

Wisconsin Social and Emotional Learning Case Study

District Name: Franklin Public Schools

Introduction/Background

HISTORY

In 2017-2018, Franklin Public Schools engaged in a year of study and analysis of the social and emotional learning needs in Franklin Public Schools. After reviewing current research, staff consulted with DPI experts, analyzed district data, attended professional development opportunities, and held staff focus groups with the intention of communicating findings with key district teams.

Several district data sources pointed to a need for comprehensive social and emotional learning. Student hope and engagement, as measured by the Gallup poll, have consistently decreased in the last 5 years, and as students progress through high school, their connection to school and hope for the future largely decrease with each year.

In addition to these data, the most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey results for Franklin High School pointed to important student needs in the areas of physical and emotional safety at school, mental health and high-risk behaviors including early use of e-cigarettes and the abuse of alcohol that increases dramatically as students progress through high school.

Staff continued to voice the need for social and emotional learning and increasing support for the mental health needs of students. Staff focus groups and surveys showed that, while most teachers reported that students’ academic needs were being met, fewer thought that the social and emotional needs of students were being met. Teachers communicated a desire for consistent expectations for behavior and discipline across all levels as well as the need for evidence-based practices and resources to teach social and emotional skills.

In spring of 2018, this work was integrated into the district’s strategic plan, specifically through the following core strategies:

<p>Three Year Strategy: <i>A district committee will develop a plan outlining a distributed process for universal instruction of employability and social and emotional learning competencies, and execute that plan.</i></p>	<p>18-19 Annual Strategy: <i>The director of strategic leadership and the Pleasant View principal will engage a K-12 team in the development of a multi-year plan for the teaching of social-emotional learning/employability skill competencies.</i></p>
---	---

To help execute these strategies, a core committee of 30 teachers, administrators, and pupil service team members met throughout the 2018-2019 school year to create a plan for district social and emotional learning programming over the next two years. Work was spread across three task forces and then vetted through the

larger committee. A summary of the district plan can be found on two key documents. The first is a program guide that provides an overview of the “why” behind the work, as well as detailed information about the broader plan areas. The second is a “Plan at a Glance” that highlights the expected actions over the next two years.

THE MODEL

The district’s comprehensive plan for the integration of social-emotional learning is grounded in four core areas:

1. Universal Instruction Related to Core SEL Competencies.
2. Cultivating Adult SEL.
3. Utilization of a Continuum of Supports for Mental Health.
4. Establishing and Cultivating Community Partnerships.

Framework & Research Base

The primary resource base for Franklin Public Schools work around SEL includes the materials listed below. All staff and leaders have or will have the opportunity to engage in learning and reflection related to these resources.

Research Base

10 Mindframes (Hattie & Zierer, 2018)

[CASEL Meta-Analysis](#)

[Teaching the Whole Child](#) (American Institutes for Research)

[This Time with Feeling: Integrating SEL and C&CR](#) (Aspen Institute)

[Hanover: Communicating Secondary Students’ Social Emotional Learning](#)

Mental Health

[Hanover: Best Practices in School Mental Health Service Delivery and Coordination.](#)

[NAMI: Mental Health by the Numbers](#)

[DPI Mental Health Framework.](#)

Frameworks & Strategy Execution

[CASEL Framework](#)

[Three Signature Practices Playbook](#)

[Modeling SEL as a Staff](#)

Universal Instruction Related to Core SEL Competencies

Franklin Public Schools approach to universal SEL instruction is occurring in three phases.

Phase I: 2018-2019 School Year

Throughout the 2018-2019 school year, all five elementary schools engaged in a strategic effort to build teacher and student capacity around restorative and community circles.

Katharine Reid, the district school counseling system specialist, provided direct training to school staff at the school and classroom level. Principals, staff, and students provided feedback on progress through individual reflection, focus groups, and other important data sources.

Phase II: 2019-2020 School Year

The planning team felt an important next step was to ensure common conditions for SEL instruction to thrive. To accomplish this, all staff will engage in learning related to the CASEL framework, as well as learn about and implement CASEL’s Three Signature Practices of welcoming ritual, engaging pedagogy, and optimistic closure throughout all classrooms in the district during the 2019-2020 school year. This learning will include key research, methodologies, practice, and reflection. In order to maintain a strong connection to teaching

and learning, the utilization of these practices has been explicitly linked to *10 Mindframes for Visible Learning: Teaching for Success* (Hattie & Zierer, 2018).

In addition to this universal approach, smaller teams will continue to work on the creation of priority standards at each grade level focused on the five areas of CASEL. These “I Can” statements have been aligned to state SEL competencies and employability skills frameworks, and will be used as the basis for explicit SEL instruction beginning with the 2020-2021 school year. Curricular resources related to this explicit instruction will be selected and piloted in the spring of 2020.

Phase III: 2020-2021 School Year

Use of the three signature practices will continue. Explicit universal instruction/programming related to priority standards will begin in all schools, supported by research-based curricular materials. For example, Sources of Strength, a youth leadership suicide prevention program, is currently being explored as the basis for explicit instruction at the high school level. Materials will be selected based on a comprehensive review process, including feedback from pilot groups that include students, parents, and teachers.

Cultivating Adult SEL

The cultivation of adult SEL is a core component of the district plan. Support will occur in three main ways.

Adult SEL Approach #1: Employee Wellness

Franklin Public Schools utilizes an employee wellness committee, made up of staff representatives from throughout the district. This committee will be leveraged to continue to provide wellness opportunities that support employee physical, social, emotional, and mental health.

Adult SEL Approach #2: Book Study

The book *Onward*, by Elena Aguilar, will be utilized to ground staff in common learning related to adult resiliency.

Adult SEL Approach #3: Modeling

Leaders throughout the district will model the three signature practices for all staff at meetings, and will continue to intentionally integrate strategies into adult interactions that promote wellbeing and social-emotional competencies.

Mental Health & Community Partnerships

Throughout the 2018-2019 school year, Franklin Public School engaged in significant work related to support for the mental health needs of students. In collaboration with students services personnel, the district clarified our tiered support model for mental health, including the following:

1. Conducted a needs assessment utilizing the DPI Mental Health Framework.
2. Linked foundational and universal supports to ongoing SEL program planning, trained all staff in trauma-sensitive practices, and select staff in mental health first aid.

3. Articulated selected levels of support, including the research-based interventions that will be used both with individuals and groups, who will deliver them, and how they will be monitored. This includes the use of wellness plans and family collaboration.

4. Engaged in a request for proposal process for the onboarding of an onsite mental health clinic in our schools to begin in the fall of 2019. Following a comprehensive selection process, the district has chosen to partner with Clinical Psychology Associates to provide onsite therapy for students and families at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

THE PLAYERS

In addition to all staff members, Franklin students, parents, community partners, and the Board of Education will continue to be involved in our ongoing work. Initial planning involved the student services team, a thirty-member district SEL committee, three ten-member task forces, the district leadership team, and a mental health task force.

SUSTAINABILITY

Our goal from day one of this work was to create a sustainable model that seamlessly integrated SEL components into the learning environment without adding significantly more to “the plate.” Staff leadership and support will be vital to our continued success.

To further ensure sustainability, planning efforts have been integrated into the strategic plan. Our onsite clinic partner represents a zero cost addition to the district, and plans have been put in place to ensure strong positive relationships develop with clinicians. Student progress will be monitored and reported.

EQUITY

One of the priorities of this work is to ensure all students have access to research-based curricula through high leverage teaching and learning practices. This includes equipping students with the skills and tools they need to be self-aware, self-manage, be socially aware, build strong relationships, and make responsible decisions while supporting both physical and mental health.

To date, we have collected limited data, as much of the program framework is not yet in place. Student and staff focus group data from pilot classrooms has been incredibly positive, and staff perceptions related to the extent to which the district is addressing the social and emotional needs of students has increased over prior years.

Conclusion

Franklin Public Schools vision for social-emotional learning is to “equip all students with social and emotional skills, mindsets, and attitudes to achieve holistic wellbeing within school, home, and community.” To that end, we have tried to take a thoughtful, comprehensive, and integrated approach to our SEL program plan. We are currently in the early stages of implementation and are confident that is still a fair amount of learning ahead of us. That said, we are confident the district’s collective commitment to social-emotional learning programming will enhance student engagement, access, and achievement in the years to come.