



## **Informational Memo: January 17, 2020 Institute Day**

TO: School Board  
Dr. Trisha Kocanda, *Superintendent*

FROM: Kelly Tess  
*Assistant Superintendent, Professional Learning & Human Resources*

January 28, 2020

### **Overview**

In a continued effort to further our District Goal of a commitment to adult Social Emotional Wellness and Education, this winter's Institute Day remained dedicated to the theme of Social Emotional Learning; specifically, CASEL's final three competencies: Social Awareness, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision Making.

The day was balanced between Committee work, building initiatives and social-emotional learning. As was the format in the fall, this January's Institute morning followed the format where committees were able to meet for two hours, followed by an hour of work specific to building and team efforts.

Following lunch, the entire District staff came together in Washburne's Little Theater for a 90 minute presentation provided by Second City Works. This arm of the well-known improv company regularly provides professional development for businesses across the country. Most recently, Second City Works provided a similar Institute Day experience for the staff at New Trier, also focused on SEL for adults. Over the course of the presentation, the presenters balanced laughter with discussion about the nuances of effective communication, awareness of others, your personal impact on a conversation or environment, and how to assess and address the functionality of a team as it relates to social interaction and communication. These elements all related directly to the CASEL competencies, as well as the ways in which our social-emotional wellness can impact the ways in which we are able to effectively interact with others.

Building Level reflection followed the presentation, allowing staff time to discuss current SEL work happening in their individual environments, as well as reflect on the topics Second City Works invited us all to reflect upon.

Feedback was collected from the staff following the day's work and presentation.

- 97% of respondents indicated that the presentation either aligned with their own/district professional development goals and/or engaged the audience at a level that promoted reflection, discovery and analysis.
- 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (70% of respondents *strongly agreed*) that the presentation's themes had an impact on their social and emotional growth or will have on student social and emotional growth.

Feedback will continue to be gathered from participants following all professional learning opportunities this year to gauge the relevance and impact of the instruction/training offered, as well as provide insights into how to best plan for next year as we continue our commitment to SEL.