



Board Meeting Date: November 4, 2024

Title: Tier 1 Social Emotional Learning Update

Type: Discussion

Presenter(s): Leigh Ann Feily, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Coordinator; and Jody De St. Hubert, Director of Teaching and Learning

Description: Strategy C of the strategic plan states that Edina Public Schools fosters a caring school environment where students and staff feel safe physically and emotionally in order to be fully engaged in their academic/professional, personal, and social growth. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an important part of ensuring that EPS is fostering that caring school environment. The body of this report includes updates on the Tier 1 SEL work being done throughout the district.

Recommendation: This report is intended to be an update to the school board. No recommendation is being made at this time.

Desired Outcomes for the Board: After reviewing the report, please consider what needs additional clarity and be prepared to share your initial reactions and questions with administration.

Background Materials:

March 26, 2024 Board Report - [Tier 1 Social Emotional Learning Update](#)
[CPSS Teacher Toolkit](#) - Created March 2024

Introduction:

Several research studies (Buckle, J.) indicate that social-emotional learning is linked to academic achievement. For example, a 2017 meta-analysis from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) shows that investment in social emotional learning (SEL) has led to improved classroom behavior, better stress management, and 13 percent gains in academics. Research conducted by Panorama Education (100,000 students across 200 schools) has found that compared to students with low SEL, kids with high SEL are twice as likely to have above-average grades, 60 percent less likely to have one or more behavior incidents over the course of a year, and half as likely to be chronically absent (Buckle).

Given the outcomes of the research shared above, as EPS continues to grow its Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), it is vital that the focus is not only on academics but social emotional learning (SEL). The Minnesota Department of Education's (MDE) MTSS Framework (2022) indicates that an important indicator of a comprehensive MTSS system is that "Evidence exists that all teachers are implementing evidence-based academic and SEL practices across content areas on a daily basis for every student" (pg. 24). Not only does guidance from MDE point towards ensuring both academics and SEL practices are being provided at Tier 1 but the Edina Public Schools 2020-2030 Strategic Plan indicates several areas where this is also a priority:

Table 1: 2020-2030 EPS Strategic Plan Priorities around SEL

Priority Strategy	Strategic Action
Strategy B: Ensure and Equitable and Inclusive School Culture	<p>B.1. Create learning environments and curricula that enable staff and students to learn from and reflect on their own and others' experiences; explore multiple perspectives; practice civil discourse; encourage empathy; create interpersonal connections; and embrace diverse identities.</p> <p>B.2. Create a school culture that enhances learning and fosters a sense of belonging for all students through our values of Integrity, Compassion, Courage, Commitment, Appreciation, and Responsibility</p>
Strategy C: Foster Positive Learning Environments and Whole Student and Staff Wellness Support	<p>C.1. Ensure students acquire and apply the social emotional competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making to promote student wellness.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Survey teachers to determine their understanding and beliefs around social emotional learning to move forward with tier needs assessment process2. Conduct focus groups with secondary students as stakeholders in the development of Tier 1 SEL services

	<p>3. Identify universal screening and progress monitoring tools to baseline and monitor student growth in response to training</p> <p>C.5. Create environments that are conducive to learning and facilitate constructive interaction.</p> <p>1. Identify, train and implement restorative practices to improve student and staff ratings of positive school climate</p>
Strategy D: Develop Leadership Throughout the District	<p>D.2. Provide robust and balanced professional development</p> <p>1. Ensure staff has a deep understanding in the instruction of social emotional skills and characteristics and embeds the development of those skills throughout the school environment to address the whole child</p>

By ensuring that evidence-based SEL practices are part of Tier 1 programming (Tier 1 being the instruction that each and every student receives), EPS can ensure that we're moving forward with strategic actions and creating a caring and inclusive school culture that supports the whole child.

Background Information:

The March 26, 2024 board report gives a comprehensive overview of the historical and current SEL practices in the district. It also provides more information about the ongoing pilot of the Character Strong SEL curriculum in the district. Please refer to that report for further background information.

Review of the Tier 1 SEL practices in Edina and review of the data collected throughout the Character Strong pilot from the March 2024 board report indicates areas of strength and areas for continuous improvement. It is a strength that all six of Edina's elementary schools utilize a Tier 1 curriculum. Additionally, both middle schools and the high school have weekly advisory times built into their schedules to support school community relationships and student SEL growth. While an SEL focus is present in all buildings, it is an area for continuous improvement to ensure that students are receiving consistent instruction and making progress towards acquiring and applying the social emotional competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making as outlined in the Edina Strategic Plan.

Edina was awarded two grants in the winter of 2024 to help support continuous improvement in this area. The first grant is the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Grant which supports the district in implementation of MnMTSS. MnMTSS is the state's systemic, continuous improvement framework for ensuring positive social, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and academic outcomes for every student. The second grant is the Non-Exclusionary Discipline Grant. Funding from this grant supports the development and implementation of a professional learning plan for school staff to implement non exclusionary discipline practices

that maintain the respect, trust, and attention of students and help keep students in classrooms. Utilizing consistent, Tier 1 SEL practices and curricula fits within the broad umbrella of non-exclusionary practices.

Funding from both grants has supported the following activities related to continuous improvement in the area of SEL (Table 2):

Table 2: MTSS and NED Grant Activities Related to SEL Continuous Improvement

Grant Activity	SEL Continuous Improvement
Hiring additional district-wide MTSS coordination staff	Additional coordination staff ensures leadership capacity across all MTSS implementations including SEL. An additional MTSS Coordinator was hired in June 2024 whose role is shared between the Teaching and Learning and Community Education departments.
Supporting continued engagement in professional development around SEL data literacy	Growing staff capacity in utilizing Panorama SEL data for CSIP goals and student intervention planning ensures that SEL is a focus for each school. Grant funding was used to pay for part of our Panorama professional development package.
Continued growth in the pilot of Character Strong curriculum	Countryside, Concord, and Highlands are now implementing Character Strong school-wide as their Tier 1 SEL curriculum. VVMS also uses Character Strong as part of their advisory curriculum. Grant funding was used to pay for our Character Strong online licenses.
Building a system of MTSS for SEL and behavior that is as robust as our academic system via work through a Tier 1 SEL Implementation Team	Ensuring teacher voice and a district-wide lens is crucial for moving this work forward. Please see the next section for further information about progress in this area.
Leadership, affinity group, and restorative circles training for secondary students and staff	Utilizing the Caring and Committed Conversations protocol with EHS staff and students will bring more student voice and leadership to EHS. Please see the Caring and Committed Conversations Update section of this report for more information.

Tier 1 SEL Team Updates:

The Tier 1 SEL Team was created in the spring of 2024 when grant funding became available. The team is currently in the Exploration stage of implementation science and is working towards five outcomes:

1. Determine articulated and aligned SEL outcomes for EPS students
2. Determine best practices around SEL data collection

3. Discern Tier 1 SEL curriculum and determine best fit for EPS schools
4. Co-create an implementation plan for Tier 1 SEL implementation
5. Determine training needs for staff related to evidence-based practices and curricular materials

Participants on the team were chosen through collaboration with building principals. Given the focus on Tier 1, it was important for each building to have at least one classroom teacher as part of the team. This was achieved and each building has at least one teacher as part of the work. Grant funding allows more flexibility with paying for subs and/or time-card pay for teachers if meetings fall outside their duty day (which happens due to differing start times across the district). Additionally, members of the Community Education department are part of the team so that Tier 1 SEL outcomes can be cascaded to Community Education programs such as Kids Club.

The first team meeting in May was a half-day meeting focused on grounding the team in the work as well as identifying the team's collective vision for the SEL in our district. The team determined the following five statements reflected the team's vision for SEL implementation in our district:

1. Having universal language and expectations across all settings
2. SEL woven into academics and valued equally with academics
3. Staff wellness interlaced with student SEL
4. Each and every learner can identify a place in school where they belong
5. Close gaps within our data

Given this shared vision, the team then moved towards working on the first outcome - determining articulated and aligned SEL outcomes for EPS students. In a full-day meeting in mid-May, the Tier 1 SEL team grounded in self-reflection on biases and identity before doing a deep-dive into the [5 CASEL SEL](#) competencies and the [MDE SEL Standards](#). Bringing all these materials together with the CPSS Teacher Toolkit developed by EPS staff in the winter of 2024 (see link in background materials above), the team developed a draft of what potential aligned SEL outcomes could look like for both EPS staff and students across the district. The Tier 1 SEL team worked from the following definition of culture aligned with other district CPSS work: "shared beliefs, values, traditions, social norms, and behaviors of a group of people who share the same living environment..." (Naik, Baker, Mohiyeddini, 2023).

An example of what the team produced is outlined in the table below. Please note the table only gives an example of the look-fors within the CPSS Essential Element of Assessing Cultural Knowledge. However, look-fors were also developed in each CASEL competency for each of the other 4 CPSS Essential Elements as well (Valuing Diversity, Adapting to Diversity, Managing the Dynamics of Difference, Adapting to Diversity, and Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge).

Table 3: DRAFT EXAMPLE of Articulated and Aligned SEL Outcomes for EPS

CPSS Essential Element (only 1 of 5 presented here)	Element as Represented in the Learning Space (created by	EXAMPLE SEL Look Fors - Students	EXAMPLE SEL Look Fors - Staff
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	Teacher Toolkit Team, March 2024)		
Assessing Cultural Knowledge <i>The extent to which the lesson provides opportunities for educators and students to learn about self and others</i>	Representing and reflecting each and every student's cultural identity	Self Awareness: Students reflecting on their feelings and expressing how they connect to their cross cultural identities. Self Management: Students are able to make choices that support themselves as learners and as members of a community, while respecting others' differences. Responsible Decision Making: Students will make decisions with culturally proficient, agreed-upon norms and others in mind.	Self Awareness: Staff actively participate to build their awareness of cultural identities of the community and ensure representation of various cultural groups. Self Management: Staff modeling a variety of strategies. Staff are modeling curiosity for others' ideas or strategies. Responsible Decision Making: Staff will take time early in the year to discover and explore the identity of each and every student and then intentionally create opportunities for students to discover and share their identities with the community. Teachers will create learning opportunities built on a community where all identities are represented and validated throughout the year. Staff will create an environment where all student identities

			are validated and supported.
		Relationship Skills: Sharing and listening to cultural identities and seeking to understand others identities Social Awareness: Students understand their own cultural identity and its interaction within the school. Students understand others' cultural identity and its interaction within the community.	Relationship Skills: Providing a variety of opportunities/spaces for others to share their cultural identities in multiple contexts Social Awareness: Providing opportunities for all learners to reflect on and explore the cultural identities of themselves and others.

The Tier 1 SEL Team will be meeting at least four more times this school year to continue working towards all five outcomes. Immediate next steps will be to begin determining best practices for SEL data collection in EPS schools.

Caring and Committed Conversations Update:

Caring and Committed Conversations is a process developed by Sarah Miller and Malik Peer from Jordan Public Schools in Jordan, MN (datewithdiversity.com). According to the Caring and Committed Conversations training manual, it is a process that values diversity, honors differences, and celebrates commonalities by elevating student voices. This guided conversation process empowers students to courageously use their voices in sharing their personal stories and thoughts about societal and educational issues that explicitly and implicitly impact their lives. Participating adults create a time and place for supporting positive relationship and communication skills-building. The process encourages participants to be: a) committed to implementing change by listening to each other, and to b) share their personal narratives and ideas in a caring way. Educators and community members who listen to the young people's stories and ideas engage in questioning methods that deepen the understanding of the students' lived experiences ([Caring and Committed Conversations Manual](#), page 1-2).

Through funds provided through the Non-Exclusionary Discipline grant, EHS will be contracting with Sarah Miller and Malik Peer to provide professional development to both staff and students as well as facilitate Caring and Committed Conversations two times throughout the school year at EHS. Edina High School staff engaged in professional development with Sarah Miller and Malik Peer on the professional development day on

October 4th. The goal for this session was to give EHS staff the experience of how these structured conversations take place and introduce them to the Caring and Committed Conversations protocol. Going forward, Sarah Miller and Malik Peer will be meeting with a select group of students (Equity Leadership Council) weekly during Flex time to receive training about the protocol and begin the work of determining the conversation topics. The Equity Leadership Council will be composed of student leaders from multiple affinity groups and clubs to ensure that we have a diverse group engaging in this work. The goal for EHS is to have two Caring and Committed Conversations take place this school year, one before Winter Break and one before Spring Break.

Summary of Next Steps:

- The Tier 1 SEL Team will be meeting at least four more times this school year to continue working towards all five outcomes. Immediate next steps will be to refine the SEL Toolkit (example above - Table 3) and begin determining best practices for SEL data collection in EPS schools.
- Sarah Miller and Malik Peer will be meeting with a select group of students (Equity Leadership Council) weekly during Flex time to receive training about the Caring and Committed Conversations protocol and begin the work of determining the conversation topics. The Equity Leadership Council will be composed of student leaders from multiple affinity groups and clubs to ensure that we have a diverse group engaging in this work. The goal for EHS is to have two Caring and Committed Conversations take place this school year, one before Winter Break and one before Spring Break.

Sources:

Buckle, J. *Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): Everything You Need to Know*. Panorama Education. Retrieved on February 14, 2023 from:

<https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/social-emotional-learning-sel>

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