

## **Social Emotional Learning Task Force 2018-2019 Summary**

This year a Social-Emotional Learning Task force was created and has worked throughout the school year to support the goal of proposing a comprehensive plan for identifying and supporting the development of social-emotional learning competencies for all students. It is important to acknowledge and thank the committee for their work in this year.

Members include the following:

- Jenn Williams, 1st Grade Teacher/Hanscom
- Kathleen Esposito, School Psychologist/Hanscom (K-3) and Lincoln PK
- Mara Salis, Social Worker/Hanscom (K-3)
- Erich Ledebuhr, Principal, HMS
- Loretta D'Alessandro, Transition Specialist, HMS
- Dayna Brown, Lincoln PK & Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher
- Naomi Konikoff, Student Services Coordinator K-8, Lincoln Campus
- Carolyn Dwyer, 4th grade Teacher, Smith/Lincoln
- Lateefah Frank, METCO Director, Lincoln Campus
- Lauren Taylor, School Psychologist/Lincoln Campus (5-8)
- Alyssa Rosenfeld, Social Worker/Lincoln Campus (5-8)
- Sarah Collmer, Principal, Smith
- Sharon Hobbs, Principal, Brooks
- Shelley Moeller, Social Worker Smith School

Social-emotional learning is the “process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs to identify and manage emotions; to make good decisions; to behave ethically and responsibly, to develop positive relationships and to avoid negative behaviors (Elias & Moceris, 2012). Research indicates that students benefit from social emotional learning programs in the following ways: increased academic performance, improved behavior and increased development of social emotional skills. In addition, when SEL competencies are achieved, decreases were noted in conduct problems, emotional distress and substance use. These benefits were similar for all subgroups of students as related to race, socioeconomics, or geography. When students develop social emotional competencies in childhood, there are positive impacts on success when navigating the workplace and greater community.

During our process we have used the Collaborative for Academic and Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) resources and research as our guide and framework. In addition to this resource, we have also used DESE’s *Guidelines for Implementing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Curricula K-12 (2017)* as a resource. Professional development opportunities for SEL Task Force members have been attended throughout the school year. These conferences include, *Leading with Access and Equity; Assessing and Measuring Development of Social-Emotional and Academic Skills;* *MASS Leadership Forum, Social Emotional Learning: Advancing Cultural Proficiency*. In addition, the SEL Task Force has discussed and looked at how a few selected districts have approached SEL.

As we began this work, it was important to start with an analysis and discussion of the SEL Inventory from May of 2018. This inventory highlighted important areas for our district. These areas included a need to address our SEL focus and growth, to identify previous cultural foundations that had been used,

to report on current practices, and to highlight the need and desire to have SEL be more consistent, cohesive and intentional across the district.

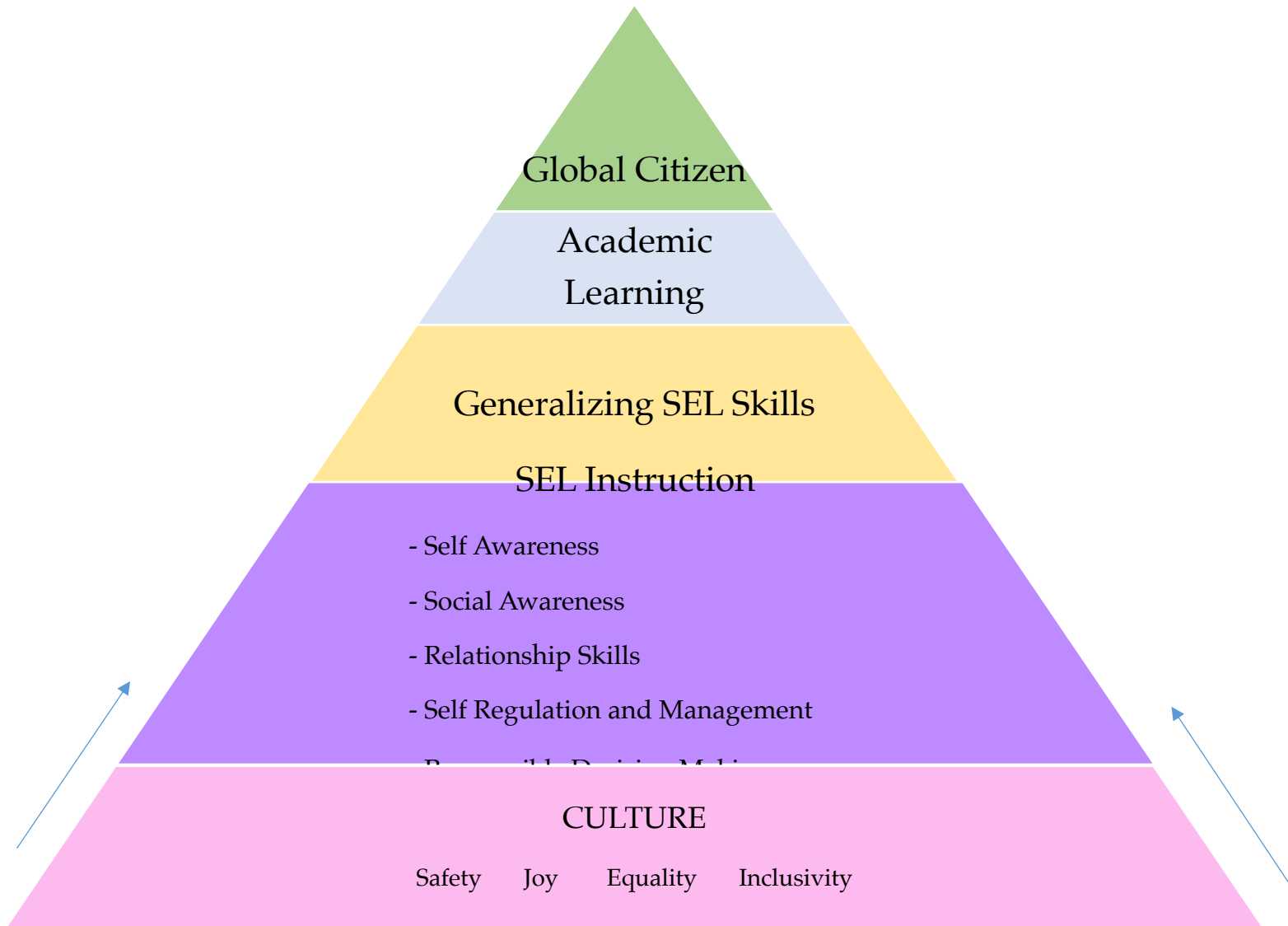
At this time, we have many interventions, strategies, supports and programs that have been identified that are used in the district in a variety of ways. Our Wellness Department covers specific lessons that support students' social-emotional growth with a focus on anti bullying curriculum and lessons. While not formalized in a curricular manner, wellness teachers focus their instruction in the areas of safety, kindness, respect, sportsmanship, and teamwork. At our Hanscom Campus, the Zones of Regulation skills are explicitly taught in targeted grades and supported by psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Zones of Regulation support students with identifying and applying strategies according to the emotional "zone" identified. Students have also developed "Zones" books to be utilized as a reference. At Hanscom Primary School, the social worker, school psychologist, and BCBA have developed "model me" videos to address coping strategies and problem solving skills. Across the district, and variable from school and grade, Social Thinking skills have been taught within the classroom and in small group and individual settings delivered by social workers, speech and language therapists and special educators. At Lincoln K-4, the social worker has developed a curriculum and has provided instruction within the classroom to support students with learning and applying coping skills and strategies. The psychologist at the middle school level on the Hanscom Campus has provided instruction to selected grades using the Minds UP curriculum for mindfulness and identification of coping strategies. The Second STEP curriculum is currently being provided in selected grades at the Lincoln K-4. In addition, the Lincoln K-4 has worked in a very comprehensive manner to further develop their CARES values to support school culture and positive reinforcement of the CARES values observed by students. All of these curricular and strategy based programs target SEL competencies and are valuable to our students. At the Lincoln 5-8 the social worker and psychologist have provided instruction in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms in the areas of friendship skills, coping skills and developing self-confidence. Lincoln 5-8 has also provided a focus on implementing restorative practices and mindfulness. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at Lincoln 5-8 are working on coping/calming skills by using break spaces. All teachers in Lincoln 5-8 have been provided with training in anxiety management strategies for use in their classrooms. The preschool has implemented the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment Program (DECA). This program is fully implemented and is core to the SEL programming at the preschool.

In addition to supporting our students, we need to discuss and investigate ways to engage and support all of the families in our district to support their children in the development of SEL competencies. For example, the Hanscom Middle School has created a school goal of understanding the needs of our military families so they can support the social-emotional needs of their children. Although there are many interventions happening across the district, we need to ensure a more structured approach to application and decision making regarding curriculum and instruction.

Historically, the primary schools have been trained in Responsive Classroom with training in Developmental Design at the middle school level. These initial trainings occurred 10-12 years ago with sporadic and inconsistent retraining. New staff members are currently not trained systematically. The Lincoln 5-8 did conduct a refresher for Developmental Design in 2016. Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design are sound, research based approaches to addressing school culture. As a first step it is the recommendation of the SEL Task Force to formalize a multi-year plan to provide retraining and professional development to reinvigorate Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design for consistent use in the classrooms.

Moving toward the retraining for Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design is only a first step in this important and essential work for our district. The members of the SEL Task Force are making the following recommendations:

- Finalize the SEL competencies identified as essential to building strong SEL skills
- Participate in summer work to further define and articulate a multi-year plan for professional development, curriculum, and funding
- Articulate a plan for continued training for Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design
- Develop SEL school based teams to support the vision and work of the SEL Task Force
- Continue with an SEL Task Force to look at curricular needs at the district and school levels, with a plan for professional development and implementation of programming and instruction
- Identify where, at a school level, explicit SEL instruction will take place and how general educators will be supported to infuse and reinforce the instruction and cultural undergirding in their classroom
- Identify explicit instruction and units that will be taught in wellness for all grades and within advisories at the middle school level
- Investigate ways to involve parents/guardians with supporting their child's SEL and to request their input regarding further development of the SEL competencies that their children will need as they move through our schools



### **Self Regulation and Management**

The ability to successfully manage emotions, thoughts and behaviors and a plan to use skills and strategies to organize in all environments

This looks like:

- Setting goals
- Using coping skills
- Self-initiating
- Controlling impulses
- Persevering
- Attending to task
- Planning and organizing
- Applying coping skills and strategies
- Participating in learning

### **Relationship Skills**

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and positive relationships with the goal of expanding social and learning circles to include diverse individuals and groups

This looks like:

- Cooperating
- Listening
- Negotiating
- Working as a team/Collaborating
- Communicating effectively
- Building relationship
- Engaging socially

### **Responsible Decision Making**

The ability to make good choices while considering consequences, safety and well-being (of self and others), applying ethical standards and social norms to decisions

This looks like:

- Solving problems
- Reflecting on decisions
- Pursuing equity
- Behaving ethically
- Prioritizing
- Analyzing possible outcomes

### **Social Awareness**

The ability to understand identity and how this informs and impacts the greater world and to understand and empathize with others

This looks like:

- Showing empathy
- Appreciating diversity (gender, race, culture)
- Taking others' perspectives
- Working as a team
- Engaging socially/communicating

### **Self Awareness**

The ability to recognize emotions, thoughts and values and how they influence behavior as well as accurately assess strengths and limitation through a growth mindset model

This looks like:

- Recognizing strengths and challenges
- Demonstrating self-efficiency
- Engaging in self-reflection
- Feeling self- confident
- Being self-motivated