



# *Connections Matter:*

Connecting Community, Staff, and Students

## **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Roadmap for School Re-Entry**



**April 2021**

Department of Educational Support Services and Parent Relations

On March 18, 2020, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy closed all pre-K through 12 schools until further notice as part of a wide-ranging effort to contain the spread of the COVID-19. Education, as we know it, was drastically about to change.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the current state of our nation regarding civic unrest in response to structural racism, the return to school this quarter will be unlike any other in our history. This moment will call on all members of our school community to deepen our social and emotional competencies and create equitable learning environments where all students and adults can process, heal, and thrive.

To rebuild thriving schools, we need to prioritize safe, supportive, culturally sustaining, and equitable learning environments that promote the social and emotional competencies of both students and adults. This requires centering our transition plans and processes in relationship-building and authentic partnerships that honor the voices and experiences of all members of the school community.

#### **What is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)?**

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning CASEL, defines SEL as “how children and adults learn to understand and manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”

Social Emotional Learning is **key** to the success of academic student performance in all grade levels.

#### **East Orange School District Elementary Education Support Staff**

The East Orange School District’s School Counselors and Social Workers are professional educators certified by the New Jersey Department of Education. School Counselors and School Social Workers are trained to service the entire Pre-K-12th school community including students, families, and staff through their area of certification. This SEL re-entry plan will be implemented by both School Counselors and School Social Workers in collaboration with school leaders, teachers, and other support staff as part of a distributive approach.

# **SEL Critical Practice 1**

*Take time to cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL*

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this school year has been unlike any other. It has been filled with a complex mix of emotions, challenges, inspired activism, constant change, and has certainly changed our perceptions of what school looks like, around the world. By taking the time to prioritize relationships and plan for SEL, the hope is to establish a stronger foundation for the challenging but rewarding work ahead. SEL Critical Practice 1 will help you to acknowledge and prepare for the lived experiences and perspectives of all members of the school community, and collaboratively develop a responsive plan for re-engaging students and adults in a new type of learning experience.

## **1.1 Foster new relationships that elevate the voices and perspectives of students and families**

Returning to school in the 4th quarter of the school year, during this unprecedented time will require new types of relationships that reflect diverse perspectives. It is important that educators also take the time to build new relationships with those who have been traditionally left out of the decision making process or absent during remote learning.

As students return, so do their families and caregivers and any excess baggage they may be carrying. It is important that we intentionally connect with stakeholders in meaningful ways. Keeping in mind our stakeholders are students and families in our school community. This can be successfully done if we are aware of our own biases and open to discussing those of others. Lastly, linking our stakeholders to community partners to assist in building positive relationships are both critical to reopening schools.

### **Essential Questions**

- How can we increase and/or improve our communication strategies to simultaneously and consistently include the greatest number of stakeholders, including those whose voices have been omitted traditionally?
- What opportunities will be made available so that all stakeholders can contribute to the learning environment and experiences so that all students have a chance to achieve success?
- How can we maintain these relationships to ensure that students and families have on-going access and support?

### **Implementation (Recommendations)**

- Encourage families to participate in community town hall meetings, DPAC meetings, school PTO/PTA meetings
- Provide parent programs addressing various topics (i.e., attendance, health and safety as it relates to COVID-19, school reopening plans, academic expectations, etc.)
- Parent-teacher conferences communicating successes and challenges for students and providing resources to community partnerships, if needed

- Student/Parent surveys to assess values, experiences, and needs
- Acknowledge student’s soft skills and talents, consider partnering them with community programs such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters, or other mentoring programs
- Create and display a student friendly “go-to chart” displaying ***what to do when*** suggestions that cover a wide range of topics that address physical, mental, and spiritual health
- Connect students/families with community partners based on their needs - community partners may include Family Connections, East Orange recreation, etc.
- Create incentives to get buy-in from families. i.e., partner with local grocery stores to donate gift cards to parents/caregivers with greatest involvement.
- Create virtual platforms where parents can log-in and record/participate in designated activities with their students, i.e., at the end of each week or month, validate the top 10 and provide gift card to top 3 participating families
- Be aware of and post community resources and events, share with parents in weekly blog or email; encourage high school students to partner with you to offer tutoring or mentoring activities through Schoology postings
- Display community partners and the work they’re doing to support your school
- Invite community professionals to share their expertise, mentor, and/or sponsor students during regular intervals
- Make Essex County Covid-19 link available on district website
- Connect families with community partners based on their needs, have pamphlets and other visual aids displayed in prominent locations. Include links to applicable resources on school and district website, such as
  - 211 Assistance at [www.211.org](http://www.211.org)
  - SNAP Benefits at <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/>
  - Homelessness Prevention at <https://www.homelesshelterdirectory.org/cgi-bin/id/city.cgi?city=East%20Orange&state=NJ>

## **Tools**

- <https://www.familyconnectionsnj.org/>
- <https://www.fsoec.org/>
- <https://succeed2gether.org/>
- [Mapp, Karen, Henderson, Anne, et. al., Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family School Partnerships www.thebakesale.com/bakesale](http://www.thebakesale.com/bakesale)
- [https://covidactnow.org/us/new\\_jersey-nj/county/essex\\_county/?s=1695622](https://covidactnow.org/us/new_jersey-nj/county/essex_county/?s=1695622)
- <https://www.essexcovid.org/>

## **1.2 Use two-way communication strategies to inform, engage, and listen to members of the school community**

Communication during these unprecedented times is critical as students, educators, and families need to hear from their school leaders. It is equally critical to prioritize SEL and share out why it is so important to the entire school community during a time of healing, relationship building, recovering learning loss, and creating a solid foundation as students return.

### **Essential Questions**

- What platforms will be used to successfully receive and deliver pertinent information from and to stakeholders in a timely and consistent manner?
- For stakeholders who have not been responsive - what are the barriers? How will these barriers be dismantled?
- What creative strategies can we implement to ensure consistent, two-way communication between stakeholders?
- How are we improving and building upon relationships with stakeholders?

### **Implementation (Recommendations)**

- Offer a variety of communication strategies, such as surveys, questionnaires, blogs, includes links on school and district websites and offer paper versions
- Improve protocols for updating student information in database systems and interconnect various platforms so that they are in sync as updates are made
  - Make student data forms available online for family members to complete and scan supporting documents
- Interconnect FOCUS and School Messenger
- Have students create PSAs for their families and the community-at-large via cable access channel, post student made signage in local community businesses
- Keep communication consistent and positive utilizing multiple platforms
  - For example, Class Dojo, Remind, Bloom, School Messenger, FOCUS, social media outlets, etc.
  - For parents who do not have access to online platforms, provide family engagement journals to record activities. Designate time and location for journal checks
- Encourage family members to be open-minded
  - Hear and validate the concerns of parents, ask for recommendations for improvement
  - Create and facilitate affinity groups among stakeholders focusing on specific areas, provide the necessary resources and training to ensure success
- Invite relevant community members as guests, either virtually or in person, and to promote events/messages on various outlets
- Share transitory rituals, routines, and expectations of students and how they will be held accountable in friendly manner
  - Step by step process in visual and written format
  - Transition protocols may be made available on various platforms

## **Tools**

- <https://schoolguide.casel.org/focus-area-1a/communication-planning/>
- [www.nifi.org](http://www.nifi.org) offers workshops and a starter kit on how to organize forums on community issues and also helps sponsor forums.
- [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org) available in English and Spanish
- <https://businessfinder.nj.com/NJ-east-orange>

## **1.3 Examine where SEL efforts have been impactful and where more support is needed**

Developing the social and emotional competencies of students assist schools in creating safe environments that contribute significantly to academic achievement. To achieve this success, positive leadership, relevant and meaningful professional development, coordination of resources, proven instructional practices, policies and consistent collaboration with stakeholders are required. The goals of incorporating Social Emotional Learning activities in everyday instruction are to assist students in acquiring the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to:

- Recognize and self-regulate emotions
- Show empathy for self and others
- Establish and build healthy relationships
- Exercise responsible decision making
- Manage challenging experiences

It is pertinent that SEL initiatives be supported by all stakeholders and built into the daily schedule. This will bring about opportunities to not only learn but to practice and reinforce required skills. Best practices implement the acronym, **S.A.F.E.** to teach these skills.

- **Sequenced:** utilize a universal step by step process understood by all stakeholders
- **Active:** provide opportunities to practice and rehearse scenarios, give feedback
- **Focused:** ensure time is managed wisely to maximize benefits
- **Explicit:** target specific social and emotional skills

### **Essential Questions**

- How are current SEL practices being implemented and evaluated? Based on data, are they successful?
- How can SEL practices be altered to improve student outcomes?
- Can these practices be easily reinforced at home, in the community, etc.?
- What other creative measures can be added as we transition into summer and a new school year to keep the momentum going?
- How will these efforts be measured and recorded to create consistency in expectations and outcomes?

### **Implementation (Recommendations)**

- Incorporate SEL into student's daily schedule for consistency and accumulation of accurate data collection
- Share tangible resources with families and community partners to reinforce and increase student supports
- Communicate district & community efforts with summer programs, local businesses and other community stakeholders to ensure consistency of messaging
- Create student/family friendly survey to measure success of SEL programs being used and evaluate unmet needs

- Have efforts recognized during virtual events throughout the city, such as town halls, billboards, back to school night, etc.
  - Continue to implement reward programs for attendance, decreased infractions, promote positive/desired behaviors
- Create list of summer programming for students to support academic, mental, and physical growth, recognize students for making improvement
  - Student recognition at Back to School Night
  - Student shout outs in newsletter, social media, school website, etc.

## **Tools**

- <https://ldaamerica.org/> - provides resources and support for families of children with special needs
- [www.DiscoveryEducation.com](http://www.DiscoveryEducation.com) - Discovery Education offers a wide variety of free family resources that you can trust to provide high quality, relevant material for you and your children.
- [www.parents.nea.org](http://www.parents.nea.org) - providing resources to parents and students to foster healthy partnerships between home, school, and community to promote student success
- <https://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds/article/school-community-learning-partnerships-essential-expanding-learning-success>
- <https://case1.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SEL-Effort-Inventory-and-Analysis.pdf>
- <https://www.edutopia.org/article/assessing-social-and-emotional-learning>

## **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: HOTLINES AND HELPLINES:**

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK),** [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org). The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.
- **2NDFLOORNJ Youth Helpline: 1-888-222-2228, [www.2ndfloor.org](http://www.2ndfloor.org).** 2NDFLOOR is a confidential, anonymous, 24/7 helpline for New Jersey's youth and young adults. If you are between the ages of 10 and 24, live in New Jersey, and need to talk about an issue or problem that you are facing, call or text anytime.
- **The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7326,** Call, text, or chat 24/7; To text, type START to 678-678; [thetrevorproject.org/about](http://thetrevorproject.org/about). The Trevor Project provides crisis intervention and suicide intervention to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) young people under 25.

## **SEL Critical Practice 2**

*Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students*

Educators shoulder significant responsibility in helping young people understand, process, and heal from these momentous events. But in order to effectively support students, adults will need to feel connected, supported, valued, and capable of taking on the challenges ahead. This SEL Critical Practice will help you create working conditions (i.e., time, space, professional learning) and well-designed opportunities for educators to engage in self-care, develop supportive staff relationships, and build their capacity for promoting students' SEL through equitable learning environments.

### **2.1 Allow space for connection, listening, and healing among all adults in the school community**

When educators have an opportunity to engage in self-care and process their own emotions, they are more likely to co-regulate, relate, and communicate in ways that help students express and manage their emotions, make sense of their experiences, and decrease the likelihood that a stressful event becomes traumatizing. To support healing and self-care, design safe and responsive spaces for educators to build relationships, support and reinvigorate one another, and collectively process their emotions and experiences.

#### **Essential Questions**

- How do we approach maximizing supportive connections as we re-enter schools this quarter?
- How do we keep staff motivated while supporting their well-being and intentionally providing strategies for self-care?
- How are we creating opportunities for staff members to focus on self-care practices that model what we want to happen for our students?

#### **Implementation (Recommendations)**

- Designate specific time for SEL practices in staff meetings and/or grade level meetings, i.e., utilize mindful leaders, trained staff member(s), or community partners
- Schedule staff check-ins with the administrative team to provide individuals opportunities to connect with Administrations and verbalize thoughts
- Standing leadership team debriefing sessions to discuss climate and culture in the building
- Create or utilize staff Zen/calming rooms or designate a space in the teacher's lounge for staff relief (i.e., mindful posts, reflection and/or cozy corners)
- Create opportunities for staff to communicate uplifting/encouraging quotes, messages, and shout-outs. Schools may use a variety of platforms from Group Me, Class Dojo, e-mail, and other social media sites
- Wellness/Accountability partner (staff members' check-in with another to discuss wellness or accountability goals)

- Establish/utilize school's Sunshine Club, a club designed to express congratulations, sympathy, or concern to members in the event of illness, bereavement or milestones
- Virtual Yoga Class (lead by a trained professional)
- Schedule self-care practices, i.e., screen time breaks, mindful moments, water breaks, or any activity that promotes self-care
- Set aside intentional time for mindful practice as part of the school wide announcements

## **Tools**

- Create a survey to assess your staff as they return to school. Please see the *sample* below.
- <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSet2bYEel7ooHRR3VGyBL4un5dEdkU>
- 5 Minute Chats/Check-in with the Principal (CASEL with support from the National Association of Elementary School Principals- NAESP) This sample check-in agenda and questions can be used by school leaders when connecting individually with staff members. [5-Minute-Chats-with-the-Principal.pdf \(case1.org\)](#)
- 7 SEL Meeting Strategies You Can Use with Your Teachers
- <https://blog.edmentum.com/administrator-tips-7-sel-meeting-strategies-you-can-use-your-teachers>

## **2.2 Ensure access to mental health and trauma supports for adults as needed**

As staff reunite and return to school, adults will have varied experiences and stressors, and some may have additional mental health needs (including depression, anxiety, grief, post-traumatic stress disorder). It will be critical to have a system in place and identify school-based counselors and community partners to support the overall health and well-being, both physical and mental, of all staff. Supportive conditions that prioritize staff wellness for all adults help prevent secondary trauma and compassion fatigue. In addition, it will be important to identify and connect those who need additional support with school, district, or community resources for more targeted mental health support.

### **Essential Questions**

- What measures can you utilize to put your staff's well-being at the center of school culture?
- What does a safe and secure environment look like for staff?
- How can you engage community stakeholders to support the range of needs and experiences of your staff?
- What support systems are in place for staff?

### **Implementation (Recommendations)**

- Allow time during staff meetings for health and safety updates to discuss on-going protocol and procedures related to COVID-19
- On-going wellness checks
- Arrange daily staff wellness walk throughs
- Mindful leaders to lead a mindful activity during staff meetings and/or morning announcements
- Remind staff of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) resources
- Zen breaks
  - Relief for staff to leave their classroom to go to the Zen/calming room, if necessary. It is recommended that a process be in place for this to occur.
- Invite community mental health organizations and/or other stakeholders to staff meetings and/or PLCS to engage the school community in activities and professional learning
- Wellness Wall
- Healthy tips (food options, exercise, mental health wellness, inspirational messages, books, acknowledgement jar)
- Access to mental health services
- Consult with support staff (social workers'/school counselors'/school nurses) for community resources, to create a resource guide for your school as well as post resources in visible areas

## **Tools**

- EAP referral process
- National Distress Hotline: 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUsto 66746
- East Orange Employee Assistance Program through BCBS
- [www.horizonblue.com](http://www.horizonblue.com) (Achieve Solutions)
- [www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help](http://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help)

## **2.3 Provide embedded professional learning to build educators' capacity to support students' social, emotional, and academic growth**

Upon returning to school, all adults who interact with youth will need skills and knowledge to engage in culturally responsive practices and create equitable learning environments that promote all students' social, emotional, and academic competencies across new learning formats. Recognizing that educators may feel pressure to focus solely on academic content when school reopens, focus professional learning on helping educators understand that academic growth is deeply connected to developmental relationships and SEL. Professional learning can also help teachers identify and effectively implement culturally responsive practices that help encourage positive student-adult interactions, promote equitable learning environments, and facilitate academic, social, and emotional learning. It is also important to engage community partners and school-based mental health professionals to do this collective work alongside educators and other staff.

### **Essential Questions**

- What types of professional support/training are needed to holistically support students socially, emotionally, and academically?

### **Implementation (Recommendations)**

- Utilize Administrative and Teacher unions to promote self-care and wellness trainings
- Disseminate community fliers promoting town hall meetings discussing current trends in the community
- Allow trained staff to provide workshops on current SEL programs:
  - Second Step, Positive Discipline, and Zensational Kids (mindful leaders) to support trauma-informed practices
- Staff modeling self-care behaviors and best practices

### **Tools**

- Professional development for holistically support students socially, emotionally and academically
- Teaching and Learning: Social and Emotional Learning Webinar Series Part 1  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73LphoZubT0>
- Teaching and Learning: Social and Emotional Learning Webinar Series Part 2  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SMenWmBgMM>

## **SEL Critical Practice 3**

*Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development*

Students of all ages are grappling with a range of emotions including anger, fear, uncertainty, optimism, and motivation. The ways in which students process their complex emotions and experiences will be influenced by whether they have at least one “secure base” to turn to. As you transition back, ensure each student has *at least* one trusting, supportive adult relationship at school.

Positive relationships between students and adults are reciprocal, attuned, culturally responsive, and trusting. These relationships provide a sense of security and inclusion, enhance student resilience and coping, protect students from risk factors such as trauma, and contribute to higher engagement and achievement and positive long-term outcomes. Relationships are supported by learning environments that provide structures for safety and belonging. These environments include consistent, restorative discipline practices and opportunities for collaborative work that reinforce SEL and support community building, student engagement, and equitable outcomes.

### **3.1 Intentionally build structures that promote supportive adult-student and peer relationships**

Building strong relationships are essential to promoting engagement among students, staff, and families and to supporting the social, emotional, and academic well-being of students. Research shows us that strong adult-student and peer relationships play a critical role in student motivation and learning. Students who have strong relationships with their teachers and their peers, have been shown to feel more connected to school and perform better academically. Therefore, it stands to reason that perhaps the greatest contributor to our ability to motivate students to be engaged in learning is to relate to them in authentic and meaningful ways and build structures that promote supportive adult-student and peer relationships.

#### **Essential Questions**

- How will we intentionally build and maintain connections with each student, having a personal regard for them as individuals through remote (virtual), in-person, and hybrid learning?
- How do we create an environment to ensure that all students have a sense of belonging?
- How are students, families, and communities, authentic partners in fostering inclusive school climates where all students feel physically and emotionally safe, supported, challenged, and capable-no matter the instructional setting?

## **Implementation (Recommendations)**

- **Assign each student a designated staff member** (i.e., teacher, mentor, counselor, coach, advisor) who will maintain a relationship with the student during transitioning from remote/virtual to in-person and hybrid learning.
- **Build community and connection** among staff members and peers through in-person and virtual platforms. (i.e., Classroom, Schoology, Google Meet, Class Dojo). Use virtual games (i.e., Nearpod, Flipgrid, Kahoot) and online challenges (i.e., motivated Monday, throwback Tuesday etc.)
- **Implement rituals, routines and ongoing structures** such as new social norms to greet and welcome students at the door, check-ins, advisory, morning/afternoon meeting structures, or community-building rituals (in-person, virtual, by phone and/or other means) aligned with the developmental relationships framework that can be informal, regularly scheduled, or a combination. [The Developmental Relationships Framework](#)
- [Creating a Classroom Routine for Online or Hybrid Learning Students](#)
- **Support students' mental health** and show them how to seek support through (i.e., trusted adults, school nurse, school social worker/counselor etc.) [Mental Health and Students: What Educators Should Know](#)
- **Encourage students to participate** in student lead groups (i.e., student council, school clubs, sports and activities) to create a sense of belonging where all students can feel physically and emotionally safe, supported, challenged, and capable.
- Provide developmentally and age-appropriate classroom activities that foster connectedness and learning such as SEL lessons. [Embed SEL Classroom Lessons](#)

## **Tools**

- Teachers and staff provide K-8 mindfulness lessons and activities for students
- [Flip Lid Video Link](#) (Dr. Daniel Siegel's hand model of the brain - teaches why we lose control of our emotions and how to restore a sense of calm)
- Teachers and staff provide Second Step, Positive Discipline, Leader-in-Me, Naviance - SEL instruction/activities within the classroom (in-person and remote)
- Teachers and staff utilize the "Calm Room and/or Cozy Corner" to provide students with a safe space to practice regulating their emotions through self-calming techniques
  - [Checklist: Relationship building strategies during the Covid-19 crises](#) (Search Institute) This checklist outlines relationship-building strategies during the Covid-19 crises.
  - [Creating Opportunities Through Relationships \(University of Virginia\)](#) These free online professional learning modules support educators in developing supportive relationships with students.
  - [5-Minute Chats With Individual Students \(CASEL\)](#) This sample agenda and questions for one-on-one check-ins with students can build connections and help respond to needs.

## **3.2 Weave in opportunities for students to develop, practice, and reflect upon social and emotional competencies throughout the day**

School leaders will continue to address important concerns about the impact of school building closures on academic performance and potential “learning loss.” We have an opportunity to elevate how students learn and develop, socially, emotionally and academically to determine how they engage. And how their culture and environments influence the unique ways they grow and develop throughout life.

As students return to school, they will need to cope and manage stress, build relationships, reflect on their experiences, express empathy for their peers, and make decisions that keep themselves and their communities healthy. It will be important for educators to help them develop critical social and emotional skills through explicit instruction in and practice with social and emotional skills through evidence-based programs and practices.

### **Essential Questions**

- What opportunities do we provide teachers to learn about, practice, and receive support (from administrators, coaches, and colleagues) for integrating social and emotional competencies and pedagogies into all instruction, implementing community-building strategies, and elevating students’ voices?
- How can we support teachers in providing opportunities for students to reflect on their social and emotional competencies to build critical thinking skills and their own sense of identity, agency, and belonging?

### **Implementation (Recommendations)**

- **Create opportunities for students to socialize and connect** with their peers during less structured group times (lunch, recess, PE) following the safety and social distancing guidelines as set forth by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) (i.e., schedule virtual lunch buddies) and have students reflect through tools like [Learning Logs](#)
- **Support teachers and staff through Professional Development opportunities** (i.e., PLC’s, grade level meetings, staff meetings, leadership team meetings, morning circles)
- **Encourage consistent opportunities for student voice** (i.e., create groups for students to collaborate and problem solve, ask students about their lives beyond the classroom to create a deeper value and better understanding of the complexities of their lives, and ask for student feedback and use it) [Ways to Promote Student Voice](#)

### **Tools**

- [Virtual SEL Reflection Room \(Tulsa Public Schools\)](#)
- [Developmentally Appropriate SEL Lessons \(Case1\)](#) Sample Lesson Plans to Support Core Competencies of SEL
- [Playworks \(Case1\)](#) 150 games that help students produce Social Emotional (SE) Skills
- [Tennessee Toolkit for Teachers and Administrators to Incorporate Social & Personal Competencies Into Instruction \(Tennessee DOE\)](#) This toolkit is designed to increase administrator and teacher awareness of the instructional practices that promote SEL

### 3.3 Identify and Implement a comprehensive system of support for students with additional needs

All students share the experiences of the pandemic. However, their personal responses to these events can vary widely depending on their individual circumstances. Contributing factors include their age as well as their access to resources and the health and well-being of their family and friends. As a team, it is critical to develop structures to assist students who report to school in need of additional support of mental and behavioral health in order to address current traumas, due to the pandemic.

As you work to support the mental and behavioral health and wellbeing of students in a way that addresses the current traumas, develop an adaptive and responsive system of tiered supports that leverages students' assets to help them cope, navigate, and strengthen their social and emotional competencies. To do this, develop structures to identify strengths and those who need additional behavioral or mental health support-connecting with processes (i.e., referrals, screeners)

#### Essential Questions

- What is the current structure in place to understand student assets, competencies, and strengths?
- What are current structures and processes to work with school counselors and school psychologists to connect students with targeted (Tier 2) or intensive (Tier 3) behavioral and mental health interventions? What is the process to continuously monitor student progress?
- How do you avoid labeling students (i.e., as “struggling,” “vulnerable,” or “at-risk”) and relying on assumptions of students based on their past behaviors, race, or socioeconomic status? How do we avoid neglecting students who may receive less attention because they are considered “high-performing” or “quiet”?

#### Implementation (Recommendations)

- **Take a baseline assessment for each student** - use classroom observations, anecdotal notes, report cards, progress reports, benchmark and state assessments results to determine students' needs.
- **Continue to implement ongoing structures** such as rituals and routines i.e., welcoming students at the door, and classroom meetings.
- **Make sure staff is aware of the process for referring students** in need of assistance.  
[Process for Referring Students to I&RS](#)
- **Send I&RS information to parents** so they are aware of services.
- **Share evidenced based research** with the administrative team to promote the value of therapeutic approaches when dealing with certain behavior.
- **Referrals to community agencies** such as Perform Care, which has certified screeners who can provide licensed clinicians that will make it possible to receive counseling services and treatment plans for the family.
- **Utilize evidence-based character education programs** led by school counselors to assist students. Implement a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to provide prevention and intervention for all students.

## **Tools**

- <https://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/irs/> I&RS
- <https://www.performcarenj.org/about/contact.aspx> PerformCare
- <https://www.schoolcrisiscenter.org/resources/teacher-training-modules/> Professional learning modules to provide a structure for supporting grieving students.
- <https://transformingeducation.org/resources/trauma-informed-sel-toolkit/> This toolkit includes everything needed to deliver a two-hour professional development session designed for educators seeking research-based strategies to create a healthy classroom environment for students who have experienced adversities and trauma.
- [I&RS Referral Packet](#)

# **APPENDIX**

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Professional development for trauma informed instruction:**

- Webinar: Trauma- Informed Teaching & Learning  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tm4JGtBEzR8>
- Trauma-Sensitive Practices During the COVID-19 Pandemic:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0JcKrGvEN4>
- Dan Siegel Hand model of the brain <https://youtu.be/gm9CIJ74Oxw>

### **Getting started with trauma informed practices:**

- <https://youtu.be/eWIV3wWygS4>
- **How mindfulness helps our students:** <https://youtu.be/Gv-SxltPY>
- **3 Trauma-Informed Practices Backed By Science** Pediatrician, California surgeon general, and author Dr. Nadine Burke Harris on the science behind relationships, school discipline, and mindfulness
- **The impact of mindfulness on students:** <https://youtu.be/cOGM-zKPTE>

### **Examples of Social and Emotional Learning in Elementary English Language Arts Instruction**

- [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h80xf\\_UcCEymbMtC4dDBRhHXs1c1YpFx/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h80xf_UcCEymbMtC4dDBRhHXs1c1YpFx/view)
- **Examples of Social and Emotional Learning in Elementary Mathematics Instruction**<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GIg2-4DMq80p5SYobL5RSwcfZyWbxMeV/view>
- **Examples of Social and Emotional Learning in Middle School Social Studies Instruction** [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nRobsgGLE\\_1Vd3stIm43IKUAlhAz-d5p/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nRobsgGLE_1Vd3stIm43IKUAlhAz-d5p/view)
- **Examples of Social and Emotional Learning in High School English Language Arts Instruction** [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Q0Bo-AYL2TY4fEgxadCZ-ff\\_bFXLwBK/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Q0Bo-AYL2TY4fEgxadCZ-ff_bFXLwBK/view)
- **Flip lid videos** - Some Days I Flip My Lid - Read-aloud with reflections and mindful breathing - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qExgmMeQk3s>

### **Zensational videos: These videos provide self-care tips and practices.**

- [https://www.facebook.com/Zensationalkids/videos/287375138977907/?so=channel\\_tab&rv=all\\_videos\\_card](https://www.facebook.com/Zensationalkids/videos/287375138977907/?so=channel_tab&rv=all_videos_card)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O29e4rRMrV4> (Rainbow Breath – Flow GoNoodle: Learn how to raise your energy and face your day with this exercise)

### **Belly Breathing Mindfulness Activities:**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RiMb2Bw4Ae8>
- [Belly Breathing: Mindfulness for Children](#)

### **New Jersey Resource Guide:**

- [www.essexresource.net.org](http://www.essexresource.net.org)

- [Good-grief.org](http://Good-grief.org)
- [Guidance Related to Childcare During COVID-19](#)
- [Guidance on Providing Pediatric Well-Care During COVID-19](#)
- [List of latest AAP News articles](#) on COVID-19
- [Pediatrics](#) COVID-19 Collection
- [COVID-19 Advocacy Resources](#) (Login required)
- <https://www.teladoc.com/therapy/> (Teladoc-Online Counseling App)
- <https://programsforparents.org>
- [www.pcnj.org](http://www.pcnj.org)
- [www.mhaessexmorris.org](http://www.mhaessexmorris.org)

## REFERENCES

- <https://afton.com>
- [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)
- [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org)
- [www.cdc.org](http://www.cdc.org)
- [Good-grief.org](http://Good-grief.org)
- [Guidance Related to Childcare During COVID-19](#)
- [Guidance on Providing Pediatric Well-Care During COVID-19](#)
- [www.horizonblue.com](http://www.horizonblue.com)
- <https://IntegrateListening.comL>
- [List of latest AAP News articles](#) on COVID-19
- <https://learn.nctsn.org>
- [www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help](http://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help)

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**Thank you for contributing to the SEL Roadmap for School Re-Entry!**