



WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Deborah Childs-Bowen

School leaders set the tone for social and emotional learning

When we talk about building social and emotional learning (SEL), we often focus on students. But adults must model, teach, and prioritize the way we want our students to learn and live. School leaders set the tone for SEL just as they do with academic expectations. To do that, they must lead not only *for* SEL but *with* SEL.

Leading with SEL is a mindset or way of being that focuses on whole persons. It promotes the values and vision of equity by understanding each person's needs and strengths and providing the supports for his or her learning and growth. School leaders can steward the transformation from SEL as a program to SEL as a way of being through what they *believe, know, and do*.

SEL LEADERS BELIEVE:

- That putting people and relationships first promotes a school culture of equitable practices for all.
- That the sum of a human being is greater than a single aspect of that person.
- That all people have the potential to learn and improve their lives when provided with academic and social-emotional learning opportunities.
- That professional learning is essential for assessing, reflecting on, and building socially and emotionally aware educators and school cultures.

SEL LEADERS KNOW:

- That staying abreast of current research on and best practices for SEL can help them develop skills and increase impact on others.
- That the five SEL domains described by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning apply to both students and adults. They are:
 1. **Self-awareness:** Recognize and label one's feelings and accurately assess one's strengths and limitations.
 2. **Self-management:** Regulate emotions, delay gratification, manage stress, motivate oneself, and set and work toward achieving goals.
 3. **Social awareness:** Show empathy, take others' perspectives, recognize and mobilize diverse and available supports.
 4. **Relationship skills:** Communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, and resolve conflicts constructively.
 5. **Responsible decision-making:** Make ethical choices, anticipate obstacles to goals, and make sound plans.

SEL LEADERS DO:

- Communicate clearly and listen

actively to differing perspectives.

- Resolve conflict in a manner that promotes growth and leaves each person with dignity and wholeness.
- Reflect on their own SEL competencies and use a continuous improvement process to keep growing.
- Know the triggers that make them angry, frustrated, or impatient, and practice strategies to manage their responses.
- Identify and leverage staff members' collective strengths and impact.
- Constantly survey the school's human, intellectual, and social capital to determine the supports available and those needed to ensure a socially, emotionally, and academically healthy environment.
- Steward the resources needed to weave SEL into school culture and instructional practice.

Leading with SEL is an ongoing process. In that process, it is important to remember that professional learning is the backbone of growth and improvement. SEL has a place in everyone's learning — not just students and teachers, but yours and mine.

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Deborah Childs-Bowen (deborah.childs-bowen@learningforward.org) is a senior consultant with Learning Forward. ■