

Selecting a Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum

What is a social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum?

Social-emotional learning (SEL) curricula offer lesson plans and materials for delivering social and emotional knowledge and skills in a school setting. An SEL curriculum is a comprehensive program that may span ages and grade levels to deliver SEL skills at a schoolwide level. Strong SEL curricula include implementation supports and provide tools to promote ongoing quality improvement and sustainability. When evidence-based SEL curricula are implemented with fidelity, they can result in schoolwide improvements in students' social and emotional skills, attitudes, relationships, academic performance, and perceptions of classroom and school climate.¹

What criteria should we consider when selecting an SEL curriculum?

The number of SEL curricula to choose from is ever-growing. The criteria below should be taken into consideration when reviewing SEL curriculum options for both best practice and alignment with MTSS-B.



Local fit

Aligns with school/district priorities, addresses identified service or system gaps, and fits with community values, culture, and history.²



Schoolwide programming

Offers multiyear, classroom-based programming that universally promotes students' social and emotional competence and skills.



Positive effects on student outcomes

Evidence-based with at least one study/trial with a comparable population that documents positive impacts on specific student and/or schoolwide outcomes.



Initial training

Includes training model that maps out information about the number of days and length of time required for initial training.



Administrator support

Includes training specifically for school/district administrators and leaders to support implementation.



Implementation supports

Clearly describes the types of technical assistance and other supports available to promote high-quality implementation.



Professional learning community

Provides guidelines and/or materials to support teachers, staff, and/or administrators to share knowledge in support of high-quality implementation.



Coaching

Includes feedback provided to teachers and/or administrators by a "coach" who is an expert in implementation (e.g., consultant, staff member).



Equity lens

Incorporates opportunities to address educational inequities, including those related to race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, country of origin, or socioeconomic status.³

¹ CASEL. (2021). What is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)? Retrieved from <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/> on Mar 8, 2021.

² Metz, A. & Louison, L. (2019). The Hexagon Tool: Exploring Context. Chapel Hill, NC: National Implementation Research Network, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Based on Kiser, Zabel, Zachik, & Smith (2007) and Blase, Kiser & Van Dyke (2013).

Which curricula do you recommend?

Below we review five SEL curricula commonly used in NH schools and/or encountered in research reviews. Curricula were assessed on whether they included or provided explicit access to the following: (1) schoolwide programming; (2) evidence of positive effects on student behavior outcomes through at least one quasi-experimental study or randomized control trial, published in a peer-reviewed journal article; (3) clearly defined training program; (4) administrator guidance and supports; and (5) implementation supports, including live coaching and a professional learning community. Criteria for which information was readily available across all five curricula were included.

Approximate program costs are also included. The content and scope of programs varied widely, and additional research should be done to determine more current program costs based on a school/district's specific needs.

	Choose Love for Schools ⁴	PATHS Program ⁵	Fly Five ⁶	RULER Approach ⁷	Second Step ⁸
Grade range covered	Pre K - 12	Pre K - 5	K - 8	K - 8	Pre K - 8
Schoolwide programming	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Evidence of impact on student outcomes	X	✓	X	✓	✓
Defined training program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Administrator supports	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coaching	✓	X	X	✓	X
Professional learning community	✓	X	✓	X	✓
Approximate cost	Free	\$499 - \$889 per classroom	\$885 - \$1250 per classroom*	\$6,000 - \$8,000 for 3-5 person school team (2-year support package)	\$409 - \$459 per classroom kit; \$2,000 - \$3,000 per school package**

⁴Cost varies by grade level and duration of license, is based on 24 students/classroom and includes professional development, a learning management system, program materials and assessments. Fly Five is aligned with the Responsive Classroom approach.⁹

⁵**School-level cost estimates apply to both traditional program materials and one-year digital program subscriptions. Single-school pricing varies by school enrollment; multi-site pricing varies by number of sites.¹⁰

Where can we find more information about SEL curricula?

- **CASEL Program Guides (2021):** <https://pg.casel.org/>
- **CASEL Guide to Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning:** <https://schoolguide.casel.org/>
- **Panorama Education:** <https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/social-emotional-learning-curriculum>

³ CASEL. (2020). Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning Programs: CASEL Criteria Updates and Rationale. Retrieved from https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/11_CASEL-Program-Criteria-Rationale.pdf

⁴ Choose Love Movement. (2021). Choose Love for Schools. Retrieved from <https://chooselovemovement.org/> on May 25, 2021.

⁵ PATHS Program LLC. (2021). Overview of the PATHS Program. Retrieved from <https://pathsprogram.com/paths-program-pk5> on Mar 18, 2021.

⁶ Fly Five. (2023). About Fly Five. Retrieved from <https://www.flyfivesel.org/sel-curriculum/about-fly-five/> on February 24, 2023.

⁷ Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. (2021). What is RULER? Retrieved from <https://www.rulerapproach.org/> on Mar 21, 2021.

⁸ Second Step. (2021). Second Step Elementary: SEL for today. Retrieved from <https://www.secondstep.org/elementary-school-curriculum> on Mar 21, 2021.

⁹ Fly Five (2023). Explore our new digital catalogue. Retrieved from <https://www.flyfivesel.org/shop/catalogue/> on February 27, 2023.

¹⁰ Second Step. (2021). Introducing our new digital program. Retrieved from <https://www.secondstep.org/elementary-school-curriculum/digital-program> on Mar 21, 2021.