

Learning for a Lifetime

Utilizing Social and Emotional Learning to Improve Student Outcomes

About the documentary

Social emotional learning (SEL) skill-building practices have traditionally focused on early childhood and elementary school students; however, students in middle school and high school still have a lot to gain from the integration of SEL practices into their education. Teachers and school leaders can create school climates that support students in developing the skills and mindsets that help them manage challenges that they encounter as teens and preteens.¹ To shed light on research-based strategies for providing SEL practices to high-school-aged students, Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest created a 30-minute documentary in collaboration with Twin Cities Public Television (TPT). This documentary is part of the [REL Midwest Career Readiness Research Alliance](#), which is dedicated to increasing educators' capacity to access, conduct, and make sense of early career readiness research and to support the use of this research in decisionmaking at the state and local levels.

The documentary focuses on the ways that schools and districts can implement SEL and discusses the fundamental concepts of SEL and illustrates strategies related to the five core SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decisionmaking.² Researchers Jessica Newman, American Institutes for Research, and Michael Rodriguez, PhD, University of Minnesota, discuss evidence-based practices that teachers, counselors, and student support staff can use to develop high-quality SEL programs that support students in setting positive goals, developing relationships, and making responsible decisions. The documentary also features real-life examples of how SEL is integrated into everyday interactions between high school students and their teachers in three unique educational settings in Minnesota: Paladin Career and Technical High School, Richfield College Experience Program, and Red Lake Senior High School.

Intended audience

REL Midwest created this documentary as a tool for individuals and organizations in Minnesota involved in supporting the development of SEL competencies, including program staff, state and local education agency representatives, school leaders, teachers, community members, community-based organizations, and policymakers. The documentary focuses on examples from Minnesota, but the information and evidence shared in the program offer important learnings for people and groups based around the country. REL Midwest hopes viewers will watch the program and use the following questions as a starting point for a discussion of how educators can use evidence-based practices to develop high-quality SEL programs that support students in setting positive goals, developing relationships, and making responsible decisions.

It's important to acknowledge that social and emotional learning and academic learning coexist.

– Dr. Michael Rodriguez, Associate Dean,
University of Minnesota



Scan the QR code to
watch the documentary.

1 Yeager, D. S. (2017). Social and emotional learning programs for adolescents. *The Future of Children*, 27(1), 73–94. Retrieved September 24, 2020, from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/FOC-Spring-Vol27-No1-Compiled-Future-of-Children-spring-2017.pdf>

2 Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (n.d.). *Core SEL competencies*. Retrieved September 24, 2020, from <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

? Discussion questions

- What were the strategies that teachers and school leaders utilized to incorporate the five SEL competencies into their practice? How would you apply these practices in your school context?
 - Self-awareness.
 - Self-management.
 - Social awareness.
 - Relationship skills.
 - Responsible decisionmaking.
- How have you seen schools and teachers support students' in developing the five core SEL competencies in your local high schools? What approaches highlighted in the documentary might be added as part of your school's effort to create high-quality SEL programming?
- How is teaching the SEL core competencies different for adolescents than for younger students? How is it the same?
- What challenges do you see in supporting high school students' SEL? What are possible ways to overcome these challenges?
- How do SEL practices align with the goals of a school or district? What can you do to encourage the integration of SEL into school and district planning?



Social and emotional learning, in any form, can be something that you can take with you all through your life. If you know who you are...you can't go wrong with that.

– Jade Dockendorf, Teacher,
Red Lake Senior High School

About REL Midwest

REL Midwest is part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. REL Midwest works in partnership with practitioners in seven Midwest states to conduct applied research and provide training, coaching, and technical support to create a more evidence-based education system. To learn more, visit the [REL Midwest website](#) and follow [@RELMidwest on Twitter](#).