



CASEL CDI SOUNDBITES

October 2020

Dear Friends,

We continue to be impressed by the dedication and energy of all of our colleagues in responding to these challenging times. With the school year underway, we've seen our partner districts intensify their efforts to reach out to students, support educators, and deepen connections with families and the community. And we're looking forward to the SEL Exchange Summit (Oct. 15), when we'll all have a chance to renew our commitment to youth and share our expertise and insights. Thank you for the work you do to support young people. As always, your work is an inspiration.

In partnership,
Karen VanAusdal

At a Glance

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Adjusting to Needs for Virtual Learning; Supporting Mental Health

William J. Stencil, M.Ed., Educator-Executive Director, Humanware/SEL Department

The Cleveland Metropolitan Schools, as with many other school districts, determined that the approach to learning for the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year would start out remote. After gathering information from our families and staff, it was determined that the first nine weeks of school would be completely virtual. Synchronous learning is happening on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Wednesdays are set aside for asynchronous learning and focused assistance for those scholars who need extra help.

As a result of this new approach to school, the work of the Humanware Department has shifted slightly from training and supporting staff through our Humanware Initiatives to also including suggestions on how to function virtually and still maintain a high level of engagement. Due to the new remote training styles, the district has been compelled to delay the initial preparation for Restorative Practices to our 22 pilot schools and introducing the Facing History pedagogy to our high schools. We hope to pick this up again once we return to brick-and-mortar schooling.

The Humanware Department has spent a good amount of time in training our Planning Center Instructional Aides, Deans of Engagement, and SEL Coordinators. We have been preparing these monthly sessions to include resources and protocols to guide their work in this remote environment. Our CTAG Team (Closing the Achievement Gap) has been working hard to build their yearlong learning series for our “at risk” scholars, which will include virtual sessions on CASEL’s five core competencies with particular

Cleveland, Cont.

Don't Forget!

**SEL Exchange
Virtual Summit
Oct. 15, 2020,
12:00-4:00 pm ET**

**An innovative
virtual four-
hour event on
Catalyzing Our
Commitment to
Youth. Remember
to invite your
colleagues! Last
day to register is
Oct. 14.**

emphasis on leadership skills. We have had to adjust our attitude toward Student Support Teams, Class Meetings, PATHS, and Second Step. Even though the tasks of each group remain the same, Humanware is regularly adjusting their work to fit into these virtual conditions.

Humanware's emphasis on mental health is front and center. Our team is in the process of facilitating virtual meetings with individual principals discussing their most evident needs from our community partners. The Rapid Response Desk is up and running, addressing our scholars in crisis. The entire team remains available to support all departments in self-care sessions and consultation. In addition, we continue to support the district's pledge to provide every scholar with the technology to properly engage in their own learning while promoting the SEL Blueprint developed by the Humanware Department and shared with each school's administration.

Our department maintains its emphasis on adult SEL. We are in the process of developing sessions for our principals that promote the structure of our adult SEL definition and particular boundaries that we are functioning within. We hope to introduce these remote sessions during the monthly Principals' Learning Institute.

As one of the district's leading departments, we are planning the next steps in our virtual environment. We are staying engaged with our colleagues in the planning and development of the next approach to educating Cleveland youth as we move forward with our educational progression following the present virtual method.



Jumpstarting SEL Family Engagement and Fostering Positive Relationships Virtually in Dallas ISD

Jane Santa Cruz, SEL Project Manager

Over the summer, [Dallas ISD's SEL Department](#) hired our first-ever SEL Family Engagement Coordinator, Sandra Martinez, and she is already developing resources and connecting with partners to share family/caregiver-focused SEL resources. On our department website, we have created the subsection, [SEL for Parents and Caregivers](#), to publicly share relevant resources.

Sandra has also partnered with our Dallas ISD Communications department to create a separate [SEL YouTube playlist for families](#), starting with a brief video on [Family Treatment Agreements](#) (in [Spanish](#), too!).

We will soon be sending out a caregiver-focused Family Engagement newsletter on a monthly basis. If you're interested in joining our mailing list, please submit your information [here](#) (or [here](#) if you prefer the Spanish-language version!).

Check out [our department's October newsletter](#) with more family resources as well as other strategies for building a welcoming environment this school year.

Worth Reading

"It's Time to Rethink How Schools Use Data to Implement Social and Emotional Learning"
Education Dive
By Alexandra Skoog-Hoffman, CASEL's Director of Research-Practice Partnerships

[Read](#)

Dallas, Cont.

At the start of the 2020-21 school year, our SEL team had the opportunity to partner with Counseling Services and Mental Health Services to develop and facilitate a training session for all principals, [Maslow Before They Can Bloom](#) (session Google folder [linked here](#)). The training provided an overview of basic needs of safety and belonging, trauma-informed care practices, and specific SEL strategies that can be used for relationship-building, self-care, and fostering welcoming environments. Moreover, the SEL Department and our partner, [Big Thought](#), coordinated an keynote speaker, [Dena Simmons](#), to kick off the training day by discussing equity-responsive practices and self-care strategies for educators to keep in mind during these heavy times. Our team hopes to continue reinforcing and building on these strategies during the upcoming year so that all educators can prioritize SEL strategies.



CASEL/DuPage Partnership's New Look

Ruth Cross, Senior SEL Consultant, CASEL

In the summer of 2020, change was impacting the lives of all individuals in our world, and the partnership took this opportunity to create a new way to promote and sustain SEL throughout DuPage County. Dr. Darlene Ruscitti, the DuPage Regional Office of Education (DROE) Superintendent, is taking a more visible role. The DROE has a new Executive Director of Equity and Professional Leadership, Dr. Ivette Dubiel, who is supporting DuPage County schools with a variety of services that promote equity as a foundation for all school and district work. Dr. Sharon Frys is the new DROE SEL leader who coordinates the partnership activities with the CASEL coach and the SEL Steering Committee. A nine-member SEL Steering Committee was formed. The committee includes superintendents, central office staff, a parent leader, and SEL district team leads.

The responsibilities for the new SEL Steering Committee include the following:

- Provide input in the agendas for all DuPage Regional Office of Education SEL meetings.
- Work collaboratively to identify the needs of the districts.
- Review key materials prior to meetings (if necessary).
- Demonstrate a willingness to share in the work.
- Provide support to new SEL Network members.
- Provide input in the drafting of white papers to ISBE, or other organizations to share the work of DuPage County relative to SEL, when needed.

Our May 2020 SEL Network meeting focused on Supporting SEL in a COVID-19 World. The speakers included: Greg Wolcott Assistant Superintendent, Woodridge District 68; Dr. David Hill, Superintendent of Schools, Community Consolidated School District 93; Lisa Xagias,

DuPage, Cont.

Don't Forget These CASEL Resources

- [CASEL's COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [SEL Roadmap to Reopen Schools](#)
- [The District Resource Center](#)
- [The School Guide](#)
- [The Program Guides](#)
- [The SEL Assessment Guide](#)
- [State Guidance Documents](#)
- [Making the Case for SEL](#)



**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
Community Schools, Thriving Students

Lessons Learned...So Far...From our SEL Lead Learner Group

Sonny Kim, Coordinator, Office of Social and Emotional Learning

This school year, our first session of the SEL Lead Learner Group—school site-based SEL teacher leaders—did not begin in Room 101 of the Graduate School of Business at Mills College. It did not begin with the serving of delicious snacks, the buzz of teachers greeting one another, and slowly finding a place to settle in for our evening of SEL and teacher-led inquiry, as we have done so for the past seven years. We began our year together, remotely in a Zoom meeting. While the context has changed, and teachers are working under extremely challenging conditions, what continues to be true is a sense of community and a strong commitment to SEL for their students.

We have been working diligently to consider how to facilitate this group in a virtual learning environment with an emphasis on connection and care through multiple pathways for engagement. In order to give more than a head nod to the current circumstances, we are learning that the sessions need to be organized in ways that harness the strength of the community, and feel supportive but not overwhelming, while providing opportunities for thoughtful inquiry. We engage teachers through four main strategies: 1) Engage the physical self; 2) emphasize identity, community, and teacher expertise through storytelling; 3) Offer multiple ways to engage; and 4) Maintain and reframe toward assets.

Engage the physical self. In collaboration with [Breathe for Change](#), we begin our time together with movement and breathing. We engage in collective movement and breathing to acknowledge the stressors of the moment and to provide pause and invitation into our learning community.

Emphasize identity, community, and teacher expertise through storytelling. Elena Aguilar, in [Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators](#), comments about the power of storytelling: “Social storytelling can be a path toward building the resilience of a school

Oakland, Cont.

faculty, of staff across a district, and of a citizenry" (pg. 84). Throughout the year, we are intentionally building our learning arc with the use of storytelling as a strategy to engage us in inquiry while also creating a collective story of resilience reflective of our individual experiences. Some examples of weaving in storytelling are:

- Using ideas that come from the initials of your name, what is a story that connects to your work?
- What is a song that represents where you are right now? What songs comprise our collective playlist?
- What do you want to be true for your students at this moment? What stories help illustrate that?
- What is a story you would like to be true? A story of future impact, a visioning story, an aspirational story

Offer multiple ways to engage. We acknowledge that we are all in different living situations, and, for some of us, a dynamically fluid or uncertain situation. During our gatherings, we provide time for cameras to be on as well as time for cameras to be turned off, chat-box moments, whole-group sharing, quiet note-taking time, and small breakout groups.

Maintain and reframe toward assets. To reinforce an asset-based lens to ourselves and peers, our work, and our students, we structure language and activities that emphasize the assets and strengths we bring into and are using in the moment. We strive to avoid engaging in activities that are framed in or come from a place of deficit thinking. Here are some ways we maintain and reframe towards assets:

Remembering what we've learned/honoring what we know—We invite our lead learners to pause and think about what ways of knowing and lessons learned—from their personal lives—they can or have drawn upon for guidance or illumination during the pandemic. What personal, family, ancestral strengths am I drawing from and tapping into to help me cope? From a personal response, we then guide the lead learners to consider their well of pedagogical knowledge and experience that they have that can draw from and pull forward into the virtual learning classroom.

Leaning into inquiry and curiosity—It is certainly easy to name all the things that have not worked, and this is where we typically think about first. This is our negativity bias at play. So, we invite people to tell small stories that illustrate what steps they've taken to create a sense of belonging for students and from there to share what they are curious about or what they would like to do next. To build on what they have in place already.

Being together...Community is an asset—Even in a virtual environment, it is essential that we create a space for our lead learners to be together, listen to one another, and share what ideas and insights they are taking from each other. The creation of a shared experience and common goals deepens a sense of connection, care, and value that serves to buffer the isolation many of us are experiencing.



Returning to School Virtually and In Person; Summer Professional Learning; Adult SEL Self-Care

Kristen Rulison, Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) Manager

Students in Palm Beach County returned to school via distance learning on August 31. On September 21, campuses opened and parents were given the option to continue in a distance learning setting or return for face-to-face instruction. Currently, around 40 percent of students are back on campus while the remainder continue their schooling via distance learning.

FY 21 SDPBC SEL Guide for Elementary				
Week	Date	Competency	Theme (Character Trait)	Description
<i>First Month of School Focus: Who Are We As a Classroom Community? It is important that you take time to learn about your students' personal identity (gender identity, race, culture, etc.) and where they learn from each other. Part of this learning is to understand how to support each other. This is a great time to learn about SEL competencies and how they can be used in the classroom. If you want ideas or support with age-appropriate communication about culture, race, family or another general topic, click here for resources from Teaching Tolerance.</i>				
1	August 31st - September 4th	All competencies with a focus on building relationships	Building a Classroom Community & Establishing Routines	Throughout this week, focus on building a classroom community and establishing routines. This week is a great time to learn about your students' personal identity (gender identity, race, culture, etc.) and where they learn from each other. Part of this learning is to understand how to support each other. This is a great time to learn about SEL competencies and how they can be used in the classroom. If you want ideas or support with age-appropriate communication about culture, race, family or another general topic, click here for resources from Teaching Tolerance.
2	September 8th - 11th	Relationship Skills	Being Inclusive (Citizenship)	Getting to know and understand one another (Gender, race, culture, etc.) is a great way to start the school year. This week is a great time to learn about your students' personal identity (gender identity, race, culture, etc.) and where they learn from each other and work together. This week is a great time to learn about SEL competencies and how they can be used in the classroom. If you want ideas or support with age-appropriate communication about culture, race, family or another general topic, click here for resources from Teaching Tolerance.
<i>September 15th - October 19th: Hispanic Heritage Month; September 21st: International Day of Peace</i>				

3	September 14th - 18th	Social Awareness	Discovering Communities	We discussed things we have in common when we look at our similarities. We also discussed differences. Take time to learn about your students' personal identity (gender identity, race, culture, etc.) and where they learn from each other. This week is a great time to learn about SEL competencies and how they can be used in the classroom. If you want ideas or support with age-appropriate communication about culture, race, family or another general topic, click here for resources from Teaching Tolerance.
4	September 21st - 25th	Social Awareness	Being Respectful (Respect)	Being respectful means that you interact in a way that shows that you care about someone else's well-being and that you are considerate of their feelings and treat them kindly. This week is a great time to learn about SEL competencies and how they can be used in the classroom. If you want ideas or support with age-appropriate communication about culture, race, family or another general topic, click here for resources from Teaching Tolerance.
5	September 28th - October 2nd	Relationship Skills	Attentive Listening	One way to be respectful and inclusive of school is to be attentive. This week is a great time to learn about SEL competencies and how they can be used in the classroom. If you want ideas or support with age-appropriate communication about culture, race, family or another general topic, click here for resources from Teaching Tolerance.
<i>October: Diversity Awareness Month, LGBTQ History Month, & National Bullying Prevention Month; October 23rd: Lights on After School</i>				
6	October 5th - 9th	Social Awareness	Appreciating Diversity (Respect)	It is important to understand that each individual is unique and has different perspectives. Take time to learn about your students' personal identity (gender identity, race, culture, etc.) and where they learn from each other. This week is a great time to learn about SEL competencies and how they can be used in the classroom. If you want ideas or support with age-appropriate communication about culture, race, family or another general topic, click here for resources from Teaching Tolerance.
7	October 12th - 16th	Social Awareness	Respecting Differences (Respect)	Having empathy can help you understand when people have different perspectives than you or feel differently about things. This week is a great time to learn about your students' personal identity (gender identity, race, culture, etc.) and where they learn from each other. This week is a great time to learn about SEL competencies and how they can be used in the classroom. If you want ideas or support with age-appropriate communication about culture, race, family or another general topic, click here for resources from Teaching Tolerance.

professional learning, but the SEL team worked diligently to create K-12 SEL resources for schools to support systemic SEL. The team created a K-12 SEL Guide to provide common language to schools around SEL by providing week-by-week SEL themes related to the five SEL competencies. Additional resources created to support the SEL themes include weekly videos, SEL Morning Meeting lessons for elementary, and daily Welcoming Ritual prompts for secondary.

This October, the SEL Team is kicking off their Adult SEL Self-Care Series for the school year. The first two sessions are focused on stress management and self-compassion.

Throughout the summer, the SEL team offered a menu of options for virtual SEL PD so schools had choice based upon where they were in their SEL journey. These virtual PD sessions focused on Implementing the SDPBC SEL Guide and Signature Practices, SEL Morning Meeting, Utilizing SEL Best Practice for Classroom/Campus Climate and Culture, Best Practice for Explicit Instruction, Integration and Implementation of SEL in the Classroom, and Social and Emotional Learning Best Practice for Non-Instructional Staff.

Not only was the summer filled with

Morning Meeting

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 9, 2020

MORNING GREETING	SHARING	CLASS ACTIVITY
<u>Greetings From Around the World (Haitian-Creole):</u> Did you know that Haitian Creole is the official language in Haiti? (Click to see Map)	<u>Group Sharing Prompt:</u> A tradition is the handing down of a culture's beliefs and customs from parents to children over many years. It can also be something that your family does every year. What is a tradition that your family has?	<u>Literacy Integration Activity:</u> Leadership Video for Kids: What is Diversity
in Haitian Creole you say 'hello' by saying ' Bonsoir! ' if it is before noon and saying ' Bonsoir! ' if it is after noon. Let's try.	A tradition in my family is	<u>Discussion Questions:</u> What is the lesson or theme from this video? What details support that lesson or theme?
OPTIMISTIC CLOSURE		
I enjoyed learning more about your family's traditions. My family does some things differently from yours, isn't it great that there are so many different ways families can show they love each other? I hope you have a wonderful weekend.		



SEL Sets the Conditions for Anti-Racist Work

Mai Xi Lee, SEL Director

SEL opens the door to critical discourse on race and social justice in Sac City. In addition to training all school sites on SEL mini-lessons for distance learning, daily community builders, brain breaks, and how adults show up with Transformative SEL in mind, the SEL team has been working hard to keep racial and social justice at the forefront of how we do our work this year.

To that end, the team released two new Google sites to support/promote SEL and anti-racist work in Sac City: [Social Emotional Learning for Distance Learning and Beyond](#) and [The Anti-Racist Classroom](#). The [Social Emotional Learning for Distance Learning and Beyond](#) has curated resources to support students, families, and educators, with a specific focus on ensuring that we're approaching SEL from an anti-racist/anti-bias lens to maximize connectedness/belonging. The [Anti-Racist Classroom](#) is intended to be a space to for everyone in our community to learn, reflect, connect, and develop capacity for belonging. We acknowledge the journey toward racial and social justice is long, messy, and complex, and we're committed to starting the conversation using Transformative SEL as a guide to get uncomfortable—and move towards healing.



SEL Takes Central Role During 2020-21 School Year

Jill Merolla, Supervisor of Community Outreach and Grant Development

The 2020 school year is definitely like no other, and the Warren City Schools has prepared systems of care to ensure our students and staff have the resources needed to provide the best education possible for our Warren community. The district is providing three pathways to learning the hybrid: two days a week for two cohorts, senior class hybrid schedules, and the full time remote program. With each pathway, social-emotional support is academically embedded and intentionally taught through our three SEL programs, 4 R's: Reading, Writing, Respect, and Resolution (PK-5), Second Step (6-8), School Connects for High School (9th/12th) along with the weekly SEL Raider Days for 9th-12th grade.

During this most unusual year, SEL has taken a more central role with daily (instead of weekly) SEL lessons for both hybrid and on-line students, plus weekly family engagement activities. Our school counselors have been supporting staff in planning these lessons, providing additional resources, and more intentionally tying guidance lessons to specific SEL needs as they arise. Building school counselors at the PK-8 buildings are also providing monthly newsletters with

Warren City, Cont.

online SEL resources and local mental health support to further meet the needs of both our students and their families.

To further meet the social-emotional needs of our students, the district has successfully provided safe avenues for students to participate in fall sports (soccer, football, volleyball) for both males and females, and have found ways for our marching band program to continue our proud Warren musical tradition. As we move into this year, academic/recreational afterschool programming for 6th-12th grade students will begin online with extra-curricular programs such as Girl Power, Men of Distinction, and Virtual Prep Bowl.

In an effort to reach the “whole child” and their family, Warren City Schools is collaborating with our regional arts community through our partnership with the Kennedy Center Any Given Child Initiative. Through this we are developing online opportunities such as “A Night at the Opera,” Ghost Walk, tales of Northeast Ohio, and taped performances from our local university, Youngstown State. These arts experiences allow us to capitalize on community partnerships while providing diverse arts experiences for students.