

SEL Innovation Awards for Teachers

2017 Recipients and Project Descriptions

The SEL Innovation Awards for Teachers sought proposals from individual educators and teams of educators seeking to improve systems that foster social and emotional skills in fresh, inventive or innovative ways. Examples include novel interventions or instructional practices focused on improving competencies such as resilience, learning mindsets, compassion, self-management and sense of belonging. Though all proposals were welcome, the fund prioritized proposals that specifically support one or more of the following student populations:

- Students from indigenous communities
- New arrivals (such as refugees) or immigrants
- English learners
- Students with significant adverse childhood experiences
- Single-sex environments

We received 479 applications from more than 40 states. Through a competitive process, 67 teachers were selected. See below for the complete list of teacher recipients, organized by state and district, followed by a brief description of each teacher’s SEL project beginning on page 3. Or click on a name to go directly to that teacher’s project description. You can also find out more about the SEL Innovation Awards for Districts by visiting education-first.com/social-emotional-learning-innovation-fund.

Teacher	District	State
Tiffany L. Brown	Mobile County Public School System	Alabama
Kim Liland	Anchorage School District	Alaska
Maribel Salazar	Anchorage School District	Alaska
Jessica Williams	Anchorage School District	Alaska
Chris Brown	Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	Alaska
Stefanie Ewbank & Christina Aragon	Alhambra Elementary School District	Arizona
Katherine Engel	Amphitheater Public Schools	Arizona
Daniel Schneider	Amphitheater Public Schools	Arizona
Cassondra Bussing	Glendale Elementary School District	Arizona
Karyn Rabe	Paradise Valley Unified School District	Arizona
Michaela Thomas	Gateway Community Charters	California
Karen Cevallos	West Contra Costa Unified Schools	California
Regina Keeley	Boulder Valley School District	Colorado
Vae Champagne	Bridgeport Public Schools	Connecticut
Christopher Poulos	Regional School District No. 9	Connecticut
Heather Sevier	Duval County Public Schools	Florida
Colleen LaHatte	St. Johns County School District	Florida
Nancy Klausner	Atlanta Public Schools	Georgia
Bridget McNeill	Barrow County School System	Georgia
Claudia Fitzwater	Drew Charter School	Georgia
Ivee Cruz	Hawaii DOE (Roosevelt Complex Area)	Hawaii
Mary Haddad	Chicago Public Schools	Illinois
Shawana Ridley	Chicago Public Schools	Illinois

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Teacher	District	State
Molly Spooner	Chicago Public Schools	Illinois
Peter Stover	Chicago Public Schools	Illinois
Raymond Baker	Hinsdale District 86	Illinois
Neema Avashia	Boston Public Schools	Massachusetts
Jillian Meade	Boston Public Schools	Massachusetts
Tess Milliken	Boston Public Schools	Massachusetts
Heron Russell	Boston Public Schools	Massachusetts
Samantha Curtis	Lawrence Public Schools	Massachusetts
Karrie Marciniak	Bay City Public Schools	Michigan
Kate Burwinkel	Traverse City Area Public Schools	Michigan
Ashley Karlsson	Minneapolis Public Schools	Minnesota
Angie Harper	Saint Paul Public Schools	Minnesota
Ty Gomez	Washoe County School District	Nevada
Jaime MacEwen	Cumberland Regional School District	New Jersey
Courtney Weiss-Chromeck	Florham Park School District	New Jersey
Pamela Vance	Hunterdon Central Regional High School	New Jersey
Lisa Vasquez	Ruidoso Municipal Schools	New Mexico
Byrne Larsen	Santa Fe Public Schools	New Mexico
Amber Chandler	Frontier Central School District	New York
Alma Aviles	New York City Department of Education	New York
Angela Manekas	New York City Department of Education	New York
Linda Noble	New York City Department of Education	New York
Alhassan Susso	New York City Department of Education	New York
Carol Tureski	New York City Department of Education	New York
Dawn Krom	Ulster County BOCES	New York
Gregory Bowman	Guilford County Schools	North Carolina
Dana Davis	Akron Public Schools	Ohio
Melissa Marini Svigelj-Smith	Cleveland Metro School District	Ohio
Carrie Brown	Portland Public Schools	Oregon
Chrissa Sullivan	Mt. Lebanon School District	Pennsylvania
Jessica Hubbard	Achievement School District	Tennessee
Benisha Lewis & Jessica Faro	Achievement School District	Tennessee
Jarred Amato	Metro Nashville Public Schools	Tennessee
Alexa Humberson	Austin Independent School District	Texas
Mary Metcalf	Austin Independent School District	Texas
Elizabeth Syria	Tooele County School District	Utah
Mary Muroski	Champlain Valley School District	Vermont
Tina Vasquez	Charlottesville City Schools	Virginia
Gwendolyn Nixon	Richmond Public Schools	Virginia
Lecia Anne Curtis	Spokane School District	Washington
Carrie Stradley	Tukwila School District	Washington
Jordan Stray	Tumwater School District	Washington
Sue Bernhagen	Madison Metropolitan School District	Wisconsin
Melanie Fischer	School District of Onalaska	Wisconsin

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Tiffany Brown • W.P. Davidson High School • Mobile County Public School System • Mobile, AL

The SEL Innovation Grant will allow me to implement new projects in my class through graphic novels and the use of technology in order to promote the overall theme of our class...tolerance! I plan to purchase a class set of *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, a graphic novel of a non-fictional Holocaust survivor's experience. I hope to purchase a class set of tablets to promote digital literacy as well language acquisition through the use of language apps and online tools. Finally, I hope to take my students on a field trip to New Orleans in order to experience the WWII Museum.

Kim Liland • East High School • Anchorage School District • Anchorage, AK

Anchorage's East High is the most ethnically diverse school in the Nation, and 80% of the student body is or previously was classified as English Language Learners. This project aims to empower immigrant and refugee students to make short films on Social-Emotional Learning. Students can choose to create one film, or to engage in a semester-long curriculum that will enable them to receive credit, which is often a necessity for graduation. This program will provide SEL for participating students, the entire student body who will view the films, and community members in Anchorage through a public film screening.

Maribel Salazar • Government Hill Elementary School • Anchorage School District • Anchorage, AK

We plan to create Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Themed Learning Kits to help us continue our work in providing SEL supports to our English Language Learners. These kits will include multiple resources, such as student literature and supporting activities in both English and Spanish. We also plan on providing professional development opportunities for teachers to understand how to use these kits, how to infuse SEL lessons into their daily routines and other academic lessons, and how to help support students that are learning a different language.

Jessica Williams • South Anchorage High School • Anchorage School District • Anchorage, AK

The South Anchorage High School Peer Mentorship team is proud to provide support for incoming and current freshman students to help ease their transition and create a pathway for success in high school. The mentorship program is self-funded through donations and fundraising efforts. The grant award will provide needed support for the desire to reach out to our minority and underserved populations, and any freshman student who demonstrates intensive disconnect, socially, emotionally and academically, from our school environment. The grant funds will be used to purchase incentives for participation in our gathering activities and in school-wide activities, for mentor training and education materials, and for program materials to use to work with the students.

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Chris Brown • Homer Flex High School • Kenai Peninsula Borough School District • Homer, AK

Homer Flex High School is an alternative high school located in Homer, Alaska. With a small, highly-trained staff, Flex has worked to increase social and emotional learning in the school-wide environment using tools such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Flex staff are now turning their attention to improving their approach to school discipline. The Flex staff and administration, with help from the NoVo Foundation, are implementing a school discipline approach based on restorative practices using three steps: (1) consult with experts on restorative justice to understand how to best incorporate these practices in our school, (2) provide professional development and training to all teachers and staff for integrating restorative justice practices into their classroom, (3) begin creating student advisory groups to incorporate in the restorative justice process.

Stefanie Ewbank & Christina Aragon • R.E. Simpson School • Alhambra Elementary School District • Phoenix, AZ

R.E. Simpson School services a large population of refugee students and English Language Learners. To better serve these students both socially and academically, our Language Lab would allow students to practice not only their developing English skills through real-world applications, but they can also be introduced to social and relationship skills, practice executive functioning such as impulse control and self-regulation, as well as to develop socially acceptable behaviors like turn-taking and waiting in line. The Language Lab will be set up with living spaces where students can practice interacting with peers and developing a kinesthetic connection to their budding English vocabulary.

Katherine Engel • Amphitheater High School • Amphitheater Public Schools • Tucson, AZ

Grammar in the Greenhouse: Amphitheater High School English language learners engage in Project-Based activities in the school greenhouse and garden. Newcomers from every corner of the world develop expertise in growing their own food and sharing it with the community. They build up confidence and emotional intelligence, connect with one another, gain relief from past traumatic experiences, and acquire collaboration skills in a new environment. English language development teachers serve as students' advocates, as they teach students to communicate effectively in English within the context of real-world application of urban gardening, sustainability, and financial literacy.

Daniel Schneider • Amphitheater High School • Amphitheater Public Schools • Tucson, AZ

Amphitheater High School has a high population of English language learner and refugee students who often come to our school with limited language and math ability. We've developed a program that meets students at their level, differentiating all the way down to a kindergarten level if necessary. The keys to our success are: recruiting tutors to reduce the student-teacher ratio as low as possible, using hands-on manipulatives, and differentiating instruction through the ST Math software program which is entirely visual based. This creates a robust, inclusive environment where success is possible without the barriers of language.

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Cassandra Bussing • Glendale Landmark School • Glendale Elementary School District • Glendale, AZ

The I.C.A.N. Scholars (Independent Community and Neighborhood Scholars) project is designed to help refugees and other immigrants at Landmark School in Glendale, Arizona. These students are new to America, just starting to learn English, and are generally unfamiliar with how to utilize basic neighborhood resources, such as American-style grocery stores, public safety departments, banks, and the medical system. I.C.A.N. Scholars will learn about resources available in the community, study appropriate terminology to navigate the systems, practice utilizing the resources, and implement their skills on field trips to locations throughout the community.

Karyn Rabe • Desert Cove Elementary School • Paradise Valley Unified School District • Phoenix, AZ

We are on the move at Desert Cove! This school year will be one of change and innovation as we elevate student success and build resiliency in our students by intentionally pursuing relationships and building community within our classrooms and school. How? Implementing the Sanford Harmony SEL program schoolwide will build classrooms as communities. Buddy classrooms and a peer mentoring program will promote greater connectedness within the school. Our student government program (STUGO) will build student leaders. Struggling students will be identified early in the school year and students will be supported with relationship based and academic interventions.

Michaela Thomas • Higher Learning Academy • Gateway Community Charters • McClellan, CA

Our project includes SEL professional learning opportunities during staff in-service days to enrich educators with SEL techniques, dialogue, and tools to use in the classroom. Teachers will create “Moving Moments” in their monthly newsletters and create a “Calm and Cool Community Forum” for parents to extend SEL practices into the home environment. Our student-led group will develop and share mindfulness and SEL messaging to their peers, the school, and the community. The group will plan activities such as sidewalk chalk messages, a poster contest, and social media outreach. We expect to recruit two community partners as classroom guest speakers.

Karen Cevallos • Washington Elementary • West Contra Costa Unified School District • Richmond, CA

The goal of our program is to better prepare our 6th grade students for the difficult demands of middle school and puberty. We will begin the year with a three-day trip at an outdoor education program called Nature Bridge where students develop trust and a sense of belonging. They will then use the knowledge and skills they gain to develop an action project which impacts the greater community. We hope to end the year with a group of students that are not only confident but empowered to make good choices for themselves and their communities. Hopefully we can provide a template for the district.

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Regina Keeley • Boulder Preparatory High School • Boulder Valley School District • Boulder, CO

Boulder Prep High School will provide Social Emotional Learning through an Equine Program. This program will offer students classes that incorporate Equine Assisted Therapy, Leadership, Animal Science, Psychology, and Service Learning. Boulder Prep serves a population that struggles with anxiety, depression, and trauma. Students will be able to access horses as a coping method when they are having social/emotional struggles that prevent them from being able to engage in their classes. The goals of this program are to help students develop coping strategies, leadership skills, and a sense of empowerment.

Vae Champagne • Central High School • Bridgeport Public Schools • Bridgeport, CT

Central High School will pilot a new social-emotional learning (SEL) mentoring and train-the-trainer initiative. Students will be at the forefront of these efforts by providing training, mentoring, and modelling to peers. The mentorship component will bridge positive peer relationships between upperclassmen who have demonstrated academic success and a high level of emotional intelligence with underclassmen who have struggled socially, emotionally, academically, and/or behaviorally. Train-the-trainer sessions will give eleventh grade students the opportunity to teach Yale University's RULER curriculum to ninth graders. Equipping and empowering students with SEL competencies and leadership roles will help infuse SEL more deeply into our school culture.

Christopher Poulos • Joel Barlow High School • Regional School District No. 9 • Redding, CT

Our goal is to further explore and plan for the integration of SEL across all academic disciplines, through participation at the Anchors of Emotional Intelligence Institute for High School Educators. Subsequent to our attendance at the Institute, our team of educators (2 Administrators, 2 Humanities Teachers, 2 STEM Teachers, a Counselor and Special Educator) plans to share the RULER resources, tools, and training that we acquire with colleagues who advise ninth grade students. Our plan is to develop four SEL advisory lessons (one per quarter) and then train the ninth grade advisors to implement them during the 2017-2018 school year.

Heather Sevier • Fletcher Middle School • Duval County Public Schools • Jacksonville Beach, FL

By the year 2020, 80% of jobs will require STEM knowledge and skills. This grant is going toward funding an all-girls robotics team at my middle school. My dream is to show girls that they can be engineers and scientists, building personal identity and personal and social awareness in the process. FIRST Lego League is a great vehicle for exposing girls to the world of robotics and the grant dollars will help us buy our robot kit.

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Colleen LaHatte • The Webster School • St. Johns County School District • St. Augustine, FL

The focus of our vision is to promote self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills with students by incorporating “shades of feelings” buddy benches within common play areas. Students will paint and decorate the benches with different shades of feelings, written or drawn by students, to help in identifying feelings. During unstructured playtime, students will utilize the benches if they experience emotions that hinder them from engaging with others. Others will notice someone on the bench and respond with kindness by being their bench buddy. Our project also incorporates a literature library for teachers with a focus on SEL needs.

Nancy Klausner • Harper Archer Middle School • Atlanta Public Schools • Atlanta, GA

The My Sister’s Keeper Mentoring program is committed to improving the total health and wellness of its mentees. The staff selected to be part of the program will embrace Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as a key component to helping disadvantaged youth at Harper Archer Middle School reach their full potential. SEL helps our mentees become more aware of their feelings, actions and decision-making, giving them an edge in both their academic and personal endeavors. Once these mentees have mastered the objectives in our SEL program they will become student SEL leaders in the school. They will mentor pre-identified seventh and six grade students. Students will participate in a series of classes, workshops and field trips which embrace and help them use Social Emotional Learning components in real world settings.

Bridget McNeill • Auburn Elementary • Barrow County School System • Auburn, GA

The goal of this project is to promote the social, emotional, and academic growth of elementary school students through the use of instructional conversations. Instructional conversations provide opportunities for students to develop conversational skills as they collaborate with a small group to create a product or solve a problem. Prior to the group work, students set and share personal conversation goals, and work towards those goals while they are also working on academic goals. This project will provide teacher training and instructional materials that will support the use of this pedagogy.

Claudia Fitzwater • Drew Charter School • Atlanta Public Schools • Atlanta, GA

Classroom re-design for social-emotional skill building is a student-led project that will re-imagine the Spanish classroom (office space utilized as a classroom) into a space that is adapted to students' social-emotional needs. This proposal looks into the relationship between spaces, learning, stimuli, and relationships in the class, looking for ways to expand and re-define the traditional classroom setting into a more dynamic and mobile space, designed to adapt to students emotional needs and psychosocial development. The project's driving question is: How can we create a flexible space, adaptable to students' psycho-evolutionary stages while promoting diversity, autonomy and understanding of individuals within groups?

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Ivee Cruz • University Laboratory School • Hawaii DOE Roosevelt Complex Area • Honolulu, HI

Global Leadership weaves diversity, social justice, indigenous and global issues with an innovative student-centered approach to cultivating lifelong learning. Global SEL encourages students to explore, apply, and understand complicated community and world issues. SEL empowers students with the tools to be able to address the constant and ever-changing world in meaningful, mindful, and healthy ways. The Global Leadership program cultivates students as catalysts for change in their classroom, school and community. Students serve as ambassadors, global citizens and leaders. Global Leadership SEL project is an innovative approach to cultivating global citizenship in youth, through an experiential youth leadership program.

Mary Haddad • Disney II Magnet Elementary School • Chicago Public Schools • Chicago, IL

The SEL Innovation Award for Teachers will fund the "Agents of Change" program (agentsofchange.online). "Agents of Change" are students who are offered opportunities to make contemporary art while defining their identity, participating in and developing community and promoting a sense belonging through building and sustaining social and emotional skills. The "Agents of Change" are empowered to promote initiatives they elect as important and significant to who they are in the world around them. The project instructors develop partnerships that facilitate collaborative lessons with artists, curators and art institutions to deepen curriculum and content knowledge to facilitate meaningful experiences.

Shawana Ridley • Burnside Scholastic Academy • Chicago Public Schools • Chicago, IL

Burnside Scholastic Academy plans to develop a philosophy of empowerment for young Brown girls in middle school called *Brown Girl Magic*. We aim for our young ladies to feel secure with themselves, make positive choices about their own lives and do positive things for others. We want Brown girls to express their feelings and acknowledge the feelings and thoughts of others in caring ways. In times of insecurity and self-doubt, Brown girls will have learned to work through their problems and grow up to lead full, valuable lives that not worried by physical appearances, because confidence looks great!

Molly Spooner • Walter Payton College Preparatory Academy • Chicago Public Schools • Chicago, IL

Our project aims to increase faculty understanding of the role of emotional intelligence in education and faculty comfort levels with implementing social emotional learning (SEL) within the classroom. Our innovative approach will provide faculty education on adolescent mental health, experiential SEL training that includes parents and students, and an SEL assessment to analyze the effectiveness of our approach and ensure future iterations are data-driven. Our goal is to improve cultural engagement within the classroom and to enhance interventions within our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support framework so that we can provide holistic supports for every student.

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Peter Stover • Parker Community Academy • Chicago Public Schools • Chicago, IL

Parker Community Academy presents: "The New Englewood Renaissance - Healing, Hope, and Restoration." Students will engage in a multi-academic and arts disciplinary unit that will crystalize their understanding of the new Restorative Justice Practices we are implementing in my school. The project will integrate reading and writing skills as students conduct research and articulate what they are learning and how they are growing. This project will integrate the four art disciplines: music, dance, theater, and the visual arts. The culminating activity will include a dance performance choreographed by an instructor from Forward Momentum Chicago that embodies the essence of restorative practice.

Raymond Baker • Hinsdale South High School • Hinsdale District 86 • Willowbrook, IL

This project is designed to support the emotional growth of young adults with disabilities as they navigate the post-secondary education setting and college classes while still being enrolled in and supported by their local high school. The project will consist of a weekly class co-taught by a special education teacher and social worker as well as bi-monthly service learning opportunities to generalize skills learned in the class.

Neema Avashia • John W. McCormack Middle School • Boston Public Schools • Boston, MA

My project involves creating re-regulation spaces in our school building to support students who have experienced trauma. We currently have a partner in our school, the Trinity Boston Foundation, which runs a re-regulation space very effectively for the small number of students on their caseload (30). We would like to expand re-regulation support to our broader student body by creating a re-regulation room with meditation tools, exercise equipment, sound therapy, etc., to help students cope when they are feeling dysregulated. We are also going to use these funds to create re-regulation kits for teachers' classrooms that students can access. These kits would include sensory toys, coloring mandalas, journal pages, and other tools that students can use to help them re-regulate after being triggered.

Jillian Meade • Succeed Boston • Boston Public Schools • Boston, MA

Succeed Boston will educate, empower and support middle school students who are suspended in Boston Public Schools through targeted SEL curriculum, Restorative Justice, and ongoing school-based support. 12 school-based staff will be provided with training and tools necessary to facilitate a Restorative Reentry process and increase the SEL capacity of students' home-schools. Our aim is to build a bridge between our short-term intervention program and students' home-schools to create a model for a supportive, restorative and successful reentry for suspended students. This bridge will utilize school-based relationships to increase students' sense of self-efficacy, school-connectedness, and resilience.

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Tess Milliken • Dennis C. Haley Pilot School • Boston Public Schools • Roslindale, MA

The Gas Station Project will provide eight elementary classrooms with an emotional check-in system, social-emotional lessons and self-management materials for a break space (“Gas Station”). The Gas Station is a space in the classroom that provides options for students to spend two minutes to de-escalate and refocus in order to rejoin the class and maintain classroom success both socially and academically. Students will also learn how to identify their emotions and identify when and how to use the Gas Station. Overall, the project will also increase engagement and relationships in the classroom and allow for positive community support.

Heron Russell • George H. Conley Elementary School • Boston Public Schools • Boston, MA

In order to cultivate an environment of inclusion, respect, and justice at the Conley School, we will utilize best practices from the fields of SEL and Critical Race in Education to craft a model for a “Culturally Responsive Morning Meeting.” Seven teachers will receive training and co-planning time to develop and implement this program with the following goals: Build a safe and supportive classroom community, recognize and celebrate racial and cultural diversity in the classroom, develop cultural competency and communication skills among students and teachers, and promote social justice in the classroom.

Samantha Curtis • ENLACE • Lawrence Public Schools • Lawrence, MA

ENLACE, a newcomers’ high school academy in Lawrence, MA, serves English Language Learners (ELLs) and ELLs with limited or interrupted formal education. To meet these diverse needs, teachers will infuse social-emotional learning (SEL) into instruction, school culture, and family engagement. Teachers will create an SEL Toolkit, including lesson plans, instructional routines, ELL-friendly rubrics, and materials for sharing social-emotional growth with families. Staff will be trained in restorative practices, and will use advisory blocks to teach SEL competencies and conference with students about SEL progress. Their goal is for all students to grow two levels on the rubric by June 2018.

Karrie Marciniak • Mackensen Elementary • Bay City Public Schools • Bay City, MI

Team Paws is an awesome group of 3rd grade service workers. It's our goal to change the world with kindness. Even the smallest kind act can mean a lot; hold the door, smile at someone, use your manners, be humble, and be kind, always. The kids on Team Paws understand that what they do and say matters and their actions can make a difference. As members of Team Paws, they learn we truly DO rise by lifting others. Our motto, Spread Kindness, is what makes being a part of Team Paws so special and important. Team Paws is a group of 30 little kids giving back to our community through volunteerism. We also bring therapy dogs into the school to listen to children read. When children are reading to dogs, they are not nervous because a dog will not correct them. In time, their fluency, accuracy, comprehension and speaking skills will improve.

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Kate Burwinkel • Long Lake Elementary • Traverse City Area Public Schools • Traverse City, MI

The Long Lake Elementary project builds capacity within our staff and community to support the social emotional development of our students. The grant will expand upon the use of Responsive Classroom and continue formal professional development for staff. In addition, the grant will empower our students to lead social support networks for their peers and offer a parent night to provide workshop sessions related to social and emotional health. The parent night will also engage community organizations to share their resources. The grant will enable us to build leadership within our school and build capacity within our school district.

Ashley Karlsson • Washburn High School • Minneapolis Public Schools • Minneapolis, MN

This project seeks to amplify the voice and self-awareness of English Learners through the study of authentic narratives. In a diverse school population, it is important to cultivate an asset-based mindset and encourage perspective-taking that crosses linguistic, religious and cultural differences. This project will build empathy and appreciation for diversity by redesigning environmental media to be more inclusive of all students, building a classroom library that allows teachers to implement lessons grounded in the experiences of marginalized populations, and promoting self-advocacy and social awareness by helping students to write, publish and share their stories within the school and greater community.

Angie Harper • Harding High School • Saint Paul Public Schools • St. Paul, MN

Saint Paul Public Schools will develop a culturally relevant space for American Indian students at Harding High School, which serves the highest population of American Indian secondary students in the district. The space will create a sense of belonging for American Indian students, and elevate the visibility of their culture in the school. This multi-purpose space will include room for peer tutoring, one-on-one or small group counseling, culture-based student supports, family meetings and afterschool gatherings. The proposed activities will help American Indian students attain the crucial building blocks for successful learning, like self-regulation, stress management and a sense of belonging.

Ty Gomez • Kate Smith Elementary School • Washoe County School District • Sparks, NV

"The Best Me I Can Be!" at Kate Smith Elementary School will train teachers to teach social/emotional skills using the literature of children's author Julia Cook. In addition to professional development, "Calm Down Corners" in each classroom will be created to encourage students to use these newly-acquired SEL skills to regulate their emotions and return to a state of calm. These skills will help create a school-wide environment of successful problem solvers. Author Julia Cook will also visit the school to expand students', teachers', and parents' knowledge of SEL and how to apply it in their everyday lives.

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Jaime MacEwen • Cumberland Regional High School • Cumberland Regional School District • Bridgeton, NJ

The Freshman Seminar/Senior Mentoring project at Cumberland Regional High School will support the transition to high school for academically at-risk ninth-graders. The project will expand and enhance the Freshman Seminar/Senior Mentoring program at CRHS, which partners freshmen with role model Senior Mentors to work together on character and leadership development, the promotion of positive school culture, and setting and progressing toward goals for academic success. The innovative program facilitates positive outcomes by supporting student development of social and emotional learning skills and competencies as well as effective strategies that promote positive behaviors, academic success, improved school attendance, and on-time graduation.

Courtney Weiss-Chromeck • Ridgedale Middle School • Florham Park School District • Florham Park, NJ

Ridgedale Middle School's project, "Prosthetic Hands for Change" uses 3D printers to design and create prosthetic hands for children who lost their hands. Special education students have the opportunity to work together on digital printing software on their computers to design hands for individual children using suggestions from the Prosthetic Kids Hand Challenge. From there, the individual pieces of the hands are put together. The finished products are shipped to the Prosthetic Kids Hand Challenge where they are given to children in need. This project allows students to work as a team to create a product that will benefit someone whose needs are greater than their own.

Pamela Vance • Hunterdon Central Regional High School • Flemington, NJ

The project will be a collaborative unit between a mainstream English class and an advanced ESL class. The goal of the project is to give students an opportunity to become familiar with students from different cultures and share several types of poetry experiences. Students will share immigrant experiences through joint class projects including "I, too" by Langston Hughes, original poems and cultural perspectives which will highlight the difficult and often times isolated environment of non-English speaking immigrants. The lessening of social barriers and new academic opportunities will benefit both groups of students.

Lisa Vasquez • Ruidoso Middle School • Ruidoso Municipal Schools • Ruidoso, NM

Addressing a very critical question for adolescents in the process of forming their identity, our project will focus on the question "Who am I and where does my identity come from?" Through reading, discussion, writing, role playing, physical fitness, and art, students will understand what factors influence their identity and how their identities inform their values, ideas, and actions. Once our students better understand their own identities, they will be better equipped to understand and manage their emotional needs, show empathy for others, and have the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with their peers, parents, and teachers.

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Byrne Larsen • El Camino Real Academy • Santa Fe Public Schools • Santa Fe, NM

We are creating and implementing a "continuous improvement" model based on the work of W. Edwards Deming, while potentially seeding a school-wide behavior management system. The intention is to create a grade-level scholastic culture of empowerment and student agency through goal setting, team building, continuous feedback and accountability for learning. This is a student-centered, data driven method relying on the PDSA method of Plan, Do, Study, Act, in which "aims" are continually measured against outcomes, while student-generated feedback guides corrective responses for continually bettering results.

Amber Chandler • Frontier Middle School • Frontier Central School District • Hamburg, NY

The NoVo Foundation's SEL Innovation fund grant will allow the implementation of flexible seating into Amber Chandler's Project Based classroom. The flexible seating will include standing desks, bean bag chairs, ergonomic designs, as well as a couch to create a space that matches the creative work being done in room 255. Students' social, emotional, and academic needs are being met as they collaborate in a safe environment. This grant is allowing the physical atmosphere of the room to meet the academic expectations of innovation.

Alma Aviles • APPA (Antonia Pantoja Preparatory Academy) • New York City Department of Education • Bronx, NY

The purpose of The Peace Ambassador Institute is to train student leaders as restorative justice practitioners and strengthen their understanding of the needs of the communities they align with. Students will take part in a six week training module to develop the skills necessary to serve as role models and mentors. The focus of this initiative is to enhance school culture through relationship building. Following this training, student ambassadors will target the social and emotional needs of the student body by leading Restorative Conferences, Peace Circles, and Youth Council to resolve conflict and build community.

Angela Manekas • PS 232 • New York City Department of Education • Howard Beach, NY

The goal of the PS 232 Q initiative is to create and implement student-led SEL literature based lessons that develop the five core competencies of SEL for students in our school community. The first dimension of the initiative is to create two 5th grade model SEL classrooms (ICT and G&T). They will serve as model classrooms where SEL skills and strategies are embedded in daily and unit lessons. In the second dimension, heterogeneous student teams from the model classes will select literature, create SEL literature based activities, and implement their SEL lessons in all K-4 classrooms within the school.

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Linda Noble • Brooklyn College Academy • New York City Department of Education • Brooklyn, NY

Brooklyn College Academy, an early college prep high school in Brooklyn, NY, has established a Mindfulness Center. Resting in a recently renovated room (designed with calming features), the center will serve as a multi-purpose "safe space," housing primarily youth-led and directed mindfulness, social-emotional learning, and restorative community-building programs. BCA mainly serves low-income students of color who balance a rigorous curriculum, a competitive college admissions process, and myriad socio-economic/emotional challenges, often disrupting their forward movement. Students expressed the need for "decompression" and "resetting" strategies to sustain their achievements, thus the center, designed to reduce student stress and build resilience and positivity.

Alhassan Susso • International Community High School • New York City Department of Education • Bronx, NY

The *Inspiring Teens' Future* is designed to equip teenagers with the life skills necessary to succeed academically, socially, emotionally, professionally and economically. The program is built on five essential components: Mindset Development, Vision Setting, Interpersonal Communications, Leadership, and Financial Management. By giving the students the space confidence through experiential learning, students are able to identify and manage their emotions, create a clear and compelling vision board, practice the art of communication, identify an issue in the community they would want to solve and create a financial portfolio plan.

Carol Tureski • International High School @ LaGuardia Community College • New York City Department of Education • Long Island City, NY

The Family Reunion Project: Healing the Wounds of Family Separation. Family separation due to immigration is a phenomenon unique to the immigrant community. A survey on family separation with 75 students at International H.S. (IHS student population is 100% immigrant) revealed that 72 of the 75 students reported experiencing separation from a family member due to immigration. Students cited being apart from at least one parent anywhere between 6 months to 15 years. When parents and children finally unite, they often feel like strangers. Students describe feelings of abandonment, resentment, and disappointment. Parents describe feelings of rejection and disrespect from their children. When these wounds are left unhealed, they manifest in poor school performance, depression, domestic abuse, self-harm, and gang affiliation to list a few of the issues that arise from this situation. Our project aims to provide families with the support and tools to discuss their feeling toward separation and truly reunite as a family.

Dawn Krom • Center for Special Education • Ulster County BOCES • Port Ewen, NY

Students attending Ulster BOCES' Center for Special and Alternative Education will learn more about themselves through focusing their attention in dance, art, and/or percussion activities. Instructors will help students see that the attention needed to learn a complex dance step or rhythm is the same attention that empowers them to listen consciously, become more compassionate, and find their own inner state of healing and calm. Students will make drums and learn about cultural and historic roots of dances and instruments. Center students will make connections between increased self-awareness and their identities as individuals and members of society.

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Gregory Bowman • Doris Henderson Newcomers School • Guilford County Schools • Greensboro, NC

ESL middle school student leaders become aware of the social emotional strategies that have sustained them through courageous journeys and extend that knowledge to peers in the district with this project. The students engage in literacy enrichment and build leadership confidence. Their project will be to study a graphic novel as a model text to identify social and emotional learning themes. Groups will write and publish graphic narratives about their lives. They will donate and present their work in the district. The published books will also be sold as a PTSA fundraiser to buy school supplies for incoming Newcomers' students.

Dana Davis • Glover Community Learning Center • Akron Public Schools • Akron, OH

Glover CLC's project, "The Big 3", is an expansion of the school's positive behavior and restorative behavior management systems. The project, visually depicted with three apples, and the motto, "An apple a day will help you find your way," will help students build resilience through three focused goals: *Treat Others Right, Maximize Your Potential, and Make Smart Decisions*. This all-inclusive project will engage students, staff, families, and community members with professional development that will support social and emotional learning for our students by valuing and using proactive ways to maintain a positive classroom community.

Melissa Marini Švigelj-Smith • Downtown Education Center • Cleveland Metropolitan School District • Cleveland, OH

Educator Melissa Marini Švigelj-Smith partners with SPACES, a presenting contemporary art venue, to offer Ms. Švigelj-Smith's students at the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center the opportunity to expand their classroom model based on gratitude, happiness, growth mindset, and service to others through the creation and appreciation of experimental art. During the school year, CCJDC students are provided access to interactive art experiences through SPACES created by local, national, and international professional artists. SPACES and Ms. Švigelj-Smith also facilitate interactive artistic activities presented by a network of Northeast Ohio nonprofit organizations and artists. Art produced during the collaboration is shown during a spring community gallery exhibition and also serves as a source for community service projects for various nonprofit organizations in the Northeast Ohio area. The partnership combines artistic mediums, creativity, personal reflection, and student voice to increase self-awareness and connections to others.

Carrie Brown • Native Montessori School - Clarendon Regional Early Learning Academy • Portland Public Schools • Portland, OR

Native Montessori Preschool in Portland Public Schools will implement a program that guides positive Social and Emotional Learning experiences for our children through traditional songs and drumming. Our youngest learners will practice self-management, thinking of others and experience a sense of belonging through Positive Cultural Identity. Specific traditional protocols of drumming in a group at a big drum will be introduced that support our Cultural Teachings. Traditional drumming enhances concentration, relieves anxiety, and instantly builds a cohesive community. Our ultimate goal is for children to take their songs with them to use as Good Medicine for emotional regulation.

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Chrissa Sullivan • Jefferson Middle School • Mt. Lebanon School District • Pittsburgh, PA

The JMS Mindful Kitchen: Savoring Being Fully Present in the Kitchen and at the Table. Beyond getting families back to the table to learn basic SEL competencies, the program will showcase the kitchen as a meditative practice space with formalized opportunities to practice 'paying attention'. The JMS Mindful Kitchen will capitalize on food's innate social and emotional power and its ability to connect the mind and body. Program components such as guided cooking meditations, mindful tasting parties, and an edible school herb garden will teach participants to be mindful, to be intentionally aware of all five senses, and to be fully immersed in each delicious moment which will cultivate healthy, life-long relationships with REAL food.

Jessica Hubbard • Fairley High School • Achievement School District • Memphis, TN

The Grindhouse Boxing Program will provide at-risk youth with a safe environment that fosters and promotes physical, mental, and social-emotional health through the use of boxing and kickboxing. Youth are given an opportunity to develop and demonstrate discipline, self-confidence and self-control, while also physically challenging themselves. This program aims to be a source of pride to students of Fairley High School: changing lives and mentoring young leaders.

Benisha Lewis & Jessica Faro • Georgian Hills Achievement Elementary School • Achievement School District •
Memphis, TN

Georgian Hills Achievement Elementary School is committed to meeting the needs of our scholars academically, socially, and emotionally. Boys 2 Men is a mentor program for our 3rd-5th grade male students who need extra supports to thrive academically. We plan to implement a sustainable mentor program that teaches our male scholars how to deal with stress and make well-informed decisions in order to maintain healthy relationships with their families, teachers, and communities. Scholars will learn life skills and practice them in the real world. Our most valuable component to make the model sustainable is incorporating fathers, uncles and grandfathers monthly.

Jarred Amato • Maplewood High School • Metro Nashville Public Schools • Nashville, TN

Project LIT Community is a national, grassroots literacy movement that began when a group of committed Maplewood High School students and their English teacher read an article about growing up in book deserts. Now, the organization includes more than 45 Project LIT sites across the country, where teachers and students work together to increase access to high-quality, culturally relevant books and promote a love of a reading in our schools and communities. Each site engages in service- and project-based learning designed to celebrate literacy and bring all people together reading.

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Alexa Humberson • Anderson High School • Austin Independent School District • Austin, TX

Students at Anderson High School (Austin, TX) lead weekly homeroom lessons to increase community, inclusivity and safety on campus. Sub-groups of these student leaders design the lessons that teach specific SEL competencies and skills to address student concerns such as consent, acceptance, safety, and decision-making. We will hold two trainings for the student leaders to build their capacity to facilitate the lessons and conversations around these topics with their peers. The first will teach student leaders how to facilitate community building circle discussions and the second will be content specific based on student needs on campus.

Mary Metcalf • Maplewood Elementary • Austin Independent School District • Austin, TX

This project serves K-5 students in Maplewood Elementary's Dual Language Program. Our student body is ethnically, socio-economically and linguistically diverse, and includes immigrants and children of immigrants (documented and undocumented), as well as non-Hispanic students from English-speaking homes. Differences in power and privilege exist alongside differences in language and socio-economic status in our classrooms and in our wider community. In this problem-based project focused on empathy and liberation, students will explore issues of immigration in their own classrooms, neighborhood, city, and state. They will examine current issues around immigration and refugees, and will explore immigration in the U.S. over time.

Elizabeth Syria • Ibapah Elementary School • Tooele County School District • Ibapah, UT

Our project will be to build a small greenhouse and allow each student to experience hands on activities growing plants and learning about life cycles that tie in with their reading themes as well as science. We will invite our community to join us in this project with small stipends given to community tribal elders and elders from the ranching families who will come to share their expertise and experience with our students in this wonderful project.

Mary Muroski • Charlotte Central School • Champlain Valley School District • Charlotte, VT

The "Empower Youth Project" of Vermont allows local adolescents to develop social, emotional and leadership skills in a supportive, community-based setting. Bringing together middle school students from towns across the state, this full-day conference will be offered three times throughout the school year. We will focus on including first generation Vermonters who have arrived in the surrounding area as part of the Refugee Resettlement Program. Our collaboration with the Children's Legacy Partnership Foundation (a non-profit organization that aims to provide comprehensive education to students in Uganda) allows attendees to compare their hopes with those of Ugandan students.

Tina Vasquez • Charlottesville High School • Charlottesville City Schools • Charlottesville, VA

Charlottesville High School's new M&M (Multilingual Mentoring) program will be a student-run, staff-supported peer advisory and mentorship program to support new refugees and immigrant students. This program was initiated by a small group of seniors who reflected upon their experiences as newly arrived ELs and wanted to create a support program so that new students would have an easier transition than they did. Multilingual juniors and seniors will receive

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leadership and mental health first aid training. These peer mentors will lead group meetings with newcomers, creating a safe space for discussion in students' native languages, helping them to adapt and thrive in their new school culture.

Gwendolyn Nixon • Huguenot High School • Richmond Public Schools • Richmond, VA

Collaborative teaching was insufficient; yet, more ELLs & students with IEPs were sitting in my classes. I scaffold; I chunk, modify, abbreviate, and I am explicit, but I needed to do more; this year, thanks to SEL Innovation Awards for Teachers, I am designing curriculum that meet the unique needs of struggling readers and writers. "If equality means giving everyone the *same resources*, equity means giving each student access to the *resources they need* to learn and thrive," states Shane Safir in Edutopia. I agree, and when students feel welcomed and know their needs will be met, they learn and thrive.

Lecia Anne Curtis • Lewis and Clark High School • Spokane School District • Spokane, WA

N.I.C.E. (Network of Immigrant Cultural Education) will consist of immigrant and refugee students who are enrolled in the English Language Development program at Lewis and Clark High School. N.I.C.E. students will identify needs within their communities and together create a mutually beneficial network to promote student and family support through community outreach. Through project based learning in conjunction with teacher support and guidance, students will produce products, such as videos, skits, pamphlets, websites, peer tutoring programs, and community celebrations to be presented or distributed to their communities via web links or through quarterly gatherings at the high school in various languages.

Carrie Stradley • Foster High School • Tukwila School District • Tukwila, WA

Our project aims to highlight to the Tukwila community our students' voices, empower students' home and family cultural experiences, and incorporate students' home language as an integral part of the community. As students work together to create individual and collective awareness, this project will build students' agency to create strong academic and cultural identities. These identities grow out of the larger need for social-emotional support, specifically for immigrant and refugee youth. Through inter-discipline and inter-level teaching within our English Language Development department, our project will culminate in a performance-based art piece where students share with us their narratives and community voice.

Jordan Stray • Tumwater High School • Tumwater School District • Tumwater, WA

Tumwater High School has been exploring the use of SEL competencies as a targeted intervention strategy using same gender student groups. We have developed programming and experiences designed to help students engage in meaningful conversations to support their SEL growth as well as increase their connection to the school. Through community experiences and volunteer opportunities we have intentionally provided meaningful learning for our students and we are seeking ways to expand the impact of SEL to a school wide focus.

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Sue Bernhagen • Glendale Elementary School • Madison Metropolitan School District • Madison, WI

This project will expand upon the foundation Glendale Elementary school has built around social emotional learning. Our plan is to strengthen teachers' capacities to support students' sensory and emotional regulation. This grant will allow our multi-disciplinary team to strengthen universal practices around sensory regulation using Zones of Regulation curriculum and mindfulness lessons in conjunction with continued development and implementation of our Tiger's Den, a sensory regulation room. The Tiger's Den is a short-term intervention with the goal of students becoming more aware of their sensory needs and solutions and to carry that awareness back into the classroom and other school environments.

Melanie Fischer • Northern Hills Elementary School • District of Onalaska • Onalaska, WI

This running club is an after school program open to all 4th and 5th grade girls at Northern Hills Elementary. The two primary goals of the project are to build self-esteem and increase fitness activity for young girls. Young girls can be susceptible to peer pressure and bullying. This project provides an outlet for girls to problem solve, learn self-advocacy and team building skills, as well as participate in group runs and local races. Having an opportunity to develop confidence and competence outside of the classroom will provide these girls a solid foundation as they prepare to enter middle school.