

# Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment

## Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

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### Social Emotional Learning (SEL) within the Kansas MTSS and Alignment Framework

**Kansas MTSS and Alignment Basics.** The Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment (MTSS) is the organizing framework that assists schools to efficiently and effectively deploy the curriculum, instructional practices and resources that enable every student to be successful academically, behaviorally, socially and emotionally.

In a multi-tiered system, the evidence-based core curriculum in each area is provided to *all* students and will be sufficiently effective for at least 80% of the student population. Approximately 15% of students may need, in addition to the core, a layer of focused, time-limited supplemental instruction and resources. Up to 5% of students will need individualized and intensive supports in addition to the core curricula.

**What is SEL?** “Social and emotional learning is the process of acquiring the skills to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively” (CASEL.org). These competencies are critical influencers of success in academics, career, health and life.

**Why SEL?** The Kansas MTSS and Alignment model is an integrated academic, social, and behavioral approach to education. Of the most significant factors influencing learning, research shows nearly three quarters are social-emotional influences. Social-emotional learning is essential to developing critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, emotional health, and resiliency in a quickly changing world. Social-emotional skills are predictive of high school and college completion, higher academic achievement, employment and positive effects on health. These skills are as teachable as academics, and many are malleable far into adolescence. Social emotional learning accomplishes at least five important objectives in education:

- Enhances and supports the 5 R’s of education: results, relevance, relationships, responsive culture and rigor, thereby benefiting performance, achievement, effectiveness and satisfaction in daily life, while decreasing risk factors associated with a range of risky or problem behaviors.
- Supports greater flexible thinking, problem-solving and creativity for the rapidly changing world and evolving economy, which by 2020 will require an estimated 71% of the Kansas workforce to have postsecondary education;
- Provides education in the ‘soft skills’ or ‘success skills’ that comprise anywhere from one-half to three quarters of the skills necessary to obtain a good job, work effectively with others, and benefit family and community life;
- Enhances teacher-student relationships, which of 150 influences studied, has one of the largest effect sizes on learning;
- Helps build the grit, persistence, motivation, commitment, engagement and self-regulation necessary for students to be college, career and life-ready;

**Essential Components of SEL.** Within the MTSS and Alignment framework, a focus on social-emotional learning is as rigorous and intentional as academics. School-wide, universal social-emotional learning is more robust than addressing one particular social issue or implementing a discrete lesson, behavioral intervention or classroom management technique. An evidence-based curriculum has a scope and sequence that allows for school-wide implementation congruent with Kansas' Social Emotional and Character Development Standards. Curricula are selected at the district level with stakeholder input to capitalize on consistency, progressing students developmentally each year toward college and career readiness. The sound pedagogy of SEL does not require dramatic change in teacher roles or actions, yet the small changes that are required can produce profound effects. Kansas MTSS and Alignment guides districts through selecting an evidence-based, scoped and sequenced universal *curriculum* that supports the Kansas Social Emotional and Character Development (SECD) *standards* and that is responsive to their community's needs. Alternatively, districts can implement a comprehensive SEL evidence-based approach compatible with the Kansas MTSS and Alignment framework. Regardless of the curriculum or comprehensive approach a district selects, evidence-based SEL implementation will have the following critical components:

- Administrative support, leadership and active participation
- Evidence-based programming that systematically promotes students' social and emotional competence in all five competency areas that are the building blocks of academic achievement and social adjustment: self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.
- Classroom-based learning that provides repeated opportunities for practice across a multi-year programming structure, allowing skill development and progression to occur
- High quality training, an implementation plan, and other implementation supports
- Consistent, connected scope and sequence for preschool/elementary and for the secondary level;
- Rigor in teaching the core SEL, including having SEL on buildings' academic schedules, implemented by teaching staff using fidelity measures, and administering assessments such as pre and post-test measures;
- Use of data to improve core instruction and supports, and to identify students needing additional support;
- Supplementing with additional layers of evidence-based programming to support students who need more practice and skill-building;
- Use of data for progress monitoring.

### **Vocabulary.**

**SEL** – Social and emotional learning is the process of acquiring the skills to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively.

**Curriculum** - A program designed to teach students a subject matter, including a detailed plan for the day-to-day activities, lessons, and assessments teachers will provide. (Examples of highly evidenced program curricula can be found on [CASEL](#))

**Standards** – Statements about the expectations of what is to be learned by the end of a school year against which success can be judged. (Eg: [Kansas' Social, Emotional and Character Development standards](#))

**Scope and Sequence** – The depth and breadth of the content to be taught at a specific grade level and across grade levels, and the order in which the content should be taught for best results.

**Fidelity** – The degree to which a program is delivered as intended, with all its essential components, in order to obtain the outcomes shown in the research.

**Evidence Based** – A specific, objective, and formal research study (or studies) was conducted and validated the specific program, curriculum or intervention as producing statistically significant favorable effects. This is a higher standard than 'research based,' due to the use of rigorous study methods and determination of statistical results.

**Research Based** – A program, curriculum or intervention that has been designed based on theoretical ideas supported by research. The program has not undergone scientific study yet to prove effectiveness.

**Promising Program** - A program, curriculum or intervention has undergone a formal, objective research study (studies) that showed evidence of a favorable effect, but not strong enough or with a large enough population to be generalizable across multiple settings and groups at this time.

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