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STRONG PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT STUDENT SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING



PREPARED BY

SEL4NJ SCHOOL PROVIDER AND QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION
WORKGROUP (SPQI) WITH SUPPORT FROM NEWARK TRUST
FOR EDUCATION (NTE)



WHO WE ARE



The mission of SEL4NJ is to continuously build a network of organizations and individuals in New Jersey that are committed to the importance of developing students' social and emotional competencies, and through this collaboration, promote a systematic and intentional integration of SEL, as broadly defined, in schools and other organizations, including before and after school programming.



The Trust is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to coordinating efforts and focusing resources to improve the quality of public education for all Newark children and establish an accountability framework among multiple stakeholders.

SPQI WORK GROUP

The SPQI workgroup is a collaboration of ten high-impact education- and health- focused organizations across the state of New Jersey, under the umbrella of SEL4NJ, and facilitated by NTE, working to expand understanding of SEL implementation needs, challenges, opportunities and best practices regarding school-provider partnerships in New Jersey in order to inform stakeholders across the state.

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Introduction

This report presents learnings from a project conducted by the SEL4NJ School Provider and Quality Implementation (SPQI) work group, a collective of ten public and non-profit organizations in New Jersey working to expand understanding of social emotional learning (SEL) implementation needs, challenges, opportunities, and best practices regarding school-provider partnerships.

The project was launched in partnership with the Newark Trust for Education (NTE) in July 2022 to inform the development of a set of benchmarks and indicators for effective collaborations between SEL program providers and schools. This report describes the first phase of this work, which includes a series of roundtable discussions, a literature scan, and a statewide exploratory survey.

Our focus emerged out of observations made by SEL4NJ and NTE partners who routinely expressed concern about gaps in the way schools and districts utilize external partnerships to enhance schoolwide SEL efforts. Key issues included lack of coordination, integration, and alignment between SEL providers in schools and across the tiers of support within a school/district.

The SPQI work group consisted of SEL leaders, professionals, practitioners, and researchers working across projects from universal to fully embedded direct service SEL supports in schools. The process of the work group was designed to continually draw on the expertise of its members through discussion, narrow areas of focus through the creation of a survey to explore additional perspectives and reflect on data as a group.

The implementation of a statewide survey presented challenges to obtaining a representative sample. Yet, it yielded a total of

68 responses from a variety of stakeholder groups, including 28 school staff, 8 providers, 13 district administrators, and 19 parent caregivers. A total of 10 districts were represented in this sample, mostly from Northern New Jersey.

The result of this work includes some initial recommendations on the domains and focus areas for a set of more detailed guidelines. It also reviews broader areas of investigation that would help stakeholders align on key concepts and components of high-quality implementation to establish the foundation for improved collaboration.

We highlight the need for more awareness of SEL implementation best practices on the part of schools, providers, and funders including:

- Processes to establish school readiness, buy-in, and ownership.
- SEL program embeddedness and integration; and
- Culturally relevant practices in the context of program delivery.

In addition, we dive deeper into three practices in partnership development for schools and program providers, including:

1. Early and frequent alignment on goals, outcomes, and strategies.
2. Consistent and structured opportunities for two-way communication with key stakeholders including school staff, students, and families.
3. Tools and processes to assess need and measure effectiveness.

Each of the above areas are critical to ensuring that providers' work is ultimately integrated within schoolwide systems such as tiered SEL supports. We hope that this report will result in more targeted efforts to define high-quality partnerships that will help schools and

providers create relationships that lead to clear results for students.

Background and Need

Increasing Demand for SEL Programs

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a critical component of a child’s learning and development. Decades of research on SEL has demonstrated positive effects on students’ short and long-term academic and life outcomes. According to SEL4NJ, SEL includes character education, positive youth development, whole child/whole school approaches, efforts to create positive school climate and culture, and the promotion of mental and physical health, among other approaches.

National research has shown that the inclusion of SEL into public education is supported by educators, principals, parents, young people and employers.¹ Local explorations also support this trend. In a recent survey of 65 Newark-based caregivers, the Newark Trust for Education reported that 97% of respondents expressed an interest in SEL workshops and programs for adults and children.²

Over the past several years, SEL programs have been in high demand across the country. In a report released by the Rand institute, teachers and principals indicated that the use of a formal SEL program or curricula rose by 25 percent or more from spring 2018 to fall 2021.³ Other reports indicate that SEL-related spending in districts across the country grew by approximately 45 percent between November 2019 and April 2021.⁴

In March 2023 New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy issued a proclamation and the State Board of Education issued a resolution supporting “Social Emotional Learning Day in New Jersey and encouraged all community members to learn about and share their knowledge of the importance and impact of integrating evidence based SEL into our schools, organizations, and

community.”⁵ The proclamation also stated that SEL is a wise use of public funds.

As support for SEL grows, it is imperative that states like New Jersey develop measures to ensure that adoption and spending aligns with the available research on high-quality implementation by adopting rigorous and practicable standards for districts, schools, and external providers, and highlighting family and student input on SEL programming. It is also important for schools and providers to learn how to coordinate existing and new SEL programs.

Importance of Establishing Guidelines for School-Provider SEL Partnerships

Though experts agree that integrated and embedded district-wide systems and practices are most effective, many schools find it necessary to partner with outside agencies to bring discrete SEL programs to their students and staff in the short term, due to staffing constraints or acute student needs. This is especially true in states and districts like New Jersey with high ratios of students to support staff.⁶

With the influx of federal funds to support SEL-related services, organizations are racing to meet the increased demand. According to EdWeek Market Brief, “the landscape of organizations with an interest in social-emotional learning today includes not only those focused on delivering SEL, exclusively, but also those that have woven it into a broader array of products they offer.”⁷ Community-based organizations also play a big role in meeting the SEL needs of schools and are responsible for helping to establish in-school policies and practices that support high-quality SEL.

Often, schools invest in programs without laying an appropriate foundation for the program to succeed. Other schools depend on the program itself to be the initiative. In this case, the provider is the owner of the implementation process and that is usually not enough for success.

Without intentional coordination and delivery methods led by the school, the expansion of programs with outside organizations can become problematic. In a blog for SEL4US, Maurice Elias explains that, often “[SEL] efforts are done sporadically within a school and/or co-exist in a school, forming a jumble of well-meaning but fragmented programs or efforts in schools through which students pass like pinballs in a pinball machine...schools must both determine and then unjumble their current inventory of SEL and related programs and organize them to create synergy and continuity.”⁸

Considerations for Schools:

Schools must determine their own needs first and then decide if an outside provider is the best choice. Then the school should select a provider that fits those needs with the understanding that the provider may only be able to provide a part of the solution. Schools should manage the partnership with intention, utilizing available tools. When schools go through this process the partnership with an appropriate provider is much more likely to be successful.

Individual provider practices can also contribute to this issue. Some providers simply sell their programs and services to a school without determining the fit of the program and whether

sufficient resources (particularly time) are available to support the implementation. In addition, various providers within a single school or district can operate without a common standard of practice. A report by the Newark Trust for Education on school-based mental health service provision in Newark found that among the eleven major providers in the area, approaches were not always aligned, consistent, or tailored to the individual needs of schools.⁹

For example, some providers connected with families and teachers to better understand family circumstances and students’ functioning at home and school or provided year-round programs, including universal and targeted programs, to avoid disruption of services during summer months. Others entered partnerships without the establishment of a common vision or a clear system for reporting outcomes to school-based teams.

As noted in the report, “the establishment of a common vision and strong guidelines must undergird the partnership so that cross-sector teams can learn to operate effectively and refine and scale their work.”

To capitalize on the added value and expertise of providers from fields such as mental health, social work, and youth mentoring, schools and partners need to have strong collaborative practices. In addition, practitioners from these fields may need additional training or guidance to adapt to unique school environments or serve diverse audiences.

This following discussion will guide us to better understand the facets of the issue through perspectives of a small sample of varied stakeholders in NJ, including school administrators, educators, school support staff, district leaders, caregivers, and providers.

Common Barriers to High-Quality SEL Implementation

Existing research shows that the following obstacles can arise when establishing SEL initiatives: lack of ownership from administrators and/or teachers, communication challenges, insufficient staff time or training, and siloed or uncoordinated programs. The SPQI work group was interested in understanding who governs decisions around SEL program implementation in schools and districts in New Jersey and what common barriers exist. We found that there is a lack of information or consistency in who governs SEL and to what degree schools had adequate capacity to implement programs well.

Governance Structures and Leadership

Investment of leadership: School staff and district administrators were asked who was responsible for coordinating SEL programs and providers in schools. Administrators including principals, district-level administrators, and assistant principals were the most common responses across groups followed by school-based SEL providers (including school counselors and/or social workers), or a school-based SEL committee. These responses indicate that there is often leadership investment in SEL and team-based coordination, which are key best practices.

Box 1: Percentage of respondents indicating coordination of SEL programs and providers (multiple answers could be selected):

Responsible for Coordination	School Staff	District Administrators
Principal	60%	69%
School-based SEL position	57%	38%
Other District Administrator	46%	38%

District support: Most respondents across stakeholder groups also agreed that school leadership and district support are in place at appropriate levels for SEL programs to work effectively in their schools. The ways in which

district leadership plays a role in supporting SEL are less clear. In the district administrator survey, several district-level roles or offices were identified as responsible for the coordination of SEL programs and providers. However, some respondents indicated that individual schools and/or principals held this responsibility. Whether district oversight for SEL program implementation extends to the school-level may vary according to district.

Teacher Support: While the survey did not explicitly list teacher buy-in or ownership of program implementation as an option under barriers, school-based respondents added in comments in other places throughout the survey regarding this aspect. Common implementation concerns included whether teachers approved and supported programs and could easily access and deliver program or materials.

Funding and Capacity

There was less agreement on whether funding, availability of providers, training of staff, sustainability of staff, and sustainability plans and time for SEL in the school day are currently adequate.

Box 2: Feeling that the following are in place at appropriate levels for SEL programs to work effectively in schools (multiple answers could be selected):

Category	School Staff	Provider	District Admin	Caregiver
Funding	14%	38%	38%	21%
Availability of providers	21%	0%	23%	0%
Training of staff	21%	50%	23%	11%
Staff sustainability	46%	63%	15%	0%
Sustainability plans	32%	38%	15%	0%
Time for SEL in school day	29%	50%	15%	16%

Siloed and Uncoordinated Programs

As mentioned above, a key concern for the SPQI work group is the existence of siloed or uncoordinated programs. District administrators were asked how coherent and cohesive SEL programs are in their district. Approximately 23% responded that programs were “very coherent and cohesive,” 62% “somewhat coherent and cohesive,” and 16% “not coherent and cohesive.”

As a starting point, New Jersey would benefit from having a more robust set of data on the extent to which the above barriers exist in schools and districts across the state. In addition, since school administrators have a large role in selection of providers, it is important to understand what information they have on best practice SEL program implementation and what they need to know. This set of information will help contextualize future efforts to promote guidelines for school-provider partnerships.

Best Practices/Aspects of High Quality SEL Implementation

Frameworks and key aspects

Among recommended best practices is that schools organize strategies into widely recognized frameworks. There are many established and well-researched frameworks for high-quality SEL implementation that a school can select from. One of which is CASEL’s schoolwide guide to SEL implementation.¹⁰ Their ten key indicators to effective SEL implementation include: explicit SEL instruction (that is age-appropriate and culturally responsive), SEL integrated with academic instruction, youth voice and engagement, supportive school, and classroom climates, focus on adult SEL, supportive discipline, continuum of integrated supports, authentic family partnerships, aligned community partnerships, and systems for continuous improvement. This framework guides schools towards what many might see as the “north star” of SEL -- embedded systems and practices that weave SEL into the fabric of the school.

Though cultural responsiveness is mentioned in the CASEL rubric under SEL instruction and discussed within the context of equity, it is not highlighted under aligned partnerships. The multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework align with CASEL’s and provides more detail on how to achieve integrated and embedded systems throughout the school, using equitable and inclusive practices.

Based on survey results and expert focus group discussions within the New Jersey context, we chose to focus on embeddedness and cultural relevance as key components of high-quality SEL implementation that need further exploration and refinement

Program Embeddedness: Embeddedness refers to the integration of SEL within the larger structure, culture, discrete content areas, and services of schools or even districts. The term applies to how schools create a schoolwide (multi-tiered) approach to SEL that incorporate stakeholder perspectives and are built into day-to-day practices. As mentioned above, this process should be owned by the school and ideally is a precursor to engaging with external partners.

However, it also applies to the need for partnerships to be rooted in a systemic approach to implementation within a school that allows SEL to become a sustaining capacity of the school that supports student wellbeing and success.

Researchers and practitioners agree that one of the most important features of high quality SEL programs is that they are integrated and embedded in the practices and culture of a school. Experts also agree that reaching optimal

schoolwide SEL is an on-going process that can take years. Therefore, the real and immediate needs of schools to provide services to students or staff under time and resource constraints makes embeddedness complex.

Whereas integration and embeddedness were indicated by our respondents as the most important elements to effective SEL programs, there may be a gap between the types of services provided by SEL providers and how this ideal plays out in relation to schools' support systems.

While 36% of school-based staff reported that some programs were integrated in a tiered, embedded curriculum and meeting structure, 64% indicated the existence of SEL programs that are not.

Box 3: School staff (n=28) reported the ways in which SEL was integrated in academic approaches:

Program Integration	
Universal SEL	32%
Participation in a few SEL workshops	25%
A standalone SEL service	7%
Integration in a tiered, structured, embedded curriculum and meeting structure.	36%
Don't know	30%

In addition, the data on meetings between schools and providers may demonstrate a lack of embeddedness. Meeting structures are important vehicles for integration, especially where multiple providers may be involved in a single school.

A third (29%) of our school-based respondents indicated that providers attended no school-based meetings on a regular basis. The most frequently reported meeting attended by providers was general staff meetings. Data on frequency of meetings was also low for regularity in many of these areas.

While this might be a result of the schools and programs surveyed, especially those implementing universal SEL or standalone workshop series, the results uncover additional questions about what integrated and embedded SEL looks like in schools with or without comprehensive schoolwide SEL systems and structures.

Program integration and SEL embeddedness may depend on individual schools' evolution on the path to schoolwide SEL or how much clarity there is about these concepts. It also points to a need for more detailed guidance on how integration can be achieved when working with external providers.

Considerations for Providers:

For high quality SEL implementation to occur, SEL providers should be aware of the steps that schools should follow before engaging in a partnership, understand what embedded and integrated SEL programs look like, and take steps to tailor their programs and practices to the needs and population of a school. This foundational work is important to the success of the partnership. Providers should also be aware how their own practices can help support the school's adherence to best practice implementation.

Cultural relevance: Cultural relevance¹¹ in SEL is the notion that a one-size-fits-all approach to instruction or program delivery is not best fit for many young people. Since school settings are often meeting grounds for learners, educators, and other stakeholders from a rich and diverse range of cultures, languages, and behavioral norms, it is important to account for ways that culture influences how students develop SEL competencies and how services are delivered. Cultural relevance is imperative in diverse urban areas and states like New Jersey.

Conceptually, the importance of cultural relevance to stakeholders in our sample is clear. School staff, district administrators, providers, and parents all identify cultural relevance as an important element of SEL and listed cultural relevance as something they pay attention to as they establish SEL in schools. Cultural relevance was also a top response from school staff and administrators when considering the selection of an SEL provider.

However, whether cultural relevance is practiced through SEL program implementation is hard to assess. While identified as important, less than 50% of school-based respondents felt that it is currently in place at appropriate levels. Even fewer parents/caregivers and district administrators indicated that culturally relevant practices are in place at appropriate levels.

Box 4: Percentage of respondents who felt that culturally relevant practices and materials were in place at appropriate levels for SEL programs to work effectively in schools:

Respondent	Percent
School Staff	46%
Provider	63%
District Admin	38%
Parent/Caregiver	16%

Additionally, while parents and caregivers in our sample feel strongly about the benefits of SEL programs, opportunities for input and engagement from caregivers are limited. More information is needed about what cultural relevance of SEL means to different stakeholder groups and how staff or providers gauge whether they are meeting this marker.

Best practices indicate that SEL programs should focus on the whole child, which includes the sphere of influences in the child’s life. Providers working in schools must have understanding and empathy for the race, language, class, culture, and sexual identity of the individuals they work with. Approaches should be collaborative and create spaces where people can give feedback.

Even if schools have alternate ways of gathering family input that are not captured in this survey, the question remains how providers and schools are collaboratively assessing the relevance of programs within the cultural contexts of families and communities.

Based on potential gaps outlined above, we focused on three main processes below that undergird the establishment of embedded, culturally relevant SEL programs and mitigate barriers to students’ full participation in beneficial SEL programming.

Considerations for Funders:

Like the providers, funders should understand the steps that schools should follow before bringing in external resources and supports. When deciding to fund programs a school’s readiness and ability to implement and integrate the resource into a framework should be considered. Funders should also consider funding training and coordination support that help schools develop the capacity to adopt a process that ensures greater impact, more efficient use of funds, and best practice implementation. In addition, they should build requirements into grants that promote collaborative practices between schools and providers.

Practices for establishing and maintaining strong partnerships

Understanding the process by which schools identify and adhere to indicators of high quality SEL is critical to establishing effective SEL initiatives and partnerships. For any new initiatives being considered, schools should determine need, assess programmatic “fit,” consider their evidence-base. If there is not sufficient support and buy-in, it is unlikely for any SEL implementation to succeed.

Ownership and Readiness

CASEL recommends that schools “build the foundational support needed to launch, sustain, and continually improve high-quality SEL implementation.” This stage is commonly referred to as the readiness phase or buy-in part of the process. Schools need to own the process for it to be sustainable.

In addition, according to the CASEL rubric, under the aligned community partnerships indicator, it is important for partners to align with the school on “common language, strategies, and communication around all SEL-related efforts.”¹²

Implementation science supports a phased approach to implementation with a focus on establishing collaborative practices and incorporating early input from diverse stakeholders.¹³ It also emphasizes team-based data-driven decision making.

The PBIS Interconnected Systems Framework provides strong guidelines for collaboration between partners, agencies, school committees, parents, and teachers in their Mental Health Agency Implementation Checklist.¹⁴ This and other frameworks underscore the importance of facilitating communication across teams and providers.

Research from public health has established several best practices for interagency partnerships outlined in the Partnership Self-

Assessment Tool.¹⁵ Key overlapping elements from these frameworks are early and frequent alignment on goals, outcomes, and strategies; consistent and structured opportunities for two-way communication with key stakeholders including school staff, students, and families; and tools and processes to assess need and measure effectiveness.

In an ideal world, these processes would take place in a school that has already established systemic SEL structures such as a tiered student support system that emphasizes team-based leadership and coordinated and continuous data-based progress monitoring. However, we know that this is not always the case. For many schools who are working toward this long-term goal, guidance on creating high-quality programmatic partnerships may be useful and may lend itself to the creation of these sustainable systems over time.

Buy-in and establishment of common goals

A schoolwide approach to SEL relies on the ongoing, collaborative effort of all staff, teachers, students, families, out-of-school time partners, and other community partners. This collaboration begins with establishing a strong foundation of support among all stakeholders.

If engaging with external providers, a collaborative process is very important to the ultimate success of the program. The two organizations should be aligned and prepared to overcome institutional barriers to success such as differences in terminology, approaches, or intended outcomes. Ideally, input from staff and agreement on outcomes should be a high priority, especially when establishing early buy-in.

School staff and SEL providers in our sample were asked what actions were taken before entering partnerships to deliver SEL programs in schools. The most common responses across

both groups included announcements to students, staff, and caregivers. However, the least common responses across both groups included input from students, staff, and caregivers, agreements on program outcomes, and a formal memorandum of understanding. Further, school respondents indicated least often that there was an orientation to the provider, input from students and community members, and a formal memorandum of understanding.

These results may indicate that processes to establish partnerships are not thorough or consistent or that the flow of communication is a challenge, particularly prior to SEL program implementation in schools. Respondents also added that teacher support, accessibility, and ease of use were important factors in selecting an SEL provider. These factors support the need for early input from stakeholders to ensure the buy-in and, ultimately, end-user satisfaction of programs or services.

Program Data Collection

Our data across stakeholders shows that measurable outcomes are important to high quality SEL implementation. However, our data also show that outcomes-based assessments are not commonly used either when selecting providers or during implementation. This indicates a potential gap between the perceived importance of measurable outcomes and the actual implementation data collection methods when selecting and implementing an SEL program.

School staff, SEL providers, and district administrators were asked what types of data were collected to identify SEL needs within schools. The most common responses included school-based data (including attendance, disciplinary records, etc.). While this is a good indicator that schools are looking at reliable long term outcome data, many short-term programs benefit from more targeted shorter-term measures and tools.

Our survey indicated that evidence based SEL assessments and targeted school or provider data were the least commonly used methods of data collection among providers and SEL staff.

Provider-initiated assessments and qualitative data such as interviews (which yield rich, descriptive data) can be extremely useful when looking at the need for services and when gauging the progress of smaller-scale SEL programs.

Program Communication

As discussed above, communication procedures are an important factor in establishing effective school-provider partnerships. Communication is essential for program integration, establishing and assessing cultural relevance, and getting clear on goals.

Strong communication practices include connections between providers, staff, students, and caregivers. Modes of communication should extend beyond information sharing to include feedback loops and opportunities for input from a variety of stakeholders. While the responsibility for direct communication lies most often with the school, providers should be included in any existing channels or structures. Our survey indicates that there may be limited types of communication between various school and community stakeholders and providers when selecting programs and during implementation. As previously discussed under the section on embeddedness, providers may not regularly be part of any school team meetings.

Although different types of programs may require more or less direct communication with students, staff, and families, even in cases where services don't work directly with each stakeholder group, communication may be beneficial for buy-in, trust building, and continuous improvement.

Caregiver integration and communication was deprioritized and deemphasized across the

sample. Fewer than 30% of school staff and SEL providers reported they held meetings with caregivers at least monthly. Additionally, they reported they did not commonly use data to determine caregiver satisfaction with services or in student-caregiver meetings.

If providers are to ensure that diverse voices are included in the tailoring and assessment of services, schools and providers should, together, create clear two-way communication channels about new and existing initiatives.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Conclusion

Based on existing research, years of combined experience of SPQI group members, and feedback from constituents across the state through an exploratory survey, we believe that there is a need for schools, providers, and other stakeholders to increase awareness and understanding of key concepts in high-quality SEL implementation and partnership development. This includes the following:

Successful SEL implementation is a collaborative process. Following a process or framework is an important element in the success and sustainability of any school improvement effort, including SEL implementation. A process for successful school-based implementation as well as effective partnerships with SEL providers needs to include an assessment of need and readiness, school ownership and buy-in, and the establishment of systems and practices to sustain the work. The process should be initiated and owned by the school and, ideally, begin before engaging with providers.

School-provider partnerships are built on shared learning. Each school has specific needs, and the provider and school should work together to look carefully at these needs to determine the best fit for programs. To avoid common barriers to implementation, there needs to be practices in place to continually share information, evaluate the success of the program, and modify it as the need arises. Early and frequent alignment on goals, outcomes, and strategies is critical. As are consistent and structured opportunities for two-way

communication with key stakeholders including school staff, students, and families.

The sector would benefit from a clear set of guidelines for strong SEL partnerships. There is a significant need for guidelines for service delivery that are embedded, culturally responsive, and inclusive of practices that promote caregiver integration, two-way communication, and data-based decision-making.

Recommendations

With the understanding that the survey discussed in this report used a sample of schools that may not be representative enough to generalize the results across New Jersey, the trend data outlined points to the need for follow up on several key points:

- It is unclear how districts in New Jersey evaluate the outcomes of SEL partnerships and to what extent we understand the collaborative practices that currently exist. Whether engaging with a community-based partner or large SEL provider, both schools and providers should have a set of practical tools to help them establish successful and sustainable programs.
- The SPQI Work Group/SEL4NJ will engage in a second phase of the work to further advance our shared goal of creating these tools. This phase will include an expansion of the work groups membership and reach, that would include collaborations with research partners, districts, and state representatives.

- Additionally, we suggest that Districts, the state DOE, or independent research-oriented organizations conduct projects to inform and advance progress toward the goal of understanding the relationship between schools and providers. Such as:
 - Engaging in tailored research projects to dive deeper into the specifics of embedded, integrated, and culturally relevant SEL programs and practices across the state,
 - Conducting a broader SEL landscape assessment to clarify and align the use of a common descriptive language across schools and providers, understand barriers to SEL program implementation, describe existing partnership models in a variety of contexts, and determine the availability of providers able to offer direct services as well as resources to complement the SEL work done in schools.

End Notes

¹ “From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope” (Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, Jan. 15, 2019), http://nationathope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018_aspen_final-report_full_webversion.pdf

² Chaluian, Gopalan, Morales, Walden, Wilson, “Families as Decision Makers Caregiver Survey,” (Newark Trust for Education, forthcoming)

³ Schwartz, Heather L., Michelle Bongard, Erin D. Bogan, Alaina E. Boyle, Duncan C. Meyers, and Robert J. Jagers, “Social and Emotional Learning In Schools Nationally and in the Collaborating Districts Initiative: Selected Findings from the American Teacher Panel and American School Leader Panel Surveys,” (RAND Corporation, 2022), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1822-1.html

⁴ “Finding Your Place 2021: Social Emotional Learning Takes Center Stage in K-12,” (Tyton Partners, October 2021), https://d1hzn4d3dn6lg.cloudfront.net/production/uploads/2021/10/Tyton-Partners_Finding-Your-Place-2021_SEL-Takes-Center-Stage-in-K12.pdf

⁵ SEL day proclamation

⁶ According to [Hopeful Futures Campaign](#), New Jersey has one school psychologist for every 731 students (the recommended ratio is 1:500); one school social worker for every 655 students (the recommended ratio is 1:250); and one school counselor for every 358 students (the recommended ratio is 1:250).

⁷ Sean Cavanagh, “Special Report: What Do School Districts Want From SEL Products and Programs?” EdWeek Market Brief (Editorial Projects in Education, Inc., December 14, 2022), <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/special-report/special-report-school-districts-want-sel-products-programs/>

⁸ Elias, M., “What if the Doors of Every Schoolhouse Opened to Social Emotional Learning Tomorrow,” (SEL4US, October 7, 2019), <https://sel4us.org/blog/what-if-the-doors-of-every-schoolhouse-opened-to-social-emotional-learning-tomorrow/>

⁹ Gopalan, P., Chaluian, R., & Parry, S., “Widen the scope: School-based mental health services in Newark,” (Newark Trust for Education, May 2019), <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CsIS1vaGjmPWcl1mMwF7F8HWCbqVJF84/view>

¹⁰ See CASEL’s Schoolwide Guide to Social Emotional Learning, <https://schoolguide.casel.org/>

¹¹ For the purposes of this report, we use the term cultural relevance, as it is worded as such in the statewide survey and is widely used in the field. However, other terms such as cultural responsiveness, cultural competence or cultural humility are also used or even preferred by various stakeholder groups. Future iterations of our work will include discussions about the nuances of these terms, and suggestions on the term/s best suited to the field of SEL.

¹² See CASEL Schoolwide Guide Rubric: <https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/Blank-Rubric-Template-3.30.20.pdf>

¹³ See National Implementation Research Network’s implementation stages: <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/module-1/implementation-stages>

¹⁴ See PBIS Interconnected Systems Framework Mental Health Agency Checklist: <https://discipline.esc2.net/sites/Discipline/files/u110/ISF%20MH%20Agency%20Implementation%20Checklist%20%281%29%20%281%29.pdf#:~:text=This%20checklist%20is%20designed%20to%20be%20completed%20by,is%20ocated%20at%20the%20end%20of%20the%20checklist.>

¹⁵ See the Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health’s Partnership Self-Assessment Tool: https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10214/3129/Partnership_Self-Assessment_Tool-Questionnaire_complete.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y