



## LAKE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT 65

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**To:** Members of the Board of Education

**From:** Lisa Leali, Superintendent, Tracy Roehrick, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and Jackie Tivador, Director of Teaching, Learning and Impact

**Date:** 2/14/26

**Subject:** Update on RULER Implementation and Next Steps for Tier 1 Social-Emotional Learning

### Background

Over the past two years, District 65 has worked thoughtfully to unpack, implement, and integrate the RULER approach to social-emotional learning across our schools. We would like to thank the team of staff who helped us to learn about and implement this new program into our schools with staff and teachers. Our goal has been to strengthen Tier 1 supports for all students by providing a consistent framework and common language around emotions and interpersonal skills.

Through classroom implementation, staff feedback, and ongoing evaluation, we have found that while RULER provides strong support in helping students build self-awareness of emotions, it has not proven to be a comprehensive solution for our full Tier 1 social-emotional learning needs.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework identifies five core competencies that effective SEL programs should support:

1. Self-awareness – recognizing one's emotions, values, strengths, and limitations
2. Self-management – regulating emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations
3. Social awareness – understanding the perspectives and experiences of others and demonstrating empathy
4. Relationship skills – establishing and maintaining healthy and supportive relationships
5. Responsible decision-making – making caring and constructive choices about personal and social behavior

While RULER effectively addresses the self-awareness component, we have found that the remaining competencies, particularly self-management, relationship skills, social awareness, and responsible decision-making, require stronger and more systematic instructional supports within our Tier 1 environment.

As a result, we recommend that the administrative team continue to work collaboratively with teachers and support staff to determine the best path forward. Possible next steps include:

- Reintroducing or strengthening SEL lessons and practices previously used in the district that effectively supported these competencies
- Forming a representative team of educators and student support staff to investigate additional or alternative SEL resources or programs
- Identifying a comprehensive solution or supplemental program that better addresses all CASEL competencies at Tier 1

Our goal remains to ensure that all students receive consistent, developmentally appropriate instruction and support that fosters emotional intelligence, positive relationships, and responsible decision-making which are skills essential for both academic success and lifelong well-being.

We will continue to update the Board as this work progresses and appreciate your continued support as we refine our approach to best meet student needs.

Respectfully,  
Dr. Lisa Leali  
Superintendent  
Lake Bluff School District 65

