



## GUIDE TO SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

As a universal best practice, all students should engage in social and emotional learning (SEL) skill building opportunities across the curriculum and across grade levels. To do so, school leaders and teams guiding behavioral health initiatives must decide:

- What program and/or skills will be taught based on local need
- How students' skills will be integrated across the curriculum and throughout the school -- "Integration occurs when problem-solving skills are applied not only to social situations, but to academics, such as literature and social studies, and to the discipline system in the form of problem-solving worksheets to help students think through rule infractions and plan better ways to handle troubling situations when they occur in the future." (Kress and Elias, 2006, p. 599)<sup>1</sup>
- How and when teachers will be trained on implementing SEL across the curriculum
- How data will be used to gauge the effectiveness of school-wide SEL opportunities

**"SEL instruction involves teaching, modeling, coaching and providing students with opportunities to develop, apply, and generalize skills and knowledge."  
(Dr. Cantor, 2013)**

### THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS STANDARDS

The Colorado Department of Education, as part of the Colorado Academic Standards, now has Emotional and Social Wellness (ESW) Standards embedded in the Comprehensive Health and PE Standards. The unit samples developed for these standards are very useful for guiding how SEL can be integrated throughout classes and across curriculum. For a brief overview of the standards visit [http://colegacy.org/news/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/BriefOverview\\_ColoradoEmotionalSocialWellnessStandards.pdf](http://colegacy.org/news/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/BriefOverview_ColoradoEmotionalSocialWellnessStandards.pdf).

For a complete guide to the Comprehensive Health and PE Standards visit [http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cohealthpe/documents/health\\_pe\\_standards\\_adopted\\_12.10.09.pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cohealthpe/documents/health_pe_standards_adopted_12.10.09.pdf).

- On page 11 of the Comprehensive Health and PE Standards guide, the graduate competencies for social and emotional health include that all students should master 1) The ability to utilize knowledge and skills to enhance mental, emotional, and social well-being and 2) The ability to exhibit responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.
- On pages 70 through 89, unit samples are available for implementing the ESW Standards for preK-12th grade students.

<sup>1</sup> Kress, J. and Elias, M. (2006). School-based social and emotional learning programs. Handbook of Child Psychology 6(4), Child Psychology in Practice.

## BUILDING BRIDGES IN MESA COUNTY

The largest project that resulted from the work of Building Bridges for Children’s Mental Health in Mesa County is a Social/Emotional Standards rubric outlining the expected measureable behaviors a child might exhibit at certain stages of development. This document helps school and community agency staff as well as parents and teachers “talk the same language” and understand social and emotional stages in a student’s development. This document was developed from the national Counseling Standards and cross walked with the State’s ESW Standards. The rubrics can be found in the accompanying tools and resources section.

In addition to the Colorado ESW Standards, many research or evidence-based SEL programs exist.

### RESEARCH- AND EVIDENCE-BASED SEL OPPORTUNITIES

**CASEL**, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, has a 2013 guide for effective SEL programs. While this guide heavily focuses on pre-K and K-8, there are some K-12 programs included. Visit <http://casel.org/guide/> to learn more.

**Edutopia** has a wealth of information regarding SEL skill building. The following link has a list of some of the evidence-based SEL programs: <http://www.edutopia.org/sel-research-evidence-based-programs>.

**Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility** educates young people for hopeful and intelligent engagement with their world. Morningside Center has information about evidence-based SEL programs along with classroom lessons to promote SEL skill building. Visit <http://www.morningsidecenter.org/> to learn more.

**Rutgers Social and Emotional Learning Laboratory** conducts action research regarding SEL. To learn more, visit <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~melias/>.

**Smart-Girl** is a Colorado-based and research-based prevention and enrichment program to develop the SEL skills in girls in grades 6-9. Learn more at <http://www.smart-girl.org/>.

While these resources are a great place to start, they are not comprehensive. There are many other organizations devoted to research- and evidence-based SEL opportunities. In addition, the Colorado Legacy Foundation promotes practice-based work in schools. These practices are created within a district or school, based on local need, and show positive results. As part of the school climate work at CLF, schools are finding positive results when implementing SEL practice-based work. To learn more, visit <http://colegacy.org/resource/transforming-school-climate/>.