



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 2021

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents and
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Kyle L. Guerrant, Deputy Superintendent *KG*
Finance and Operations

SUBJECT: Children Matter. You Matter. Learn SEL.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the bridge upon which all learning occurs. Reading social cues, identifying feelings, and working with a range of emotions are essential skills children need to navigate both the pandemic and the disruption with online and in-person learning. The skills of self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness enhance decision-making and teach a child how to connect with and befriend others. To that end, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is launching an effort to expand and strengthen SEL professional learning across the state.

During the pandemic—and in many cases before—Michigan educators have understood the value of working in the social and emotional learning space. That said, everything in this space is not SEL as defined by CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

As we as educators seek to improve how we support children and to do so from a common foundation of understanding of SEL, MDE is asking educators to complete the introduction to SEL online module hosted at Michigan Virtual. We know that some of your educators have already done so. The goal is to have as many educators as possible, a minimum of two per school building, complete the module by September 6, 2021. The course is free, offers state continuing education clock hours (SCECHs), and takes around two hours to complete. Please visit <https://plp.michiganvirtual.org/Registration.aspx?section=541> to register for this important professional development opportunity. There are five SEL modules for those who would like additional SEL professional opportunities. For more information, please visit <https://michiganvirtual.org/sel>.

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State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice created a statewide SEL/children's mental health network several months ago. He and MDE staff continue to meet monthly with members of the statewide SEL/children's mental health network. The network, composed of educators, school health coordinators, administrators, and student support staff, is promoting learning the "[CASEL 5" SEL skills](#), among other efforts. While network membership is complete for the moment, invitations will expand as participation opportunities occur.

With funding through the Michigan Health Endowment Fund (MHEF), MDE will soon begin a pilot effort on districtwide SEL. The department and its partners will be developing a coaching infrastructure that will allow a statewide cadre of professionals to support teachers and students in the implementation of SEL in every region of the state. To learn more about the work involved in districtwide SEL, please review the SEL district [rubric](#).

For questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Leisa Gallagher by email at gallagherl@michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors