SEL Roadmap for Returning to School

ABOUT CASEL

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a **trusted source** for knowledge about high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning.

For 25 years, CASEL has been supporting educators and policy leaders to enhance the experiences and outcomes of all students, preschool to high school.

Drive research

Guide practice

Inform policy

Convene networks

Opening Reflection

If we were to ask our students, one month from now how they feel about the transition back to school, what do you hope they will say and why?

Why SEL now?

Students, their families, and communities are wrestling with the impact of the pandemic, economic crisis, and longstanding racial injustices.

Students and communities are struggling with heightened anxiety, trauma, and loss.

SEL is more important now than ever. An education that prioritizes equity-focused SEL builds healthy relationships, engages students, and supports adults to create more just communities.

SEL is...

The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

(CASEL, 2019)
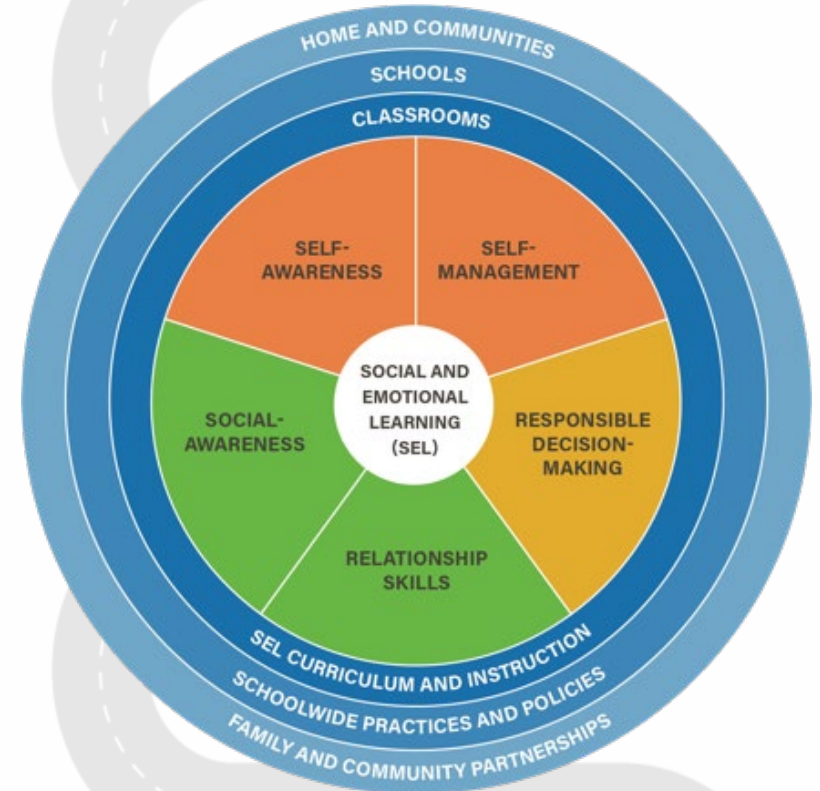
CASEL'S SYSTEMIC SEL FRAMEWORK

Creates **equitable learning conditions** and **inclusive cultures** that:
•foster **caring relationships**
•actively involve **all students** in learning and practicing social, emotional, and academic competencies.

This requires:
•aligned policies, resources and actions to **support adults**
•coordinated **school-family-community** partnerships

Social and Emotional Competencies Needed Now

SELF-AWARENESS

- Processing how I'm feeling and why
- Think about my personal identity and how it connects to current events
- Examine how my emotions, biases, and identities impact the things I do, say, and write

SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Work toward goals and stay motivated
- Manage stress and anxiety
- Cope with grief and loss
- Work through complex emotions triggered by current events
- Recognize and counteract my biases

SOCIAL AWARENESS

- Understand other perspectives
- Practice empathy
- Be aware of institutional inequities and racism and their impact on self and others
- Predict/understand how things I do impact others and contribute to equity/inequity

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

- Stay connected across distance
- Communicate my experience to others, listen to understand the experience of others
- Build meaningful connections with others, including those who are different from me
- Support one another during grief and struggle

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

- Stay on track with learning and work
- Make choices to take care of myself and others
- Analyze impact of decisions on health and safety
- Engage in collective action to support social justice

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New: SEL Roadmap for Reopening School

For schools at any stage of SEL implementation to build upon existing efforts.

Supports planning for the transition back to schools, in whatever form that takes.

Intended to help you reflect and act upon what you can do differently to leverage the moment.

REUNITE

RENEW

THRIVE

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Reunite, Renew, and Thrive:
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)
Roadmap for Reopening School
JULY 2020

Thank you to the 40+ organizations that participated in the development of this roadmap for school leaders and leadership teams.
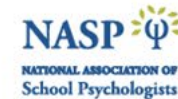
How to use the SEL Roadmap

It offers four **SEL Critical Practices**, each with 3-5 **activities**.

Within each activity, users are guided through **essential questions**, actions to **prepare & implement**, **tools** to support the actions, and guidance to **sustain** the work.

We recommend **starting with Critical Practice 1**. Once that foundational work is done, you can focus your efforts according to your needs & priorities.
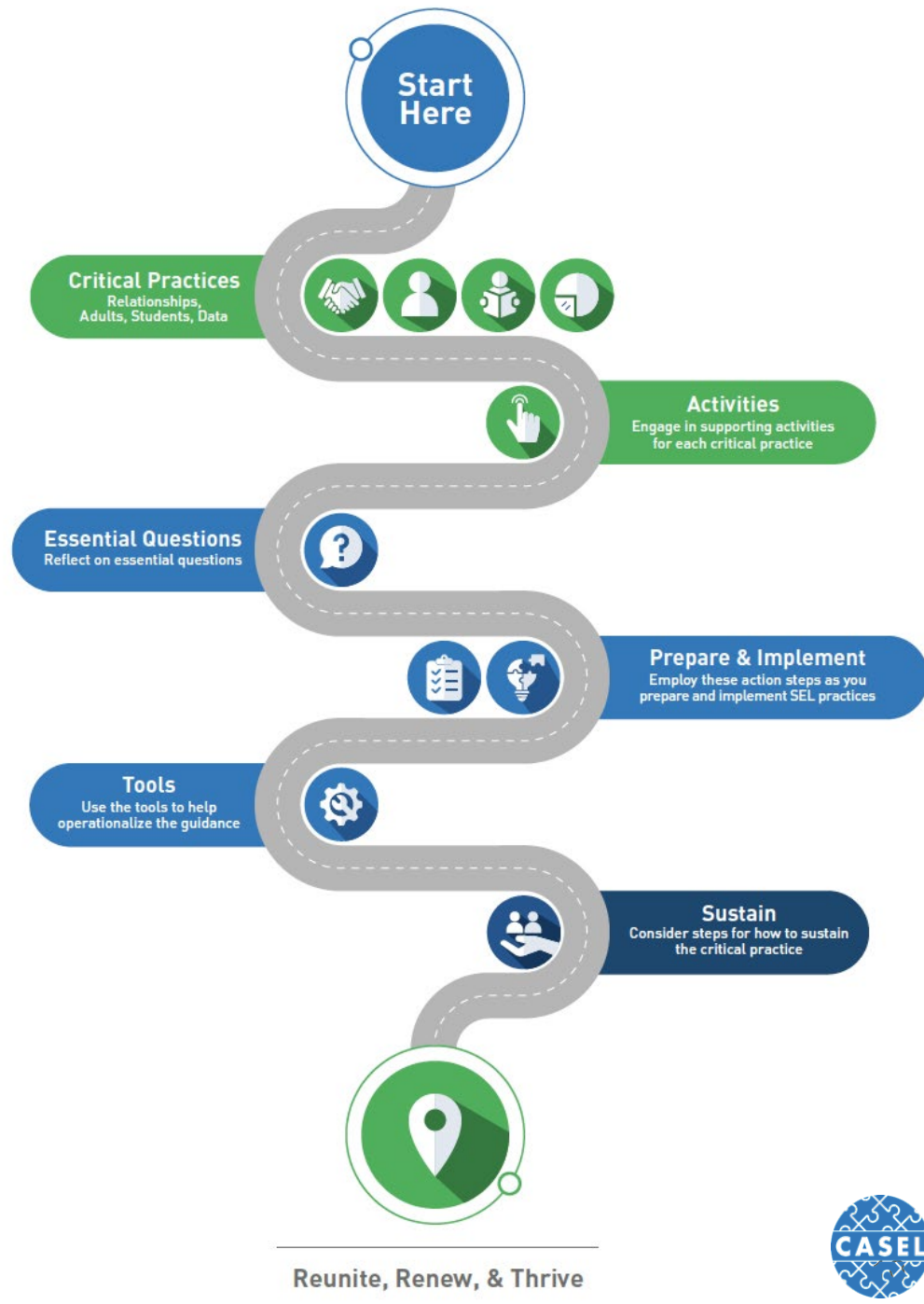
Prioritize the activities from 1 (most immediate) to 3 (this can come later)

Divide prioritized sections among your team, and make notes of the action steps you may take and tools you would like to use or adapt

1. TAKE TIME TO CULTIVATE AND DEEPEN RELATIONSHIPS, BUILD PARTNERSHIPS, AND PLAN FOR SEL				
Critical Practice	Priority Level	**Prepare** What will we do now to prepare for the '20-21 school year?	**Implement** What will we do in the first weeks and months of the school year?	**Sustain** How will we keep this work going as the year unfolds?
1.1 **Foster new relationships that elevate student & family voice** Prioritize this to focus on connecting with, caring for, and affirming the experiences of members of the wider school community.				

bit.ly/SELRoadmapOrganizer

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 1

Take time to cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL.

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 2

Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students.

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 3

Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development.

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 4

Use data as an opportunity to share power, deepen relationships, and continuously improve support for students, families, and staff.

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 1

Take time to cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL.

		Priority Level
1.1	**Foster new relationships that elevate student and family voice** Prioritize this to focus on connecting with, caring for, and affirming the experiences of members of the wider school community.	
1.2	**Use two-way communication strategies** Prioritize this to communicate the importance of SEL in navigating upcoming transitions and be responsive to student & family concerns.	
1.3	**Examine impact of SEL efforts.** Prioritize this to take a data-centered approach to decision-making, in building on strengths and targeting strategies to meet needs.	
1.4	**Build a broad coalition and integrate SEL into plans** Prioritize this to meaningfully involve community partners, families, and students in developing a vision, goals, and plans for the year.	

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 2

Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students.

Priority Level

2.1 Allow space for connection & healing among adults

Prioritize this for staff to focus on self-care, process experiences, and build trust and community.

2.2 Ensure access to mental health and trauma support

Prioritize this to put staff well-being at the center of school culture and leverage community partners to support the range of needs.

2.3 Identify opportunities for innovation and antiracist practices

Prioritize this to build on what staff have learned to reimagine distance learning, culturally responsive teaching, and approaches to equity.

2.4 Provide embedded professional learning

Prioritize this to plan learning experiences to develop capacity in trauma response, addressing racial bias, and other areas that align with school goals.

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 3

Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development.

3.1 Build adult-student and peer relationships

Prioritize this to build structures that maximize supportive connections, either in-person or through distance learning.

3.2 Weave in opportunities for SEL practice and reflection

Prioritize this to integrate SEL into the school day and support students' sense of identity, agency, and belonging.

3.3 Implement a comprehensive system of supports

Prioritize this to strengthen your tiered system of supports to meet new student needs and monitor progress.

3.4 Discuss the impact of the pandemic and racial inequity

Prioritize this to create brave spaces for students to discuss struggles, process emotions, and build their understanding of each others' experiences.

3.5 Collaborate with families and partners

Prioritize this to coordinate with and learn from families and community partners to support students' SEL.

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 4

Use data as an opportunity to share power, deepen relationships, and continuously improve support for students, families, and staff.

		Priority Level
4.1	**Elevate student voice in reflecting and acting on data** Prioritize this to collaborate with students in examining root causes and barriers to attendance, learning, and engagement and action planning.	
4.2	**Support educators in reflecting on instruction and environment** Prioritize this to focus on classroom-level data and growth.	
4.3	**Partner with families and community members to improve** Prioritize this to strengthen partnerships through the process of collecting, reflecting, problem-solving, and taking action from data.	

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 2.1

Allow space for connection, listening, and healing among all adults in the school community.

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"It is difficult, if not impossible, for adults to help students build skills that they themselves do not possess. It is vital, then, for adults working in educational settings to have strong SEL skills themselves."

- Stephanie Jones,

Harvard EASEL Lab

What does the research say?

Teaching is stressful (Greenberg, Brown, & Abenavoli, 2016) and the pandemic has added to educators' feelings of anxiety and stress

Studies have found that teachers with stronger social and emotional competencies are:
- Less likely to report burnout (Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa, Reyes, & Salovey, 2010)
- Demonstrate higher levels of patience and empathy (Palomera, Fernandez-Berrocal, & Brackett, 2008)
- Have more positive relationships with students, contributing to their academic, social, and emotional development (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009)

School and district leaders who engage in SEL practices can also improve their leadership skills, foster positive staff relationships, and create supportive school and work climates.

What challenge are you facing?

- **TEAMWORK:** This work is not possible to do on your own. Think about your closest colleagues. How have you built relational trust? How will you extend this relational trust throughout a larger, more diverse planning team? Why is it essential to bring in others who have different views and experiences?

- **SENSE OF URGENCY:** This can hijack our ability to think critically. How will you resist the urge to jump right into a strategy without thinking through the rationale? What strategies will help you slow down, read, and think critically?

- **TIME:** Our most valuable resource, and where we invest it is a good indicator of our values. How will you prioritize the time needed to read, think, and plan? What will you say "no" to so that you have the time you need to focus on SEL as a lever for equity and transformation?

- **COMPLEXITY:** This year is full of complex problems and uncertainty, and we won't be able to fall back on standard practices and procedures. How can you prepare yourself to be in a state of constant learning and flux? How will you keep your core values at the center while the landscape shifts around you?

- **FEELING OVERWHELMED:** If it feels like too much, it's too much. Trust your feelings. There will be many moments of feeling overwhelmed, so plan for what happens when those feelings come up for you. What can you do when something is too heavy, too much, too many?

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 2.1

Allow space for connection, listening, and healing among all adults in the school community.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

• How are you maximizing supportive connections between all adults in the school community in ways that may look different from previous years?

• How are you using this moment to help tap into educators' sense of purpose to fuel their practice and support their well-being?

• How are you creating spaces for adults to focus on self-care in ways that model what we want to happen for our students?

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 2.1

Allow space for connection, listening, and healing among all adults in the school community.

PREPARE

- Establish dedicated **space**, **time**, and **agreements** for staff to build relationships and collectively heal.

- Create opportunities for **individual staff check-ins** with school leaders.

- Foster a culture of **staff self-care**.

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 2.1

Allow space for connection, listening, and healing among all adults in the school community.

IMPLEMENT

- Integrate SEL practices into staff meetings and rituals

- Implement virtual or in-person healing circles or other opportunities for staff to share and process

- Engage staff in learning how to teach, model, and practice Constructivist Listening

#SELRoadmap | @caselorg

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TOOLS

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 2.1

Allow space for connection, listening, and healing among all adults in the school community.

- Creating Staff Shared Agreements (CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL)
- Educator Resilience and Trauma-Informed Self-Care: Self-Assessment and Planning Tool (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at AIR)
- Self-Care Circle (Circle Forward, via Greater Good Science Center)
- SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook (CASEL)
- Listening as a Leadership Strategy: Getting Started With Constructivist Listening (National Equity Project)
- 5 Minute Chats With the Principal (CASEL with support from NAESP)
- Flexibility, Listening Without Judgment Critical to Support Educators of Color (Education Dive)
- ...And more at casel.org/sel-in-action/reopening-with-SEL.

Example tool: The **SEL Three Signature Practices** serve as structures that help to create a safe and positive learning environment and help to foster strong, nurturing relationships between adults and students—and among students.

SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 2.1

Allow space for connection, listening, and healing among all adults in the school community.

WELCOMING INCLUSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGING STRATEGIES

OPTIMISTIC CLOSURES

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SEL CRITICAL PRACTICE 2.1

Allow space for connection, listening, and healing among all adults in the school community.

TOOLS

One thing that's new in my life is...

SUSTAINING CRITICAL PRACTICE 2
Strengthen adult connections, self-care, competencies, and capacity.

- Ensure regular **time and space for adults to reflect, heal, connect** with each other, and take care of their needs. Continue to partner with community organizations to provide culturally responsive trauma and mental health support.

- Collect ongoing **data on staff needs, wellness, professional learning outcomes, and their capacity** for supporting students (see 4.2). Track coaching and feedback via walkthrough tools or coaching logs for purposes of schoolwide data reflection and continuous improvement.

- Include **staff self-care plans** in any supervision process and establish schoolwide expectations that promote self-care such as avoiding emails or phone/video calls on evenings and weekends.

- Continue to strengthen **collaboration and professional learning** in partnership with all adults in your building to continuously improve and align practices that promote SEL. Create professional learning communities on the intersection of SEL, trauma-informed practices, equity, and healing-centered culturally responsive practices.

Key Thoughts

- As we seek to reunite and renew our school communities, the attention to students' social, emotional and academic development is particularly important now more than ever.

- Many students and adults may have experienced extraordinary events (pandemic, economic crisis, anti-black and systemic racism). The impact of these challenges is not equal.

- School leaders have an opportunity to create new types of learning experiences and adaptive systems of support within rich and supportive learning environments.

- The SEL Roadmap supports planning for the transition back to schools, in whatever form that takes.

- We invite you to **share your own journey** with this SEL Roadmap. Use hashtag **#SELroadmap.**

Questions?