

11.31 Social Emotional Learning and Student Success

Resolution passed 2020; amended 2023

Whereas, Washington state has adopted Social Emotional Learning (SEL) standards, and SEL is broadly understood as a process through which individuals build awareness and skills in managing emotions, set goals, establish relationships, and make responsible decisions that support success in school and in life; and

Whereas, the relationship between positive school climates and social and emotional learning is interactive and reciprocally beneficial and creates the conditions for safety, respect, engagement, and relational trust at school and in school policies (including disciplinary policies), norms, physical environment, and partnerships with families and the community; and

Whereas, Washington state SEL guidelines affirm the following essential elements:

- Supportive Conditions - Create the conditions to support student SEL, maintain a positive school climate and culture, and infuse SEL into school policies and practices inside and outside of the classroom
- Collaboration - Work with the full school community from the outset of planning, through implementation and review; include families, students, youth-serving organizations, educators, and professionals who play critical roles in the life of a school (e.g., school counselors, social workers, and psychologists)
- Adult Capacity - Build capacity and readiness to engage social emotional skills to support and relate with all students, to identify and counter bias, and to create learning environments in which students feel safe enough to stretch their learning; and

Whereas, Washington state SEL is shaped by a commitment to the following four guiding principles:

- Equity: Each child receives what they need to develop their potential
- Culturally responsive: Culture is viewed as a resource for learning, not a barrier
- Universal design: Learning differences are planned for and accommodated
- Trauma-informed: Knowledge of the effects of trauma is integrated into policy and practice; and

Whereas, SEL competencies are necessary for success in academic learning and are associated with increased academic achievement, higher income, better health, and social engagement; and

Whereas, as social and emotional competencies develop, indicators of various health and student success have been shown to improve, such as:

- An increase in regular student attendance and academic achievement
- A decrease in overall behavior referrals in schools
- An increase in student resilience
- An increase in teacher/educator well-being and job satisfaction
- A workforce that meets the needs of employers.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for state and federal funding for full school district implementation of Washington SEL standards and curricula in schools that are:

- Trauma-informed and healing centered
- Culturally responsive
- Incorporates the principles of equity and universal design; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils will advocate for legislation, policies, and school district initiatives that facilitate collaboration between educators, students, families, and community members at every stage of SEL implementation and ensure that the voice, cultural background, and assets of all stakeholders are recognized and valued; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils will advocate for legislation, policies, and school district initiatives that build adult capacity to develop their own and their students' SEL competencies through teacher preparation programs, in-service teacher and administrator preparation and professional development, family and community engagement, as well as the capacity to implement school-wide SEL in an evidence-based cycle of continuous improvement; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils will advocate for legislation, policies, and school district initiatives that prioritize funding to ensure staffing levels that meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of all students, including but not limited to: psychologists, counselors, family and community engagement coordinators, social workers, speech-language pathologist, behavior specialists, and nurses.