

M7-S7: Schoolwide Social Emotional Learning

CLH	<p>Hello, Gina and hello, listeners! Welcome to Session 7 in Module 7 of the TALE Academy, Schoolwide Social Emotional Learning.</p> <p>The following conversation was observed by Director of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Lisa DiGaudio during an oversight visit of a classroom at New Dawn Charter High School in Brooklyn, NY. This conversation occurred in the first two weeks after schools switched to emergency remote teaching due to COVID-19. Take it away, Gina.</p>
GK	<p>The teacher stated: Today we are going to go over political parties and how they impact the three branches of government. Let's watch this video and see where political parties came from.</p> <p>In the background, a student on camera is pacing back and forth, nervously.</p> <p>The teacher asked: Hey J---, I noticed you're moving around a lot – are you ok? Do you want to talk to me on chat?</p> <p>The student responded: No, Miss, I was just supposed to have dinner with my neighbor yesterday, but he died. I was supposed to see him.</p>
CLH	<p>That's so tough. From April 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, data suggest that more than 140,000 children under the age of 18 in the United States lost a parent, custodial grandparent, or grandparent caregiver who provided the child's home and basic needs, including love, security, and daily care.</p> <p>Approximately 1 out of 500 children in the United States has experienced COVID-19-associated orphanhood or death of a grandparent caregiver. There were racial, ethnic, and geographic disparities in COVID-19-associated deaths of caregivers: children of racial and ethnic minorities accounted for 65% of those who lost a primary caregiver due to the pandemic.</p>
GK	<p>In fact, no member of the school community has gone untouched by the pandemic. Whether losing loved ones or losing one's sense of community connection during quarantines, students, teachers, families, and educational leaders have endured significant losses. At the same time, we have all experienced unprecedented changes, including the way we teach and learn.</p>
CLH	<p>Through the pandemic, the need for and the value of social emotional learning, known as SEL, and support became clear to most educators. A fall 2022 survey conducted by the EdWeek Research Center found that out of 824 educators:</p>

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	<p>86% place “some” or “a lot” of emphasis on SEL and 83% report SEL having a positive impact on students. In the survey only 3% reported a negative impact on students, and the rest reported a neutral impact.</p> <p>And yet, nearly two-thirds of surveyed educators said that weaving SEL skills into academic subjects is challenging.</p>
GK	<p>And I’ll bet our listeners can guess why. EducationWeek researchers asked teachers: When it comes to teaching social emotional learning, what MAJOR challenges do you or the teachers in your district or school face right now? Here’s how teachers responded.</p> <p>46% said helping students catch up academically leaves limited bandwidth for SEL.</p> <p>37% indicated insufficient professional development.</p> <p>34% reported students’ social emotional needs are beyond the scope of our ability.</p> <p>30% said the emphasis on standardized-exams prep leaves limited time for SEL, and 29% said they experienced difficulty integrating SEL into other subject matter.</p> <p>According to EducationWeek, some educators cite their own weariness resulting from the demands placed on teachers these days. This burnout makes them feel ill-equipped to help students cope with stress.</p>
CLH	<p>That is why In this session, we look at how school leaders can address these barriers to SEL implementation. Specifically, we explore strategies that school leaders can use to advance SEL throughout their schools and across learning environments.</p>
GK	<p>Let’s recap where your teachers have been. In Module 6, we explored the implementation of SEL across learning environments. We began by exploring the SEL model created by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, referred to as CASEL.</p> <p>The CASEL 5 model, depicted in the CASEL Wheel shown on your screen, includes five areas of SEL competence that can be taught from preschool to adulthood: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.</p>
CLH	<p>Districts, schools, and states have used the CASEL 5 to establish standards that “articulate what students should know and be able to do for academic success, school and civic engagement, health and wellness, and fulfilling careers.”</p> <p>In Module 6, we also established a shared understanding of what high-quality SEL looks like by aligning the three New York State Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks with the five areas of SEL competence identified by CASEL.</p>

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	We also spent time developing a cross-walk between CASEL 5 and NYSED SEL Benchmark Goals.
GK	CASEL's first two competencies of self-awareness and self-management relate to the first goal of the NYSED SEL Benchmark: Young people develop a self-awareness that nurtures and affirms a strong sense of identity, informs decisions about their actions, and builds a sense of agency.
CLH	CASEL's third and fourth competencies of social awareness and relationship skills align with the second goal of the NYSED SEL Benchmark: Young people use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish, navigate, and maintain mutually supportive relationships with individuals and groups that nurture a strong sense of belonging.
GK	The fifth CASEL competency of responsible decision-making aligns with the third goal of the NYSED SEL Benchmark: Young people demonstrate intentional decision-making skills and behaviors that consider social, emotional, and physical safety and well-being in personal, school, and community contexts.
CLH	<p>Once we aligned the CASEL 5 with NYSED's SEL goals, we explored strategies for integrating SEL in day-to-day instruction across the three components of SEL in the classroom, whether physical or virtual. Those three components of SEL implementation are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Creating a supportive classroom climate and safe community for your students is the starting point for our SEL journey, 2) Integrating SEL into academic instruction gives students opportunities to practice SEL competencies, such as relationship skills, <u>during</u> academic activities, and 3) Explicitly providing SEL instruction is how we offer age-appropriate and culturally responsive content related to the SEL competencies.
GK	<p>In the rest of Module 6, we explored how to implement SEL practices that align with the three components and are portable across the learning environments of in-person, remote, and hybrid. We focused on several high-impact SEL practices for the classroom, including community-building circles, strategies for developing self-awareness and self-direction, and age-appropriate decision-making.</p> <p>We also looked at how teachers can integrate SEL with culturally responsive and sustaining educational practices, such as those explored in Module 2. Finally, we explored how SEL along with civic learning can help students become conscientious digital citizens and improve their overall academic performance. Before we left the module, we turned back to look at how teachers can implement self-care and model SEL for our students.</p>

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CLH	<p>Now let's look at social emotional learning from the school leader perspective.</p> <p>As we discussed in the opening of this session, those who are closest to the students – our teachers – agree about the need for a schoolwide SEL culture. However, they find it difficult to actually implement SEL as an integrated, schoolwide program. Educator Paige Puryear remarked on this paradox via a LinkedIn discussion of the EdWeek survey data: “The problem is time. Many teachers are struggling to find time to fit it in around the pressure of academics and scheduling issues. They WANT to teach it, but evaluations are not about SEL, they ARE about academics. It's a messed up, broken system, and mental health is now impacting staff who have been holding on through the pandemic.”</p>
GK	<p>On top of these issues and barriers, there is a mindset issue related to SEL implementation that hinders progress as well: many educators report that SEL is an “add-on” to their existing educational program and is “one more thing” that they have to do on top of instruction. Let's look at an example of this in action.</p>
CLH	<p>In the middle of the pandemic, one school leader at a Queens, New York charter school received a harried phone call at 11:30 pm. A student had just been tossed out of their home, and there was no place for them to go because everything was shut down. Shelters were not accepting anyone that wasn't already in place. After many phone calls and text messages, the student was eventually put into an Uber and placed with a friend that was willing to take them in for the time being. In this situation, the school leader had direct access to communicate with stakeholders and support agencies, and the student was willing and able to reach out to ask for help.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the conditions for success in this scenario are not the norm. Most school leaders don't have such extensive direct access available to them in the middle of the night. And most students are unwilling, unable, or don't know how to ask for help in moments of crisis.</p>
GK	<p>Challenging situations happen every single day, COVID or not. We cannot rely on exceptional school leaders, teachers, or students. Instead, we need to establish a schoolwide culture that supports SEL so that when any member of the school community is in need, they can access support.</p> <p>CASEL proposes a solution to these issues: schoolwide SEL, which they define as SEL that engages the entire school community in creating caring, motivating, and equitable learning environments that promote social, emotional, and academic growth.</p>
CLH	<p>Schoolwide SEL can take 3 to 5 years to fully implement, and CASEL provides a list of 10 indicators of schoolwide SEL by which schools can monitor their progress.</p>
GK	<p>Okay, seriously– 10?</p>

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CLH	<p>The first indicator is explicit SEL instruction.</p> <p>According to this indicator, students have consistent opportunities to cultivate, practice, and reflect on social and emotional competencies in ways that are developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive.</p> <p>The second indicator is SEL integrated with academic instruction.</p> <p>This means SEL objectives are integrated into instructional content and teaching strategies for academics, as well as music, art, and physical education.</p> <p>The third indicator is youth voice and engagement.</p> <p>In this indicator, staff honor and elevate a broad range of student perspectives and experiences by engaging students as leaders, problem solvers, and decision-makers.</p> <p>The fourth indicator is supportive school and classroom climates.</p> <p>This means schoolwide and classroom learning environments are supportive, culturally responsive, and focused on building relationships and community.</p> <p>The fifth indicator is focus on adult SEL.</p> <p>Here, staff have regular opportunities to cultivate their own social, emotional, and cultural competence, collaborate with one another, build trusting relationships, and maintain a strong community.</p> <p>The sixth indicator is supportive discipline.</p> <p>This means discipline policies and practices are instructive, restorative, developmentally appropriate, and equitably applied.</p> <p>The seventh indicator is a continuum of integrated supports.</p> <p>This means SEL is seamlessly integrated into a continuum of academic and behavioral supports, which are available to ensure that all student needs are met.</p> <p>The eighth indicator is authentic family partnerships.</p> <p>By this indicator, families and school staff have regular and meaningful opportunities to build relationships and collaborate to support students' social, emotional, and academic development.</p> <p>The ninth indicator is aligned community partnerships.</p> <p>This means school staff and community partners align on common language, strategies, and communication around all SEL-related efforts and initiatives, including out-of-school time.</p> <p>The tenth and final indicator of schoolwide SEL is systems for continuous</p>
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	<p>improvement.</p> <p>This means implementation and outcome data are collected and used to continuously improve all SEL-related systems, practices, and policies with a focus on equity.</p>
GK	<p>The SEL schoolwide indicators are a great way to help school leaders and communities establish a vision for schoolwide SEL, particularly if they currently have nothing in place.</p> <p>But what can a school leader do immediately to start building an SEL culture within their school and across learning environments?</p>
CLH	<p>One answer is modeling. Modeling by school leaders helps create a positive school environment that can support staff in building SEL skills and mindsets. Principals can “lead from the center” by embodying SEL in their daily interactions.</p> <p>The “prosocial school leader” model emphasizes that the principal’s own social emotional competencies and well-being are an integral driver in establishing a schoolwide culture supportive of SEL.</p> <p>A principal’s social emotional competencies and well-being connect to effective leadership, healthy relationships, effective family and community partnerships, and effective SEL implementation. This leads to healthy school environments that ultimately produce positive social emotional and academic outcomes.</p>
GK	<p>CASEL has a resource available on its website that can help get things started. Modeling is an important function of implementation, and principals and other school leaders can begin with very simple activities that will get the ball rolling in their buildings.</p> <p>Let’s wrap up this session by looking at eight ways school leaders can model SEL competencies across learning environments.</p>
CLH	<p>Eight ways? Seriously?</p>
GK	<p>Moving right along. Our first leader behavior for modeling SEL is check-ins. This aligns with the CASEL competencies of social awareness and relationship skills and the second NYSED SEL Benchmark.</p> <p>What does this look like in person? Before any meeting begins – group or individual – start with small talk. Follow up if you heard about something discussed earlier in the week or day. Ask people how they are doing before jumping into the task or agenda at hand.</p> <p>What does this look like in a remote or asynchronous environment? As with in-person meetings, informal protocols and rituals can set the tone for a meeting, such as a team connector or a general “thermometer” of the room before getting down to the</p>

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	agenda. “What is the Zoom threshold level today for you all?” or “What was your favorite online interaction today?”
CLH	Now let’s also consider what a <i>teacher</i> can then do to mirror this behavior for students. Standing at the door is a gold mine of information, whether meeting with students or family members. You learn so much just by seeing someone’s face and body language and just asking them how it’s going. In the online forum, doing a simple Kahoot! “How are you feeling today?” can elicit numerous responses from students and families before beginning a meeting or a lesson online.
GK	<p>Our second leader behavior is a check-in calendar. This aligns with the CASEL competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, and the second and third NYSED SEL Benchmarks.</p> <p>What does this look like in person? This is not a formal meeting. Rather, this is a personal reminder to get out of the office and walk over to the staff and ask them how they are doing. No academic or behavioral feedback, just checking in and seeing how the day is going. Similar check-ins with different parents, even just a phone call, goes a long way to show that you care.</p> <p>What does this look like in a remote or asynchronous environment? The same schedule can be followed. A simple text or email that is not work-related goes a long way to model social emotional competencies.</p>
CLH	What can a teacher do to mirror this behavior? Teachers can do the same things with their students and families. A simple schedule that ensures that everyone is touched at some point during the week shows that you care about everyone’s well-being beyond what happens in the classroom.
GK	<p>The third leader behavior is a staff meeting agenda. This aligns with the CASEL competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, and the second and third NYSED SEL Benchmarks.</p> <p>What does this look like in person? Start a staff meeting with small talk or a team connector question that does not require people to get up or do something uncomfortable. Provide agendas ahead of time so that teachers know that there is transparency and no surprises coming. Establish clear plans if something serious is coming up in order to put people’s fears and anxieties at ease. It will help create a sense that you’re all “in it together.”</p> <p>What does this look like in a remote or asynchronous environment? The way Teams or Zoom are set up, agendas and plans can also be shared well ahead of time. Meetings should begin with the same thing. Online gives more opportunities – such as asking everyone to come to the meeting wearing something silly or telling people to wear their favorite pajamas or to come with the biggest mug they have in the house</p>

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	– something that connects everyone and builds camaraderie before getting to an agenda.
CLH	Teachers can easily mirror these behaviors with their students. When a leader provides a meeting structure that is designed to provide opening ideas, teaching moves, and community-building for the classroom, it provides staff the opportunity to discern what works for them in an organic way. This makes it easy for teachers to translate the practices across learning environments with their students and families.
GK	<p>The next leader behavior that sets the tone for schoolwide SEL is verbal appreciation. This aligns with the CASEL competencies of self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, and all three NYSED SEL Benchmarks.</p> <p>What does this look like in person? Kindness goes a long way. Understanding that most of the time “it’s not about you” is actually true makes it easier to develop kindness and support for your staff. Teamwork is essential and showing appreciation for that team builds community and encourages people to become connected.</p> <p>What does this look like in a remote or asynchronous environment? Simple virtual communications, shout outs during meetings on Zoom, text messages, even a simple email, will always make someone feel special.</p>
CLH	What can a teacher do to mirror this behavior? This is an easy behavior to replicate. When a teacher calls home and tells a family member or parent something positive, the world is a wonderful place. This can be done in person and virtually.
GK	<p>The next leader behavior is simply be visible. This aligns with the CASEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, and responsible decision-making, and the first and third NYSED SEL Benchmarks.</p> <p>What does this look like in person? Get out of your office. Walk around. Talk to people and do not focus on work talk. Dive in if someone needs assistance. Being hands on also shows that you are willing to be a part of the team - not above it.</p>
CLH	<p>What does this look like in a remote or asynchronous environment? This can also be replicated in virtual sessions. Pop into a Zoom and be a student. Help with maneuvering different breakout groups in a classroom. Keep it friendly and non-evaluative.</p> <p>What can a teacher do to mirror this behavior? Teachers can also be visible beyond their classrooms in each setting. Just doing a building walk and saying hello to students in their specials or at lunch builds community.</p>

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	<p>Now let's look at the practice of identifying positive practices and events. This aligns with the CASEL competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, and the second and third NYSED SEL Benchmarks.</p> <p>What does this look like in person? Pointing out exemplars is a great way to build camaraderie and culture. Every teacher has a strong suit, and noticing that strength and identifying them as a "resident expert" not only builds their personal capacity, it signals to staff that you are watching and you appreciate their hard work.</p> <p>What does this look like in a remote or asynchronous environment? The same behaviors can be replicated in a virtual setting. Create a folder of experts- best practices where other staff find resources to build upon. This is vital to teacher life and builds creativity and expression.</p>
GK	<p>What can a teacher do to mirror this behavior? Teachers can easily replicate this during group work - stopping students from working to recognize an exemplar or a different way of thinking is quite empowering to the community.</p>
CLH	<p>The next leader behavior is to listen. This aligns with the CASEL competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, and the second and third NYSED SEL Benchmarks.</p> <p>What does this look like in person? At the end of the day, everyone, from the students to the parents to the school leader, wants to be heard and seen. Listening to someone - informally or formally - lets your staff know that you hear them and see them. Coming back to earlier comments from other meetings also demonstrates that what was said is of importance and valued.</p> <p>What does this look like in a remote or asynchronous environment? The easiest way to show someone that you are listening to them in a virtual environment is to be present. Do not answer an email or look at a text during a Zoom. Restate and respond, and follow up. The same behaviors can be followed online or on the phone as in person. Limit the distractions and pay close attention.</p>
GK	<p>What can a teacher do to mirror this behavior? Teachers can also replicate these same behaviors. Limiting distractions and ensuring that everyone is present is an important behavior to model for students as they grow into adulthood.</p>
CLH	<p>The last leader behavior we're going to look at to model SEL is to acknowledge birthdays, holidays, and important staff events. This aligns with the CASEL competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, and the second and third NYSED SEL Benchmarks.</p> <p>What does this look like in person? The school is a vibrant community that should feel like family. Celebrating milestones, birthdays, and other important events brings the team together.</p>

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	<p>What does this look like in a remote or asynchronous environment? Virtual events can also be held to celebrate these milestones. Bringing people together to celebrate, even in the virtual world, acknowledges that the team members have full lives and families and what happens to them is important to the community at large.</p>
GK	<p>What can a teacher do to mirror this behavior? Teachers can also replicate this in the classroom by recognizing students and their accomplishments. Birthdays and other events are easily identifiable and can be implemented with ease.</p>
CLH	<p>Now it's your turn! Basic interventions across learning environments can either restart the SEL community or begin to cultivate the SEL community in earnest. In your workbook, you can reflect on your school's SEL programs across the categories of classroom, school, family, and community using CASEL's Indicators of Schoolwide SEL.</p> <p>The goal of the TALE Academy is to help teachers rethink education so that everyone—students, families, educators, school leaders, and communities—all have the opportunity to succeed. You've just added another tool to your toolbox when you encourage school wide social emotional learning.</p> <p>Thanks for listening!</p>