEL and racial equity needs to be communicated broadly (Youth Development Executives of King County, 2018). Additionally, research is needed to

understand how culture, race, and other factors affect impact, as well as what effective strategies might support better SEL implementation (Education First, 2017).

- Implementation quality also appears to face regional and national challenges, and more data are needed regarding impact and equity in implementation (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017; Education First, 2017; Marsh et al., 2018). Valid and reliable measures for SEL are still in need of development to make this possible (Education First, 2017; Rikoon, Brenneman, & Petway, 2016).[7]

- Quality professional development for teachers, school leaders, and district leaders on both student and adult SEL also plays a key role in regional and national conversations (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017; Education First, 2017; Jones, Bailey, Brush, & Kahn, 2018; Yettick, Lloyd, Harwin, Riemer, & Swanson, n.d.; Youth Development Executives of King County, 2018).

- The "systems approach" is supported in the literature as district-level prioritization of policies, frameworks, programs, and curricula is described as necessary to support SEL implementation (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017; Marsh et al., 2018; Youth Development Executives of King County, 2018).

- The purposeful collaboration Washington educators and stakeholders mentioned (e.g., between districts and community-based organizations, between teachers, etc.) and networked models of improvement were described as important strategies for SEL implementation nationally and regionally (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017; Education First, 2017; Youth Development Executives of King County, 2018).

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[7] SEL measures of CORE districts, a network of eight of the largest districts in California, were cited as one valid and reliable approach (Education First, 2017; Rikoon et al., 2016).

Chapter 4. Recommendations and Next Steps

This section reflects specific recommendations from landscape scan participants in response to questions posed during the scan, as well as recommendations from Education Northwest based on our analysis of the data.

Clarify SEL goals and expectations for students and adults

- Increase the utility of the recommended standards by adding indicators, examples, and/or "look fors."
- Ensure resources produced to support SEL—including those generated by the SEL Indicators Workgroup—are culturally responsive and trauma-informed.
- Increase recognition of the importance of SEL with more robust and consistent messaging and expectations for districts to adopt relevant policies and practices.

Disseminate resources to improve SEL implementation quality

- Build adult capacity and mindsets to effectively support student SEL through pre-service and embedded professional development, especially coaching with feedback.
- Provide implementation guidance that is integrated with academics and climate efforts.
- Create statewide guidance on selecting SEL approaches, programs, or curricula, such as a clearinghouse or menu.
- Provide a resource that explains the intersections and distinctions among various frameworks (e.g., MTSS), strategies (e.g., trauma-informed practices), and program models (e.g., PBIS) to help educators make implementation decisions.

Invest in infrastructure and a systems approach to reduce fragmentation and ensure equitable access to resources

- Increase the capacity of more districts, especially those that are historically undeserved, to access and use of SEL materials.
- Promote cross-sector collaboration centered on SEL through policies and convenings at a district, region, and statewide level.
- Model community and family engagement around SEL and provide guidance on ways districts and schools can take a more holistic approach to SEL in partnership with communities and expanded learning organizations.
- Share lessons learned from "bright spot" schools and districts with innovative and effective SEL efforts to provide local implementation models for small, medium, and large districts.

Build the capacity of educators to collect and use formative data at the setting and student level to inform the continuous improvement of SEL practice

- Provide resources to assist educators with selecting valid, culturally responsive, and useful measures of SEL progress at both the student and setting level.
- Develop the capacity of educators to effectively interpret the results of SEL measures.

Appendix A: Survey Results by District Size

Question: Does your district or any of its schools do work to address SEL for students or adults?

	All Districts	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Yes	93%	52%	30%	15%	2%
No	3%	86%	0%	0%	14%
Not sure	0%	89%	0%	11%	0%

Question: To what extent is SEL part of your district's mission, current goals, or strategic plans? Please select only one?

	All Districts	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
SEL is explicitly mentioned in our mission, goals, or strategic plans	41%	35%	35%	28%	2%
SEL is not explicitly mentioned but is present in the mission, goals, or strategic plans	50%	53%	39%	8%	1%
SEL isn't part of our district mission, goals, or strategic plans	6%	78%	11%	11%	0%
I'm not sure	4%	83%	0%	17%	0%

Question: Has your district adopted SEL-specific policies or procedures?

	All Districts	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Yes	14%	55%	27%	18%	0%
No, but SEL is included in other policies or procedures	27%	48%	40%	12%	0%
No	59%	45%	35%	18%	2%

Question: Which of the following are part of your district's approach to supporting student SEL? Please select all that apply?

	All Districts	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
SEL instruction (e.g., providing students with occasional activities to promote their SEL, such as using strategies to promote growth mindset in math instruction)	65%	44%	37%	18%	1%
SEL curricula (e.g., using a formal curriculum for ongoing SEL instruction, such as teaching a unit specifically focused on growth mindset)	60%	36%	41%	22%	1%
SEL intervention programs or activities (may be schoolwide or classroom-level)	67%	43%	39%	17%	2%
We do not have a district-level approach to student SEL	12%	79%	11%	11%	0%
We do not have a district-level approach to student SEL, but individual schools do	6%	22%	56%	22%	0%
Other	10%	38%	25%	31%	6%

Question: Which of the following are part of your district's approach to supporting adult SEL? Please select all that apply?

	All Districts	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
We do not have an approach to adult SEL	29%	63%	20%	17%	0%
Provide educators with support and activities meant to promote their own SEL	37%	47%	37%	13%	3%
Consultation with school counselor or social work professionals	31%	36%	44%	18%	2%
Social support networks (e.g., new teacher cadres)	39%	24%	47%	27%	2%
TPEP (Teacher/Principal Evaluation Program) coaching	53%	44%	40%	15%	1%
Mentoring supports	50%	44%	40%	16%	0%
SEL supports for families	16%	32%	40%	28%	0%
Other	11%	29%	29%	41%	0%

Question: Which of the following are part of your district's approach to promoting positive school and classroom climate? Please select all that apply?

	All Districts	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
We do not have an approach for positive school climate	2%	100%	0%	0%	100%
MTSS (e.g., positive behavior supports or tiered interventions)	78%	40%	39%	21%	1%
Trauma-informed practices	79%	44%	37%	19%	0%
Racial equity policy	32%	33%	35%	31%	33%
Equity practices	53%	35%	43%	21%	1%
Culturally responsive practices	52%	39%	36%	25%	0%
Community and family engagement practices	66%	43%	39%	17%	2%
Restorative justice practices	60%	40%	36%	24%	0%
Districtwide campaigns (e.g., Mix It Up at Lunch, Random Acts of Kindness)	30%	53%	29%	14%	4%
Other	17%	50%	32%	14%	4%

Question: What professional development on SEL is available through the district, and who has access to it? For each topic, please select any staff members who receive PD on that topic. (All districts)

	District staff members	School staff members	Parents	Community partners	Others	Unsure/None
Supporting student SEL	52%	69%	16%	16%	5%	20%
Using SEL curricula or strategies	33%	72%	8%	7%	3%	19%
Supporting adult SEL	27%	30%	8%	7%	4%	41%
Supporting safe, positive climate	69%	75%	21%	20%	9%	9%
Integrating SEL with academic content	31%	54%	5%	3%	1%	35%

Supporting student SEL

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
District staff members	45%	38%	16%	1%
School staff members	40%	40%	20%	1%
Parents	29%	46%	25%	0%
Community partners	38%	33%	25%	4%
Others	38%	25%	38%	0%
Unsure/None	67%	23%	10%	0%

Using SEL curricula or strategies

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
District staff members	39%	37%	22%	2%
School staff members	38%	40%	20%	2%
Parents	33%	42%	25%	0%
Community partners	36%	36%	27%	0%
Others	0%	50%	50%	0%
Unsure/None	66%	21%	14%	0%

Supporting adult SEL

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
District staff members	39%	34%	24%	2%
School staff members	35%	43%	22%	0%
Parents	31%	46%	23%	0%
Community partners	55%	18%	18%	9%
Others	0%	33%	67%	0%
Unsure/None	52%	32%	16%	0%

Supporting safe, positive climate

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
District staff members	46%	36%	17%	1%
School staff members	46%	33%	19%	2%
Parents	38%	38%	22%	3%
Community partners	33%	37%	30%	0%
Others	29%	43%	21%	7%
Unsure/None	50%	43%	7%	0%

Integrating SEL with academic content

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
District staff members	46%	31%	21%	2%
School staff members	43%	40%	16%	1%
Parents	63%	25%	13%	0%
Community partners	50%	50%	0%	0%
Others	100%	0%	0%	0%
Unsure/None	54%	24%	20%	2%

Question: How are you assessing/monitoring progress on SEL? Please select all that apply.

	All Districts	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Student survey	54%	38%	41%	20%	1%
Educator/staff survey	53%	33%	43%	23%	1%
Parent survey	36%	35%	42%	19%	4%
Student assessments	17%	37%	41%	22%	0%
Classroom observations	52%	50%	37%	11%	2%
Student focus groups	13%	45%	30%	25%	0%
Other	20	42%	39%	19%	0%
None of the above	16	68%	20%	12%	0%

Question: What resources is your district using to support SEL? (All districts)

	OSPI's recommended SEL standards and benchmarks	OSPI's online SEL professional development modules	PESB's SEL micro-credential pilot	Resources from outside of Washington (e.g., CASEL)	Local resources (e.g., School's Out Washington, tribes, other districts, YDEKC)
Yes, we are doing this	35%	11%	5%	38%	24%
No, but I want to learn more about this	21%	28%	36%	22%	24%
No, we are not doing this	27%	39%	25%	10%	14%
I'm not sure	13%	13%	16%	20%	21%

OSPI's recommended SEL standards and benchmarks

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Yes, we are doing this	25%	43%	30%	2%
No, but I want to learn more about this	59%	31%	6%	3%
No, we are not doing this	56%	32%	12%	0%
I'm not sure	55%	30%	15%	0%

OSPI's online SEL professional development modules

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Yes, we are doing this	12%	59%	29%	0%
No, but I want to learn more about this	55%	33%	10%	2%
No, we are not doing this	45%	33%	20%	2%
I'm not sure	55%	30%	15%	0%

PESB's SEL micro-credential pilot

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Yes, we are doing this	25%	25%	50%	0%
No, but I want to learn more about this	54%	31%	13%	2%
No, we are not doing this	29%	47%	24%	0%
I'm not sure	54%	33%	13%	0%

Resources from outside of Washington (e.g., CASEL)

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Yes, we are doing this	29%	43%	28%	0%
No, but I want to learn more about this	58%	33%	6%	3%
No, we are not doing this	53%	40%	7%	0%
I'm not sure	48%	32%	19%	0%

Local resources (e.g., School's Out Washington, tribes, other districts, YDEKC)

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Yes, we are doing this	49%	35%	16%	0%
No, but I want to learn more about this	44%	33%	19%	3%
No, we are not doing this	43%	38%	19%	0%
I'm not sure	50%	34%	16%	0%

Question: How do you use local resources for SEL (e.g., community-based organizations, tribes, etc.)? Please check all that apply.

	All Districts	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
They are direct providers of SEL supports and services for students (instruction, curricula, assessments, programming, etc.)	61%	53%	26%	21%	0%
They provide professional development, technical assistance, or coaching	65%	45%	40%	15%	0%
They inform district policy	16%	60%	20%	20%	0%
They advise the district on SEL implementation	32%	20%	60%	20%	0%
They conduct assessments or research	19%	50%	50%	0%	0%
Other	13%	50%	25%	25%	0%

Question: What additional information, supports, or resources does your district need to successfully implement SEL? Please indicate your district's priorities. (All districts)

	Highest-priority need	Somewhat high-priority need	Low-priority need	Not a priority
Additional funding for SEL resources	63%	32%	6%	1%
More time for adults to build their knowledge and SEL capacities (e.g., time for teacher in-services)	55%	39%	5%	1%
Crosswalk of SEL standards with academic learning standards (i.e., a tool showing how SEL integrates into academics)	42%	36%	15%	3%
Access to vetted SEL resources for adults (e.g., recommended professional development that aligns with Washington standards)	30%	42%	22%	5%

Pre-service coursework on SEL at Washington higher education institutions	30%	32%	28%	7%
Access to vetted SEL resources for students (e.g., materials that align with Washington standards)	28%	50%	18%	3%
Additional staff members working on SEL-related topics at the district office	27%	39%	24%	9%
More time during the school day for SEL (e.g., more flexibility in scheduling)	18%	53%	14%	4%
Professional learning community on SEL with other Washington educators	16%	43%	30%	8%
Access to research about SEL	14%	34%	38%	10%

More time during the school day for SEL (e.g., more flexibility in scheduling)

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Highest-priority need	37%	39%	24%	0%
Somewhat high-priority need	46%	36%	16%	2%
Low-priority need	57%	33%	10%	0%
Not a priority	83%	17%	0%	0%

More time for adults to build their knowledge and SEL capacities (e.g., time for teacher in-services)

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Highest-priority need	37%	44%	19%	0%
Somewhat high-priority need	55%	25%	17%	3%
Low-priority need	43%	57%	0%	0%
Not a priority	100%	0%	0%	0%

Additional funding for SEL resources

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Highest-priority need	39%	39%	20%	2%
Somewhat high-priority need	61%	27%	12%	0%
Low-priority need	33%	67%	0%	0%
Not a priority	100%	0%	0%	0%

Access to vetted SEL resources for students (e.g., materials that align with Washington standards)

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Highest-priority need	33%	51%	16%	0%
Somewhat high-priority need	53%	29%	16%	0%
Low-priority need	54%	29%	18%	3%
Not a priority	20%	80%	0%	0%

Access to vetted SEL resources for adults (e.g., recommended professional development that aligns with Washington standards)

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Highest-priority need	41%	39%	20%	0%
Somewhat high-priority need	47%	36%	14%	3%
Low-priority need	58%	24%	18%	0%
Not a priority	29%	71%	0%	0%

Professional learning community on SEL with other Washington educators

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Highest-priority need	48%	44%	8%	0%
Somewhat high-priority need	38%	40%	18%	3%
Low-priority need	52%	28%	20%	0%
Not a priority	67%	33%	0%	0%

Pre-service coursework on SEL at Washington higher education institutions

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Highest-priority need	39%	39%	22%	0%
Somewhat high-priority need	42%	40%	17%	2%
Low-priority need	55%	29%	14%	2%
Not a priority	64%	36%	0%	0%

Access to research about SEL

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Highest-priority need	45%	45%	9%	0%
Somewhat high-priority need	42%	38%	19%	2%
Low-priority need	53%	29%	16%	2%
Not a priority	40%	47%	13%	0%

Additional staff members working on SEL-related topics at the district office

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Highest-priority need	37%	44%	20%	0%
Somewhat high-priority need	50%	30%	20%	0%
Low-priority need	35%	46%	14%	5%
Not a priority	79%	21%	0%	0%

Crosswalk of SEL standards with academic learning standards (i.e., a tool showing how SEL integrates into academics)

	Small	Medium	Large	Unknown Size
Highest-priority need	30%	45%	23%	2%
Somewhat high-priority need	60%	27%	13%	0%
Low-priority need	57%	30%	9%	4%
Not a priority	60%	40%	0%	0%

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