

Social-Emotional Learning Meets Equity

The focus on social-emotional learning for students should be reinforced by SEL and equity training for adults



BIAS. RACISM. CULTURAL COMPETENCE. JUSTICE. While these are terms that every school community has come to acknowledge, they are not words typically associated with social-emotional learning. But if 2020 has taught us anything, it is that the importance of educational equity knows no bounds.

That's why CASEL—the organization with the best-recognized definition for SEL—recently updated its language

to include support for educational equity, placing more focus on authentic partnerships with families and communities, as well as the ongoing examination of identity, prejudice, bias, and cultural competency. All can contribute to the student well-being that undergirds the purpose of SEL.

SEL Is for Adults, Too

To do this work, principals and teachers need training in SEL that is culturally competent and advances equity. Why? Because “even well-intentioned adults in schools—like well-intentioned adults outside of schools—have biases and beliefs that can harm students’ development and overall achievement,” according to “Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Through an Equity Lens,” a 2020 report by The Education Trust featured in this issue of *Principal* (see page 16).

The report argues that current approaches to SEL currently aim to “fix” kids but should instead focus on creating an equitable learning environment. “Teaching students self-management and self-efficacy will have little impact if school leaders fail to address an atmosphere that has become toxic due to discrimination or systemic racism,” the report says.

This issue of *Principal* also addresses one of the year’s most challenging matters: implementing SEL in hybrid and virtual settings. Read “Home Skilled” (page 22) for SEL strategies that work whether you are in person, hybrid, or virtual. You will need them—regardless of your school’s status this year, the summer and fall will usher in a new set of unknowns that require flexibility.

Look to the accompanying *Leading Lessons* staff guide to help students in a post-pandemic world (www.naesp.org/leading-lessons). As an extra bonus we’re pleased to present you with a school safety poster presented in partnership with Lysol; find it on page 31. And as always, please let me know how you enjoy this issue of *Principal* magazine.



Connect
with me on
Twitter

@kaylentucker

—Kaylen Tucker, Ph.D.

NAESP STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NAESP FOUNDATION PRESIDENT
L. Earl Franks, Ed.D., CAE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Kaylen Tucker, Ph.D.
ktucker@naesp.org

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
Edwin Colbert

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE
Krysia Gabenski

EDITORIAL ADVISERS

Neill Alleva, New York

Christopher Bailey, Texas

Julie Bloss, Oklahoma

Todd L. Brist, South Dakota

Edward Cosentino, Maryland

Liz Garden, Massachusetts

Jessica Hutchison, Illinois

Jodi Lemoine, Louisiana

Lyn Marsilio, Virginia

Amy Mason, Alabama

Henry McCain, New Mexico

Kristal Pollard, Mississippi

Bobby Riley, Vermont

Rachel Roberts, Florida

Matt Scott, Alabama

Ryan Sheehy, California

Shanna Spickard, Michigan

Jen Thomas, District of Columbia

Christopher Wooleyhand, Maryland

If you are interested in submitting an article for possible publication in *Principal*, review submission guidelines at www.naesp.org/writing. Send letters to the editor or general inquiries to publications@naesp.org.

ADVERTISING SALES

Fox Associates Inc.
800-345-8670, ext. 119
Fax: 312-644-8718
adinfo.nep@foxrep.com

Printed in the USA by **The YGS Group**
Senior Managing Editor: Ashley Reid
Senior Editor: Ian P. Murphy
Art Director: Zon Buckley
Copy Editor: Steve Kennedy