SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING
Frequently Asked Questions

What is social and emotional learning (SEL)?
SEL is the process through which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to recognize and manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations constructively. Although SEL is not a program, many available programs provide instruction in and opportunities to practice, apply, and be recognized for using SEL skills. Competence in the use of SEL skills is promoted in the context of safe and supportive school, family, and community learning environments in which children feel valued and respected and connected to and engaged in learning. SEL is fundamental not only to children's social and emotional development but to their health, ethical development, citizenship, motivation to achieve, and academic learning as well (Elias et al., 1997)

Why is SEL needed?
In 2017, a 28-member Council of Distinguished Scientists examined the relevant evidence regarding SEL across a range of disciplines and concluded that social and emotional competencies are essential to learning; positive development; and success in school, careers, and life. (Greenberg, M. T. 2023). Evidence for social and emotional learning in schools. (Learning Policy Institute) There is a great deal of data indicating that large numbers of children are contending with significant social, emotional, and mental health barriers to their success in school and life. In addition, many children engage in challenging behaviors that educators must address to provide high quality instruction. Providing students with necessary social skills and coping strategies helps to allow them to feel safe and comfortable at school and ready to learn.

What skills do socially and emotionally competent children and youth have?
Socially and emotionally competent children and youth are skilled in five core areas aligned with the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) competencies:
They are self-aware. They are able to recognize their emotions, describe their interests and values, and accurately assess their strengths. They have a well-grounded sense of self-confidence and hope for the future.
They are able to manage their emotions and behavior. They are able to manage stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles. They can set and monitor progress toward the achievement of personal and academic goals and express their emotions appropriately in a wide range of situations.
They are socially aware. They are able to take the perspective of and empathize with others and recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences. They are able to seek out and appropriately use family, school, and community resources in age-appropriate ways.

They have good relationship skills. They can establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation. They resist inappropriate social pressure; constructively prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflict; and seek and provide help when needed. *They demonstrate responsible decision making at school, at home, and in the community*. In making decisions, they consider ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, respect for others, and the likely consequences of various courses of action. They apply these decision-making skills in academic and social situations and are motivated to contribute to the well-being of their schools and communities

What are the components of effective district-wide SEL programming?
Effective SEL programming includes:
Instruction in and opportunities to practice and apply an integrated set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills:
• Learning environments characterized by trust and respectful relationships
• Implementation that is coordinated and reinforces classroom, school-wide, out-of-school, and at-home learning activities
• Systematic and sequential programming from preschool through 8th grade
• Developmentally and culturally appropriate behavioral supports
• On-going monitoring and evaluation of implementation for continuous improvement

Effective SEL Tier 1 programming provides students with opportunities to contribute to their communities, families with opportunities to enhance their children's social and emotional development, school personnel (administrators, teachers, student support services, and support staff) with ongoing professional development, and community groups that affect the lives of children and youth (e.g., after-school and before-school programs,mental health and health care providers groups) with opportunities to partner with schools. Students that require more support will be supported through the district's MTSS (Multi Tiered System of Support) with Tier 2 and Tier 3 intensive interventions based on their individual needs with a school based counselor or support staff.

What instructional methods are commonly used in SEL?
Effective instructional methods for teaching SEL skills are active, participatory and engaging immersed throughout the school day. The Rumson School District incorporates many programs through our MTSS process to ensure that all students are receiving instruction in SEL including Responsive Classroom, Advisory, Character Education lessons, Mindfulness, Zones of Regulation and Metacognition/SELf questioning.

There is no loss to academic instructional time as these programs are integrated across academic and special area classes. Some examples of SEL instructional practices are as follows:

- Young children can be taught through modeling and coaching to recognize how they feel or how someone else might be feeling using the language of the Zones of Regulation.
- Prompting the use of a conflict-resolution skill and using dialoguing to guide students through the steps can be an effective approach to helping them apply a skill in a new situation.
- During Morning Meetings students can practice group decision making and setting classroom rules, while learning how to interact with classmates in a positive way.
- Combination of mindfulness program and character education lessons within the six day cycle.
- Students can learn cooperation and teamwork through participation in interactive team building, sports and games.
- Students deepen their understanding of a current or historical event by applying to it a set of questions based on a problem-solving model/SELf questioning strategies
- Cross-age mentoring, in which a younger student is paired with an older one, can be effective in building self-confidence, a sense of belonging, and enhancing academic skills.
- Having one member of a pair describe a situation to his partner and having the partner repeat what he or she heard is an effective tool in teaching reflective listening.