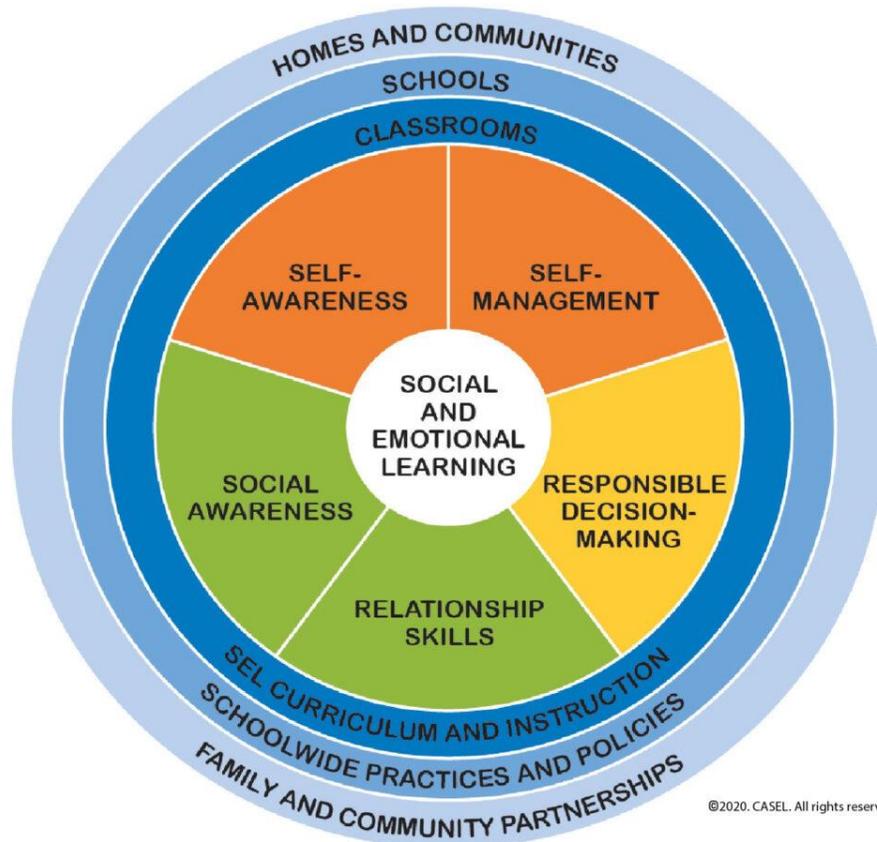


Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

The return to school this year will bring unprecedented challenges regarding the emotional wellness of students and staff. It is critical that our school community focus on strengthening our emotional competencies in order to support equitable learning environments where all students and staff can heal and thrive. To accomplish this, White Plains City School District is aligning the SEL work to the CASEL Five Core Competencies that research has shown us to be critical to the development of emotionally healthy and competent adults.



School Counseling plans

Our school counseling plans are to be reviewed and updated to meet the district's current needs. Areas of considerations are:

- the use of the elementary counselor to support self-management and self-awareness
- utilizing school counselors as part of a multi-tiered system of supports
- utilizing a school wide referral process for students requiring support
- identifying and rectifying gaps in the completion of graduation requirements resultant of the COVID 19 school closure.

K-12 Counseling Advisory Panel

The K-12 Counseling Advisory Council is a working group comprised of parents/guardians, students, members of the board of education, school building and/or district leaders, community-based service providers, teachers, certified school counselors, and other pupil personnel service providers including school social workers and/or school psychologists. Their role is to inform the comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan. Before adopting any changes to the comprehensive counseling plan, the K-12 Counseling Advisory Panel will meet to review the changes.

Referrals for Support Services and Programs

A district wide process for referrals will be developed. The referral will identify the student's social emotional needs and which tier of services the student will access. Referrals will be submitted to the building child study team and should be reviewed and resolved in a timely manner. For students, who the building suspects may have a disability, the building and the Special Education office should work in collaboration to determine the next steps consistent with the Committee on Special Education referral process. Referrals that come through the Special Education department will be forwarded back to the building principal for review. The building will have 10 days in which to review the referral and speak with the parent/guardian before moving it forward to the Committee on Special Education.

Professional Development and Building Capacity

Faculty and staff will be provided opportunities for professional development on how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency. In addition, buildings will identify additional professional development for supporting the development of coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff. All trainings will be aligned to developing the CASEL Five Core Competencies. The districtwide SEL committee will support buildings in the identification and provision of professional development.

Considerations for Reopening Plans

As the district and building level SEL teams meet the following items must be considered and addressed as part of the individual building reopening plans:

- The deepening of staffs understanding of SEL, mental health, and trauma responsive practices through professional learning.
- Communication that stresses the importance of SEL as a priority and engages members of the school community in implementing imbedded SEL into instructional practices
- How to partner with community agencies to enhance partnerships that will strengthen district initiatives.
- How to provide safe spaces for staff to process, connect and heal
- Adoption of a screening tool to assist PPS staff in identifying students in need of supports

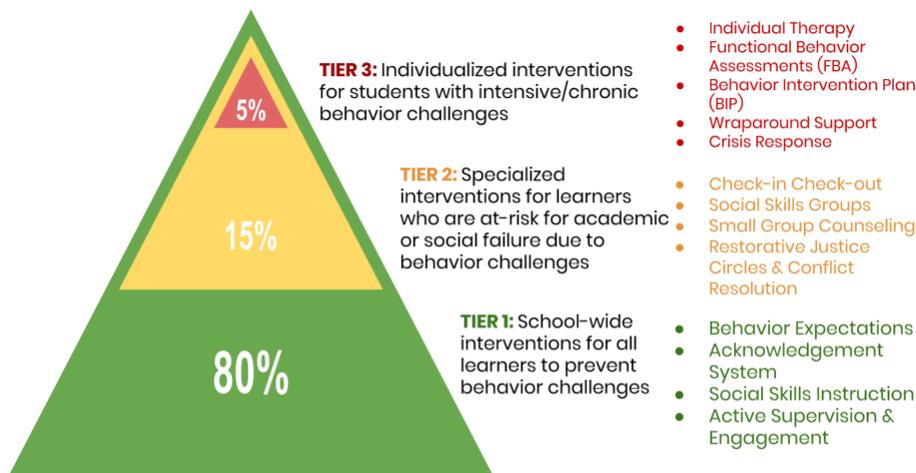
- Articulation of a multi-tiered system of social and emotional supports (MTSS) that reflects a school-wide implementation of effective, evidence-based practices and strategies that all students can access.
- Identifying the necessary data that will be necessary in determining the effectiveness of the multi- tiered system of supports.

Mental Health and Trauma-Responsive Practices

Prior to the reopening of schools, staff will be provided professional development that will help them identify trauma and provide in classroom supports for students. The focus of adult- student interaction, will be thoughtful responses that consider the root causes of the student's behavior and determine the individual student needs to address the root causes. This shifts the reaction from a negative to a positive reaction to student behavior

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

MTSS is an evidenced based approach to a comprehensive system that addresses behavior challenges. Supports are layered to include proactive, universal classroom interventions, secondary interventions for at-risk students and intensive supports high risk students. Moving through the tiers, is based on the individual needs of the students. The work of the district and building level SEL committees will be to identify and implement the tiers of interventions. These structures and supports will be critical in maximizing the pupil services staff's ability to promote a safe and supportive learning environment for everyone in the school community.



Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Transformative SEL

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as, “the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” The work of the SEL committee’s will be to create a common understanding of the breadth of the SEL competencies and support an integrated approach to the development of the competencies in both staff and students. Working as a team, buildings will support teachers in imbedding the competencies into daily instruction and creating spaces for adults to strengthen their own competencies. SEL competencies must be culturally and linguistically responsive and part of our districtwide equity work.

Planning and Capacity Building

Central to the reopening plan is the prioritization of mental health and wellbeing for students and staff. Planning includes staff, family, students and community members and is grounded in the results of the surveys administered to staff and families. The data identified the following areas of need:

- Social Emotional Learning Competencies
- Building Trauma informed schools
- Stress reduction and self-care

In planning, the needs of both students and adults will be taken into consideration and resources and professional development will be aligned to both district data and the CASEL Roadmap for Reopening Schools.

Adult SEL & Well-Being

During the period of the COVID 19 school closure, adults in our school community have experienced stress, anxiety, grief and trauma. In the survey administered to staff, employees indicated that they would require ongoing support to manage and process their experiences during the COVID 19 school closure, and strategies to manage anxiety and stress. In creating the building-based reopening plans, each building, in collaboration with the district SEL team, will explore and plan for the following considerations:

- Ongoing support groups for staff led by either district PPS staff or an outside mental health professional
- Community building time to create a safe space for staff to come together and heal, professional learning and planning opportunities
- Access to information regarding the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Professional development in the areas of psychological mental health and coping strategies
- Professional development in trauma informed care and mindfulness
- Ongoing equity work

- Building based time during the Superintendent Conference Days for staff to come together for discussions regarding experiences during the closure, community building, identifying new needs, and scheduled support and communication.
- Robust SEL resource list

Student SEL and Well-Being

The priorities as we open schools will be, targeting school climate, transition back to school, the role of trauma, reengaging students both academically and socially and identifying students who will require a higher level of support. Imbedding social emotional learning into the curriculum to support the development of the CASEL 5 Core Competencies will be addressed in the following ways:

- Professional development for staff on the foundations of SEL and embedding SEL into instruction
- Professional development for staff on embedding trauma informed practices into classrooms
- A planned transition back to school including visual supports for students on what to expect
- Synchronous daily meetings to build community
- Behavioral norming for both in person and remote instruction
- Professional development for PPS staff on building resiliency and coping skills in students
- Increased community partnerships to support SEL- community partners are a part of the Districtwide SEL committee
- Identification and administration of a SEL screener to identify students who may require Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports
- Increased group counseling for all students to access
- Leveraging building level SEL teams to create additional experiences for adult/student and student/student connections

Using Data for Continuous Improvement

In planning for reopening White Plains City School District has surveyed staff and parents and planned for the surveying of students. As we reenter school, this data will serve as a baseline. Over the course of the year students and staff will provide feedback to the building level SEL teams as to the effectiveness of the interventions. In addition, data such as engagement in remote instruction, discipline referrals, referrals to the Child Study team, will serve to inform the future SEL needs of students and staff. Frequent informal feedback should be utilized to identify roadblocks and revise initial services and supports to both staff and students. Any review of the data should involve all stakeholders with the focus of continuous improvement.