

THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDE FOR DISTRICT TEAMS

AUGUST 2021, VOL. 42, NO. 4



STARTING STRONG

Thank you for being a district member with Learning Forward. To help you spread the learning and engagement with your colleagues, we have designed this supplemental guide exclusively for district members.

This guide will help you take your teams through a deep dive into [the latest issue of *The Learning Professional*](#), which focuses on leveraging social and emotional learning (SEL) to build educators' and students' resilience in this uncertain school year. By reading the issue and using this guide, teams will:

- Reflect on how to integrate social, emotional, and academic learning throughout the curriculum and school building.
- Identify untapped opportunities for supporting the

whole child.

- Plan how to grow your professional learning partnerships and supports to meet educators' and students' holistic needs.

You may wish to send this guide, or portions of it, to your team members to help everyone engage in the activities. Alternatively, you may wish to use it as a facilitation guide and walk your team through the activities yourself. We invite you to share the learning opportunities however they work best for you.

Be sure to give us feedback about whether you found this useful, and, if you post on social media, tag us [#The LearningPro](#) [@LearningForward](#) so we can share your good work.

NEED HELP LOGGING IN? If you or your colleagues have questions about logging in with your district membership to access the articles, call **800-727-7288** or email christy.colclasure@learningforward.org.

GET STARTED

Build SEL into academics

“**S**ocial and emotional learning (SEL) skills such as growth mindset and perseverance have always been important for learning mathematics, but educators are not always explicit about how or intentional about integrating them into math classrooms,” write Carrie Edmond and her colleagues in the article, [“Coaching with SEL in mind.”](#) The authors share how they are leveraging coaching and other forms of professional learning to help teachers in North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas, integrate SEL into their daily teaching practices.

ACTIONS:

1. Ask participants to read the article and discuss the following questions.

- Do you think math is a good place to start for integrating SEL into academics? Why or why not?
- What do you think about the authors’ approach — starting with one math course and planning to scale up over time?
- Why is professional learning important to the district’s integration efforts?
- Which strategies described in the article resonate with you, and how might you share them with your colleagues?



2. In pairs or small groups, facilitate a conversation about the lessons from this article for your own school or district.

- Do educators value SEL and see how it is connected to academic success?
- Is your school or district intentionally integrating SEL with academics, and if so, how?
- What professional learning supports are available for teachers to build their knowledge and skills about integrating SEL and academics? What additional supports do you need?
- The authors write about coaching as a key strategy for building capacity. How might coaching for SEL and academic integration work in your system? For example, would it be more effective to have coaches who focus specifically on SEL or to have academic coaches integrate SEL into their existing coaching?
- The authors write that barriers between departments can create barriers to doing this work. What other challenges do you see, and how might you address them?

NEXT STEPS

Map out an SEL approach

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is more than a program; it's an approach that has to live and breathe in classrooms and throughout schools. In this issue's **"At a glance,"** the Learning Policy Institute shared a graphic it created to demonstrate how educators at Lakewood Elementary School in Sunnyvale, California, integrate SEL in many different spaces and ways.

ACTIONS:

1. Review the "At a glance" graphic and the reflection questions.
2. Hand out a rudimentary map of your school building. (Alternatively, you can ask participants to draw their own.) It doesn't have to be fancy or detailed; it just needs to show the main spaces in your school.
3. Pair participants using your preferred pairing method (e.g. count-off, teaching partners, etc.).
4. Have participants identify places that provide opportunities for adults to promote SEL skills. Participants should:
 - a. Circle places that lend themselves to SEL-building strategies.
 - b. Make notes in the margins about how to build SEL in those places.
 - c. Place stars in the circled spaces where they have direct responsibility or influence (e.g. their classroom, hallways outside their rooms, exits where they have dismissal duty).
 - d. Place X's in spots where problems frequently occur with student behavior or where students tend to feel uncomfortable.



5. Combine pairs into small groups (or one group, depending on the number of participants), and ask them to discuss what they noticed on their map. For example:
 - a. Are there spaces for promoting SEL that you hadn't considered before? What does that mean for your school's SEL approach?
 - b. Are adults using SEL-supportive strategies in the spaces you identified? If so, who is doing that work?
 - c. In the untapped spaces you identified, why are SEL strategies not happening? How can you get them started? Whom will you engage and how? What policies or norms might be in the way (e.g. guidelines about who is and isn't responsible for the hallways)?
6. Come back together as a large group to report out and reflect on what everyone learned from this exercise and identify action steps for integrating SEL more widely into your school.

DEEP DIVE

Leverage your learning partners

Peer learning is a powerful strategy not only for students, but also for educators. Just as students have different strengths to share, educators with diverse responsibilities and backgrounds offer varied skill sets. One untapped source of expertise for promoting social and emotional learning (SEL) is out-of-school time providers, Suzanne Bouffard writes in the article, [“To make SEL stick, align school and out-of-school time.”](#) Her profile of two sites from the Partnerships for Social and Emotional Learning Initiative shows how professional learning partnerships can lead to better outcomes across settings.



ACTIONS:

1. Consider your professional learning partnerships, looking beyond your own school or system. Use the following table to reflect on your existing partnerships. Include community partners, consultants, national organizations, and other sources of knowledge.

PARTNER OR SOURCE	PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOCUS OR CONTENT	NOTES (e.g. how you engage with them, how often, and how valuable you find the partnership)
-------------------	--	---

2. Consider new partnerships you haven't yet leveraged. Think broadly, including community partners like those mentioned in the article. This might include out-of-school-time programs, early childhood educators, public health, etc.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NEED	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	NOTES (e.g. how could you engage with them, and how would it be valuable?)
----------------------------	--------------------	--

3. Reflect on your responses and make an action plan. What is your current and past experience with professional learning partnerships? How can you build on or modify those experiences to get the best possible outcomes for educators and students?