Study: You Are Enough

School Year 2021 - 2022

Planning Commission for
Madeira City Schools - Board of Education

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Section 1: Self-Worth

Before we can help students believe that they "are enough" it is crucial to start from a place of knowing and understanding one's self-worth. The dictionary defines *self-worth* as "*the sense of one's own value or worth as a person*." (Neff & Firestone, n.d.) Self-worth is often confused with self-esteem, which relies on external factors such as successes and achievements to define worth and can often be inconsistent leading to someone struggling with feeling worthy.

While it is important to have a solid understanding of our strengths and areas for growth, we also need to feel good enough even when we make mistakes or things do not work out in our life as we had hoped. (*Self Worth*, n.d.) Unconditional self-worth is distinct from our abilities and accomplishments. It's not about comparing ourselves to others; it's not something that we can have more or less of. Unconditional self-worth is the sense that you deserve to be alive, to be loved and cared for. To take up space. (Gooden & Gore, 2020)

In psychology, the concept of self-worth may be a less-popular research topic than self-esteem or self-confidence, but that doesn't mean it's less important. Self-worth is at the core of our very selves—our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are intimately tied into how we view our worthiness and value as human beings.

Brene Brown an American research professor, lecturer, author, and podcast host has written numerous books talking about living from a place of whole-heartedness which is connected with one's overall sense of self-worth. She states, "Wholehearted living is about engaging in our lives from a place of worthiness. It means cultivating the courage, compassion, and connection to wake up in the morning and think, no matter what gets done and how much is left undone, I am enough. It's going to bed at night thinking, yes, I am imperfect and vulnerable and sometimes afraid, but that doesn't change the truth that I am also brave and worthy of love and belonging". (*Love, Belonging, and the Quest for Wholeheartedness*, n.d.)

Studies show that basing one's self-worth on external factors is actually harmful to one's mental health. One study at the University of Michigan found that college students who base their self-worth on external sources (including academic performance, appearance and approval from others) reported more stress, anger, academic problems and relationship conflicts. They also had higher levels of alcohol and drug use, as well as more symptoms of eating disorders. The same study found that students who based their self-worth on internal sources, not only felt better, they also received higher grades and were less likely to use drugs and alcohol or to develop eating disorders. (*Self-Esteem Based on External Sources Has Mental Health Consequences*, 2002)

Although real accomplishments are important to acknowledge as you build your sense of self, your self-worth should also take into account the unique qualities that make you, *you*. As mindfulness expert, Dr. Donna Rockwell points out, we are all unique and that, in and of itself, gives each of us inherent value. According to Dr. Firestone, "We shouldn't be rating ourselves, we should just be ourselves." (Neff & Firestone, n.d.)

As with most lifelong traits, it's best to start early when trying to improve or help shape an overall sense of self-worth. It is important to encourage children/adolescents to understand and accept their own self-worth. Reinforce their value as a "being" rather than a "doing," as some say—in other words, make sure they know that they are valuable for who they are, not what they do. Researchers at Michigan State University recommend two main strategies for boosting an

adolescent's self-worth.

1. Provide unconditional love, respect, and positive regard;
2. Give adolescents opportunities to experience success (Clark-Jones, 2012).

Showing a teen unconditional love (if you're a parent, family member, or very close friend) or unconditional respect and positive regard (if you're a teacher, mentor, etc.) is the best way to teach him self-worth. Showing a teenager that you love and appreciate her for exactly who and what she is, she will learn that it's okay to love herself for exactly who and what she is. If you demonstrate that she doesn't need to achieve anything to earn your love and respect, she'll be much less likely to put unnecessary parameters on her own self-love and self-respect. (Ackerman, 2021)

Another way to help improve overall self-worth is to stop comparing yourself to others. Challenging your critical inner voice-which everyone seems to have is also imperative. The critical inner voice is like a nasty coach in our heads that constantly nags us with destructive thoughts towards ourselves or others. This internalized dialogue of critical thoughts or "inner voices" undermines our sense of self-worth and even leads to self-destructive or maladaptive behaviors, which make us feel even worse about ourselves. (Neff & Firestone, n.d.)

A true sense of self-worth can also be fostered by practicing self-compassion. Developed by Dr. Kristin Neff, self-compassion is the practice of treating yourself with the same kindness and compassion as you would treat a friend. This involves taking on what Dr. Dan Siegel describes as the "**COAL**" attitude, which means being Curious, Open, Accepting and Loving toward yourself and your experiences rather than being self-critical. There are three steps to practicing self-compassion:

1. Acknowledge and notice your suffering.
2. Be kind and caring in response to suffering.
3. Remember that imperfection is part of the human experience and something we all share.

Section 2: Promoting Mental Health & Healthy Sense of Self

"The 'self–image' is the key to human personality and human behavior. Change the self–image and you change the personality and the behavior."

Maxwell Maltz

"It's like everyone tells a story about themselves inside their own head. Always. All the time. That story makes you what you are. We build ourselves out of that story."

Patrick Rothfuss

Throughout this paper you'll find reference to social and emotional learning (SEL) and is a critical factor in the development of the concept of self. The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) describes it as follows: "**Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development.** SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions." (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, n.d.) In fact, this is the same SEL framework that the Ohio Department of Education uses for its SEL competencies.

The CASEL framework describes five primary skill clusters:

- **Self-awareness**—having a realistic perception of one's own values, interests, and strengths, and being able to recognize one's own emotions
- **Self-management**—how well one manages emotions, impulses, and stress, and whether one is able to establish and achieve goals and exercise self-discipline
- **Social awareness**—the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with someone else and to appreciate and respect diversity
- **Relationship skills**—the ability to participate in healthy, cooperative, and caring relationships, and effectively resolve conflicts
- **Responsible decision-making**—the ability to recognize and generate good choices, evaluate the likely consequences of actions, and take responsibility for one's decisions
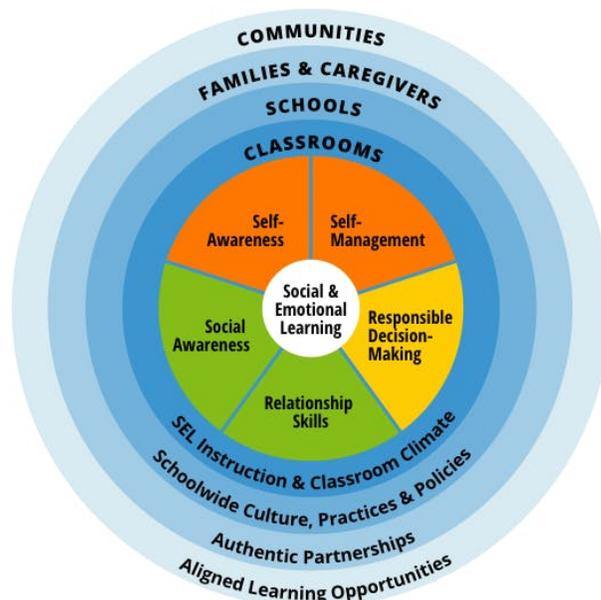
To continue to build upon the idea of self-worth and self-esteem, below are some practical applications of applying the SEL and how to develop a sense of self-worth in students, parents and staff.

Students

A frequently cited article from the journal The Future of Children (Princeton University) asserts that SEL has both near-term benefits of desirable behaviors, improved test scores, and higher engagement in school as well as a number longer-term benefits summarized as "greater social emotional competence." (Greenburg et al., 2017, #) These early benefits are critical factors in the formation of the concept of self as well as the development of self-worth.

Practically, the CASEL provides a framework for how to promote SEL with students that is outlined in their document Systemic Social and Emotional Learning for States. This framework can be a valuable resource for developing a program because it contains a rubric that describes the hallmarks at each level of maturity.
1. Identify or Develop an SEL Framework and Support Implementation of PreK-12 (or Adult) SEL Competencies, Standards, or Learning Goals
2. Promote and Support Adoption and Implementation of EvidenceBased Programs and Practices
3. Promote SEL Integration with Academic Standards and Other State-and-School-Based Frameworks
4. Develop and Strengthen Family and Youth Partnerships Through Policies, Systems, and Supports
5. Develop and Strengthen SELRelated Community Partnerships

Parents

Below are steps on how to begin engaging parents in the SEL concepts (Move This World, 2019).

- **Provide Multiple Opportunities for Parents to be on Campus** - first establish a trustful relationship with those you are trying to engage and that the best way to do this, is to sit with parents face-to-face.
- **Explain the "Why" Behind Social Emotional Learning** - discuss how the tools and skills developed through our SEL program can impact our own lives. The importance of managing stress, practicing mindfulness, and taking care of ourselves as adults. Share science and research behind SEL to help parents understand the effectiveness of the program you are using.
- **Equip Parents with Resources** - Ensure that they are familiar with the fundamentals, so that they can use the vocabulary and strategies at home, and feel empowered to do so.
- **Encourage Students to talk to Their Parents About Their Program** - To facilitate a conversation about SEL in both directions at home, students are also actively encouraged to talk to their families about what they are learning

Trainings & Resources to Support and Empower Parents

The Ohio Department of Education references the CASEL framework in their brief on SEL. Similar to other organizations, they note that "social-emotional learning is a journey that begins at home. Nurturing parents and caregivers have the greatest impact on their children's development as they are their children's first and most significant teachers." (Ohio Department of Education, 2019)

Therefore, in addition to educating parents about the concepts and how SEL will be implemented in the curriculum, it is critically important to provide resources to support parents at home so they are able to continue and reinforce the concepts.

There are easy-to-access resources (e.g. quick handouts and online resources) available on the CASEL website as well as those provided by the Ohio Department of Education. (Ohio Department of Education, 2019) One example is an online resource that provides 'parent cue cards' to help deal with a number of different scenarios with your children. Another example, is the organization Panorama that outlined 'Top Resources to Share with Families' (Woolf, n.d.)

- Inner Explorer @ Home App
- Harmony at Home Lessons
- "Wisdom": The World of Emotions Game
- SEL Videos at Home
- The Family Guide to Supporting Student Well-Being
- The Play at Home Guide
- Interactive Family Activities Checklist

Example of a resource that can be provided to parents (included in newsletter, on district website, etc.)

IF YOU HAVE 5 MINUTES

Enjoy a Moment of Music
Put on your favorite song! If your space allows you might even dance and sing along.

Hydrate to Feel Great
Take a break and have a glass of cold water. Getting enough water daily helps our brains and bodies stay healthy. It'll help you feel energized and ready to take on whatever comes next.

Pause and Praise Yourself
Take a moment and think about something that went well recently. What was it? How did it make you feel? Noticing and celebrating small victories helps us to thrive.

Take a Breath Break
Pausing to stretch and breath can clear your mind. Inhale a big breath and shrug your shoulders. Exhale and let your shoulders fall. Try again, this time reaching up with your arms as you inhale and letting them fall as you exhale. Try it a few more times.

Send a Terrific Text
Sending kind words or just sharing them with someone you care about is good for you too! Giving compliments helps us to notice and appreciate the good things that are happening all around us.

Ready4K

IF YOU HAVE 10-15 MINUTES

Read to Relax
Get comfortable and pick up something to read. It can be anything, as long as YOU find it enjoyable.

Have a Cup...
Make yourself a cup of tea or coffee and sit down to enjoy it. Take a moment to think about something that made you happy or laugh recently. Was it something your child did? Maybe something a friend said?

Clench to Calm
Learning how to relax your body can help ease tension in stressful moments. Start seated or standing. Take a deep breath, clench your lower body and press your feet into the ground. As you exhale, relax your feet and legs. Continue to work your way up your body, inhaling and tightening and exhaling and releasing groups of muscles. After you have relaxed all your muscles, take a few deep breaths. Enjoy the feeling.

Take a Walk
Getting outside and moving your body is a great way to help your mind reset. It's especially helpful if you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed. A quick 10 minute walk around the block or in a park can help you feel more energized too.

Write it Out
Spend 10 minutes just writing about whatever is on your mind. Putting your thoughts and feelings down on paper can be great for dealing with worry, stress, and anxiety. You might also note times you got through stressful situations in ways you felt good about. What helped?

Ready4K

As helpful as online resources and handouts can be, it seems there is also an opportunity to provide in-person or online training for parents - similar to the technology presentation that was offered to parents. Specific recommendations for parent education/training - to support SEL and helping to create students with a strong sense of self-worth include (Priscilla Peters, Mental Health Counselor, December 2021):

- Building Identify in Your Children
- Teaching Your Kids to Build Healthy Relationships
- Healthy Boundaries (time, activities, cell phones & technology)
- Listening Skills
- The Process of Building Self-Esteem
- Stress Management & Anxiety

Staff

From a mental health, self-care and resiliency perspective - we recommend that the district consider how to continue implementing and building upcon the recommendations and practices from the previous mental health study. Similar to the framework provided for students, the CASEL State Theory of Action document (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2021, #) provides a similar framework for staff development with a corresponding rubric.

1. Develop Staff Expertise on SEL
2. Create Conditions and Structures for Professional Learning Systems to Promote SEL from PreK through Postsecondary for All Adults Who Work with Youth
3. Create Conditions to Support SEL Across the Educator Pipeline
4. Strengthen Adult Social and Emotional Competence and Leadership to Advance SEL Through Collaborations with Districts, Communities, and Families
5. Promote Systemic SEL in Districts and Schools
6. Promote SEL for ALL Students, Including Throughout Key Educational Priorities (e.g., Academics, Career and Workforce development, Arts, and Civic Life)

Finally, the MHS counselors were surveyed regarding some positive changes that were made during COVID noting that some would be beneficial to continue.

> Are there any changes that your school/district has made, as a result of COVID, that have been positive and have created more balance for students?
> - Yes - in 2020, the HS moved to block scheduling and removal of exams, and mask breaks; this was not continued in the 2021-2022 school year.
> - Further discussion of scheduling comprehensive exams is ongoing.

> As a result of COVID, are there changes your school/district has made to your work culture that have been beneficial and that you plan to keep?

- Yes - in 2020, there was 1 day a month that was a "mental health day" for students and staff - this may be a powerful item to reconsider.
- High School Fall In-Service - opportunity for staff mental health.
- Targeted opportunities for Zoom meetings and pre-recorded presentations for staff, student and parent meetings - participation has increased and access has been improved.
- Grace over grades mindset encouraged from administration.

Is there any curriculum (age/school specific) that your school/district has implemented, or has considered, to teach social emotional skills? - e.g. self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, social awareness.
- Adolescent Depression Awareness Program (Johns Hopkins University) - MHS
- HOPE Squad - MHS
- Middle School and Elementary have their own curriculums

Section 3: Overcoming Comparison

Comparison theory has been a noted phenomenon since the 1950's. In many ways this issue of constantly comparing ourselves to others has been wrestled with for decades. Social comparison theory was first proposed in 1954 by psychologist Leon Festinger and suggested that people have an innate drive to evaluate themselves, often in comparison to others. (Psychology Today, n.d.) A twist on this need to compare has been made a common term, FOMO the fear of missing out; which can all be FOMA the fear of missing achievements. Social cognitive psychologists have long known that when we want to feel better about ourselves, we make comparisons to people worse off than we are (or think of ways that things might have been worse than they are). When we want to improve, though, we compare ourselves to people who are better than we are. This is especially effective if we compare ourselves to people we feel like we can realistically become—superstar seniors are more motivating to first-year students than they are to fellow seniors, for instance.

Davidai and Deri recently completed research capturing a unique aspect of the impact of constant comparison. Their research indicates that many of us believe we are above average at positive traits such as intelligence, being nice, and work ethic. Yet most begin to place themselves lower in self ranking when comparing to others. (Davidai & Deri, 2019, #) This happens in that we tend to compare ourselves to the highest achievers, not the average or under achieving. Whether in scholastics, fitness or social activity; we are biased towards comparing our status to the exceptional. The intuitive conclusion of this comparison is that we end up with feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. The 'high bar' creates a view of subjective self perceptions that we are performing worse and achieving less than we should.

Some approaches to encourage students to stop individual comparisons involve moving from "me" goals to "we" goals. Incorporating group or even class goals and rewards can shift the focus from competing and comparing with each other to working towards a common goal

Allowing all the individuals to find ways to help achieve the outcome while still learning. (Lynch, 2021) Celebrate the achievements and wins as a class versus as an individual, comparisons shift to "how is this person better than me" to "how can this person help us". Increasing group assignments versus individual assignments can allow students to tackle tougher problems, collectively learn, hold each other and themselves accountable and establish a shared identity. (Carnegie Mellon University: Eberly Center, n.d.)

All forms of teamwork can assist in the shift of constantly comparing. This includes after school clubs and societies, especially student run organizations that focus on mental health. Active Minds is an example of this type of organization, student-run, working on equipping students with strategies for dealing with the stress and pressures of everyday life. (Sontag, 2018) Student run organizations can help find a niche where each student feels important, valued, and able to pursue their passions. Developing leadership and confidence in a school centric but not class centric setting can reduce anxiety levels for school and increase perception of self worth. (Bentley University, n.d.)

Lastly, increasing the ownership each student has over his and her scholastic progress and choices can improve their self-esteem. Creating learning paths that allow students to choose their course forward increases engagement levels with students. An example is adding more assignment choices that achieve the same learning objective. Papers vs presentation as an example OR a project vs an exam. Creating options that the student is empowered to act on can allow her or him to play to their strengths, feel more in control and possibly less concerned about others choices and progress in class. (Wierman, 2021)

Section 4: School and Community: Partners in Social/Emotional Learning

To clarify what already happens in Madeira City Schools in promoting social/emotional connection, we interviewed our high school counselors. To find examples of further options for social/emotional connection among schools and the wider community, we interviewed counselors from three different high schools.

At Wyoming High School, similar in size and somewhat similar in demographics to Madeira, each alphabetical section of the student population is served by two counselors: one handles scheduling and the college application process, and the other is a social/emotional counselor. Wyoming social/emotional counselor Effie Jansing-Jata explained that, in regard to involving the school and community in social/emotional strategies, three important ideas are to "normalize mental health care and help students understand what mental health concerns really are; to put teams in place to help students get life experience outside of education; and for adults who are ready to be honest and vulnerable to have conversations with students about their life experiences, especially as they relate to college and careers." Based on the interviews included in this section, Ms. Jata's last point may be most important, as many counselors discussed students learning to see setbacks as learning opportunities instead of failures as one of the more difficult goals to achieve.

When we asked MHS counselors about school and community partnerships in encouraging social/emotional strategies, it is clear that there are some programs and activities already in place. Here are the questions and their answers:

- Are there ways that your school/district has partnered with the community on social emotional strategies for kids?
    - HOPE Squad-"You Matter" Signs for each school, Banners, Positive Messages/signs for Hope Week, Etc
    - Regional Counselor Network- provide and facilitate professional development about popular topics twice a year
- Are there organizations (like Mindpeace) that your school/district has partnered with to support students & parents as a supportive third-party?
    - Yes, we are partnered with Mindpeace, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, 1N5, along with collaborating with outside counselors for students on an individual basis
    - Entire staff was trained in QPR suicide prevention through Cincinnati Children's
    - Ennis Britton Legal Firm presented on Gender Support plans to counseling team
- Do you have any examples where your school/district has partnered with coaches and other extracurricular sponsors to support key messages, creating stronger social emotional connections and/or strategies for seeing setbacks and failures as true growth opportunities?
    - Ally Event - Gay-Straight Alliance and HOPE Squad
    - Play for Peace- Unified for Uganda and MHS basketball
    - HOPE Week with MES/MMS
    - MHS and Madeira Police on emergency drills
    - Chris Stewart brings in motivational speakers for his football team from the community
- Have you seen any areas in your community that support being authentically human and recognize that no one is equally good at all things? Can we help students recognize that it's ok to have areas of weakness?
    - MHS Counselors work with students in these areas as a group with classroom meetings and also individually in our appointments with students
    - Bringing in Inspiring Speakers to present to school community: Harris III, Amy Corey, Tim Knight
    - Partner with an organization to provide therapy dogs
    - PRIDE, OLWEUS, and Student Health and Wellness Surveys
    - LGBTQ Training with GLSEN
    - Global Classroom committee work
    - Social Justice Club
    - World Language Week
- Does your school/district have any tools, resources, or forums to help parents become aware of unhealthy messages that may unknowingly/unconsciously be promoted in the home? Hyper-involvement, overachieving, perfection, etc.
    - Our PTO has provided resources in the past

- ○ Used 1N5, Mindpeace and Children's to present "Angst" to families and students
- ○ Counseling Department promotes this in beginning of the year parent meetings and on our website, newsletters
- ○ HCESC work with Chris Walters regarding Gifted Education

Several partnerships and resources are listed here. Many are special events that recur yearly, with success, and are generally well-supported by the schools and community. Counselors meet with students individually to address setbacks on an individual basis.

We inquired about the culture of social/emotional learning in two districts, in addition to Wyoming, that are of larger student population, Loveland and Lakota, to discover if social/emotional learning is part of the culture of other area schools.

Lakota West High School counselor Bob Emig answered the same questions as Madeira High School counselors:

- ● Are there ways that your school/district has partnered with the community on social emotional strategies for kids?
  - ○ Yes, we have partnered with CCHMC (2 Therapists in the building and soon to be 3), and have a Clinician to monitor and/or prescribe medications. This clinician comes to Lakota West every couple of weeks.

- ● Are there organizations (like Mindpeace) that your school/district has partnered with to support students & parents as a supportive third-party?
  - ○ Yes, we are partnered with Mindpeace and Companions on a Journey (for Grief Support groups)

- ● Do you have any examples where your school/district has partnered with coaches and other extracurricular sponsors to support key messages, creating stronger social emotional connections and/or strategies for seeing setbacks and failures as true growth opportunities?
  - ○ Sounds needed, but not at this time.

- ● Have you seen any areas in your community that support being authentically human and recognize that no one is equally good at all things?
  - ○ Yes, Edge Teen Center and Boys and Girls club of West Chester.

- ● Can we help students recognize that it's ok to have areas of weakness?
  - ○ Yes, this message is conveyed daily to at risk students to normalize our strengths and weaknesses.

Loveland High School counselors Drews Mitchell and Amy Mason responded generally to our questions:

- ● We've been working diligently to develop relationships with area businesses to create experiential learning opportunities for students. These include career shadowing, career interviewing, internships and pre-apprenticeships. Our community partners have been outstanding in giving students meaningful learning experiences so far. The focus currently is on the initial relationship; we hope to move to evaluative steps that include resilience as students move into longer term programs (i.e. internships). Part of our evaluation will include the Ohio Means Jobs Readiness Seal.

- One small thing we did recently was with Lemons and Limes Boutique in downtown Loveland, and they sold a shirt that said #beLoveland with the proceeds going to our Hope Squad... so a social / emotional AND school / community link.
- SALT speakers- This is a group of athletes who meet and hear speakers from the community about leadership, etc.
- LAMP- this a mentor program where we have students paired with community mentors regarding future / career planning.
- Work experience- our students with disabilities go out into the community to work at places such as El Picante, Paxton's, Plaid Room Records, LaRosa's, etc. to work on their work skills.... this has increased the reach of our school / community relationships.
- We have a group of faculty and staff who gather around the flag and / or in the auditorium one morning a week to pray together, and that is something that could be a social / emotional and school / community connection, if we invited the community.
- The part about seeing setbacks as growth opportunities is difficult because there is always the inclination with a setback to find evidence of why this was "not our fault" or to rationalize our own decisions as a way to deflect responsibility for the setback. It's almost like you have to create growth opportunities because if you wait for a setback, particularly a setback that is known to the community, finger-pointing starts. Social media plays a big role in this.

Finally, we tried to schedule an interview with a representative from Princeton City Schools, but they were not able to talk with us before this study was to be presented.

In general, it is clear that many area school districts, including Madeira, have successful community partnerships and programs involving social/emotional learning. However, counselors in all districts agree that the most difficult aspect of any of this is to find ways to encourage students to view setbacks as opportunities for learning rather than as personal failures. This particular area may be worthy of further study.

Good Suggestions for progress in this area from interviews with Mason City Schools:
- Wellness Designer in each building (background specific to building needs)
- Survey Parents to assess needs (ex. Mason parents felt more comfortable with hiring counselors/staff to help in school and not focusing the curriculum on Social Emotional Learning)
- Consider providing support resources in discipline hearings in lieu of expulsion
- Partner with: Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Mindpeace, 1N5, Hope Squad, Sources of Strength
- Teach using Responsive Classroom and Zones of Regulation

(Nicole Pfirman, Mason City Schools, 2021)

Section 5: Coping Skills & SEL Framework in Practice

- Social Emotional Skills and Coping Strategies can be taught across grade levels and should not be limited to specific age groups. There is a continuum of skills that are specific to different grade bands.

- Social Emotional Skills and coping strategies can be taught in the classroom, through attending a guest speaker, during team building activities, at a sporting event or extracurricular activity, on field trips, at home, etc.
- The Ohio Department of Education developed a set of Learning Standards for Social Emotional Learning with specific standards based on different grade bands (K-12) in June 2019.
  - These standards are similar to academic standards, however, there is no specific class to teach these standards. Instead, these standards are meant to be embedded into everyday learning.
  - Each District has access to these standards, however, it is up to the district on how they choose to use these standards.
  - The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) does not currently have any way to measure how a school integrates these standards because it is voluntary, however, ODE does indicate that research suggests,"students who receive support for social and emotional learning in schools do better academically, socially and behaviorally. Social-emotional learning also has been shown to positively impact economic mobility and mental health outcomes."
  - "These standards focus on five competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision-Making. The social and emotional learning standards are for all students, kindergarten through grade 12, with the understanding that *each child* develops at his or her own pace and may excel in one set of skills while struggling in another."
  - Link to the SEL standards: https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Social-and-Emotional-Learning/Social-and-Emotional-Learning-Standards/SEL-Standards-K-12.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US
    (Ohio Department of Education, 2019)
    (Ohio Department of Education, n.d.)

- CASEL is a program which works to support the healthy development of all children and provide schools and parents a framework of how to implement the teaching of Social Emotional Standards.
- CASEL's goal is to establish high-quality, evidence-based SEL as an essential part of preschool through high school education. In 1997, nine CASEL collaborators co-authored Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators, which formally defined the field of SEL.
- Over the following decades, a large body of research demonstrated the effectiveness of SEL for supporting students' academic and long-term success. Demand for SEL surged among teachers, school leaders, district administrators, policymakers, parents, employers, and students themselves. Increasingly, schools, districts, and states across

the country are adopting and implementing evidence-based SEL strategies to support local priorities.
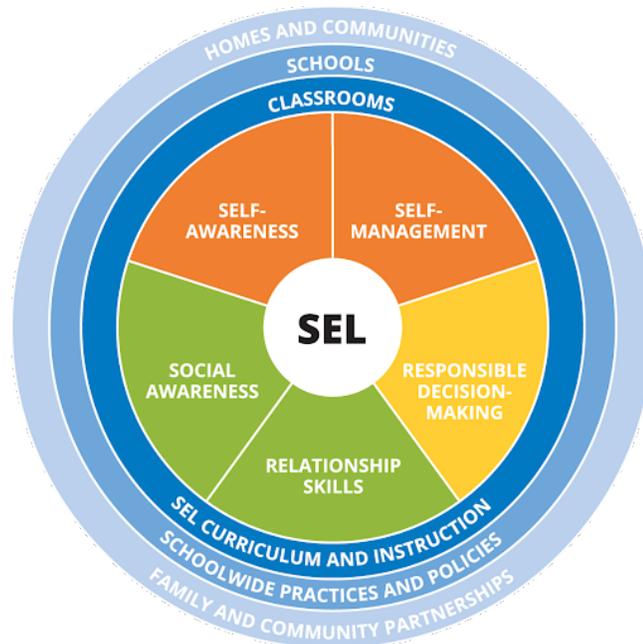
(Casel, n.d.)

- Casel looks at a school district and community's needs and attempts to provide a framework for how to best get started with the integration of SEI into a district.
  - [Offers a rubric for districts to show where they are and where they need to be](#) (Casel, n.d.)
  - [Provides a guide on how to get started with SEI across a district/school](#) (Casel, n.d.)
- [InfoOhio-Educator tools](#): Provides a lot of video and digital resources to educators about SEL. (INFOhio, n.d.)
- Districts also have the ability to utilize specific research-based programs which teach skills SEL standards. Some of these programs include: (Hallway Heroes, Responsive Classroom, Teen Connection Project, MindUp, etc.) (Casel, n.d.)

Coping Strategies for Schools:

- Teach/Practice coping skills while the student(s) is/are calm so that they will listen and understand how to use coping strategies appropriately when they are needed.
- Teach students how to communicate the need for a break or using coping strategies. Ex. how to ask for help or for a break.

- The main thing to remember when offering strategies to students is they should Try it - if it doesn't work, move on and try something else. Mindfulness for instance may work for one, but not someone else. If a strategy works for a student and doesn't hurt themselves, doesn't hurt someone else or any other living thing, and doesn't damage property, then that's a winner!
- Tips for teachers/adults working with students:
  - Students have to first REGULATE— then they can RELATE— Then REASON
  - Instead of 'What's wrong with you?' —-> What happened to you? How can I help?
  - Frequent breaks and opportunities for movement for all kids during the day.
  - Kids can only think in seconds and minutes- so they need time to calm down, so they can access their brain to think. You can't take away things during anger. Give them a break to chill.
  - Empathy drives connection, not sympathy so Instead of saying "At least" statements... i.e. At least you still got to ... you can say "I don't know what to say right now but I'm glad you told me."
  - Teachers can do Proactive strategies such as Check Ins to see how student(s) are doing (The Montgomery County Educational Service Center, 2021)
- Model and teach positive self talk so students know what it looks like and sounds like.
  - "If you tend to have a negative outlook, don't expect to become an optimist overnight. But with practice, eventually your self-talk will contain less self-criticism and more self-acceptance. You may also become less critical of the world around you."
  - "When your state of mind is generally optimistic, you're better able to handle everyday stress in a more constructive way. That ability may contribute to the widely observed health benefits of positive thinking." (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020)
- Make strategies available at a student's seat (fidget, adapted seating, ability to stand vs. sit, access to snack or drink, gum, mint)
- Have a cool down area (within classroom environment): Cool Down Corner, Calm Spot, Chill Out Zone
  - Create a comfortable/safe space with tools to help students calm-down "Cool down kit": weighted blankets/animals, fidgets, sensory items, journal, visuals, lighting (lava lamp, task cards, etc.
  - Set some type of timer so that it doesn't reinforce "avoidance" behavior
- -Provide opportunities for movement (whole class or independent)
  - jumping jacks, yoga, go for a walk, swing, use of a scooter, crab walks, arm circles, etc.
  - Whole classes could use GoNoodles or online Yoga or Buddy Beats to get the whole class up and moving.
- Provide a different environment: Calm down/quiet room, sensory room, Muscle Room, Gymnasium, Playground where a student can go if they need a break away from the rest of the class.
- For older kids, this may be a walk around the track, in the hallways, journaling, talking to a preferred person, listening to music, working out in the fitness center, etc.

Section 6: Recommendations

Some recommendations to allow people to feel more real in a more real school and less pressure to be perfect

- Develop a district-wide vision.
- Consider partnering with a group like Casel to help Madeira develop a good framework of how to align standards from Preschool to 12th grade.
- Create a plan to introduce new programs systematically and purposefully.
- Form a wellness committee of teachers, parents, students and administrators to help streamline a districtwide plan.
    - Create consistency for the whole district.
    - Streamline this process by understanding what the schools are already doing, and ensuring that all students have access to some form of SEL instruction.
    - Determine the best methods and approaches for teaching these standards
        - Programs (ex. Responsive Classroom, Teen Connection Project)
        - Motivational Speakers
        - Team Building Activities
        - Staff Training
        - Wellness Classes
    - Develop a rubric to ensure that all areas and standards are being introduced.
- Host Community conversations between students, parents and staff to talk about the social emotional piece and how we as a community best support kids, families and staff at home and at school.--Through these conversations conduct an informal needs assessment of how the school can best support the social emotional standards.
- Vertically align a Tier 1 program for kids from preschool through high school.

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