

# Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

## Introduction

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is “broadly understood as a process through which individuals build awareness and skills in managing emotions, setting goals, establishing relationships, and making responsible decisions that support success in school and in life. When we think of educating the whole child, their social-emotional development must be considered as a part of overall instruction.” ([OSPI Website.](#))

### 1. Washington’s learning communities should carefully consider SEL data collection.

The state, by establishing SEL standards, indicates that it values SEL for our young people. The only way to know if our students are learning socially and emotionally, or if our schools and systems are fostering SEL well, is to check. Without knowing how things are going, Washington will not know what to continue, expand, replicate, and celebrate or what to limit, correct, or stop altogether. SEL in the dark is not a recipe for success. Collecting and reviewing SEL data should occur amidst other data collection and reviewing relevant for teaching and learning.

### 2. Collecting and reviewing SEL data can serve to advance equity.

For the SEL Advisory Committee, equity means “that each child receives what he or she needs to develop to his or her full academic and social potential.” Attending to issues of equity helps ensure that equity is advanced and that inequities are not perpetuated. Like all other aspects of data collection and review, SEL data collection and reviewing should attend to issues of equity.

### 3. Schools regularly collect data to learn and make adjustments based on what’s working and what needs work.

Any such data could be misused. It could, for example, track students, exclude students from opportunity, or excuse the need to support each student. SEL is no exemption. The law already requires schools to put safeguards in place around student-level data—safeguards such as de-identification, limited use, retention, and right-to-access protocols. Data safeguards must attach to SEL the same way they attached to other student data. How SEL data are intended to be used must be made explicit and with care.

### 4. There are valid and reliable ways to assess SEL.

The field has developed several effective, research-based tools that educators can use to check and see how well SEL is going in a learning setting. These, with the proper data safeguards in place, can ensure Washington’s learning communities are on track and stay on track for young people’s social-emotional learning. CASEL offers an [SEL Assessment Guide](#) to help the field understand what research-based options are available for collecting and reviewing SEL data. CASEL also has a [school guide](#) to help learning communities look at the process of advancing SEL holistically, which includes but is not limited to considerations around collecting and reviewing SEL data.

