

# Empowering Social-Emotional Learning and Mental Health Support to Strengthen Academic Achievement in Colorado

A partnership of:



Bennett School District 29J



Strasburg School District 31J



Weld County School District RE-3J



Our neighboring school districts have partnered to strengthen social-emotional learning and mental health support for students, their families, and school staff.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) in the classroom has been **proven to improve students' academic performance**, as well as their behavior, decision-making skills, ability to manage emotions, and more.

The challenges and impacts of COVID-19 increased the need for a comprehensive approach to strengthening and supporting the mental health of children and youth.

## WAYS THAT SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING & MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT CAN HELP STUDENTS

### Teaches students to:

- Manage difficult emotions
- Control reactive impulses
- Use adaptive coping techniques

### Decreases:

- High-risk behaviors
- Self-harm
- Behaviors leading to disciplinary action

### Improves:

- Academic achievement
- Management of mental illness symptoms such as anxiety and depression

## OUR APPROACH

Using **Colorado's Multi-Tiered System of Support** model, we are implementing social-emotional learning into all K-12 schools in our three school districts. For those teachers not already using an SEL curriculum, we offer the evidence-based program **TRAILS** (Transforming Research into Action to Improve the Lives of Students-- **About TRAILS**). TRAILS seeks to:



### Raise mental health awareness for all students.

In the same way that we take care of our bodies by eating good food, exercising, and getting enough sleep, or take care of our brains by learning new things, social-emotional learning (SEL) in every classroom teaches students how to manage difficult emotions, control impulses, and communicate better with others.



### Provide support to students experiencing mental health difficulties.

Students may voluntarily choose to participate in small groups with trained school mental health professionals that teach them how to navigate academic and social pressures and reduce symptoms of more serious mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.



### Connect students at risk of suicide to services.

Each of our schools is strengthening the ability to identify and provide needed care to students at risk of suicide in an accurate, timely way.

**These programs promote wellness and academic achievement in our schools and provide strategies and training for caring school professionals. Through this work, schools can deliver life-saving resources to students experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety, and better coordinate care for those who need additional support outside of school.**

## LEARN MORE

### Resources for Families

- > [FAQs](#)
- > [TRAILS curriculum overview/introduction](#)
- > [Read more about the evidence behind social-emotional learning](#)
- > More Information (coming soon)

### Resources for Educators in the Partner Districts

- > [FAQs](#)
- > [Lesson plans](#)
- > [Self Care for Everyone](#)
- > Educators (only) in the Bennett (29J), Strasburg (31J), and Weld (RE-3J) school districts may join the weekly SEL Support Calls, please visit the [TRAILS Website](#). Educators using any SEL curriculum are encouraged to join.

If you would like to learn more about bringing SEL to your school or district, please contact the districts or partners shown below.

## CONTACTS

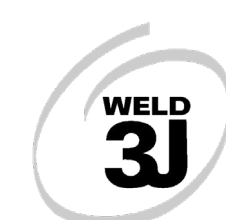
### Partners



[Bennett School District 29J](#)



[Strasburg School District 31J](#)



[Weld County School District RE-3J](#)

Combined, these districts serve nearly 4800 students in 15 various school settings. We are working together to create an effective and sustainable approach to addressing the social-emotional and mental health needs of our students, their families, and school staff as a result of the impact of COVID-19 and beyond.

## SUPPORTING PARTNERS



### TRAILS (Transforming Research into Action to Improve the Lives of Students).

This evidence-based program is being used to help achieve our goal of creating a lasting student-centered mental health model of learning and support for all K-12 teachers and students. TRAILS is based at the University of Michigan. [Learn more.](#)

**Contact:** Michael Priske, Project Coordinator, [prisemi@med.umich.edu](mailto:prisemi@med.umich.edu)



### Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab

Supporting the three school districts in building evidence of effectiveness for implementing a model to address the social emotional needs of students, families and staff across grades K-12. The Colorado Lab is located at the University of Denver. [Learn more.](#)

**Contact:** Kristin Klopfenstein, Director, [kristin@coloradolab.org](mailto:kristin@coloradolab.org)

### Funding Support

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