

SEL Innovation Awards for Districts

2018 Recipients and Project Descriptions

The SEL Innovation Awards for Districts sought proposals from districts 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
- LGBTQI+ students

We received 391 applications from more than 45 states. Through a competitive process, 34 districts were selected to receive a grant award. See below for the complete list of district recipients, organized by state, followed by a brief description of each district’s SEL project in their own words beginning on page 2. Or click on a district name to go directly to that district’s project description. You can also find out more about the SEL Innovation Awards for Teachers and Districts by visiting education-first.com/social-emotional-learning-innovation-fund.

District	State	District	State
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	AK	Holyoke Public Schools	MA
Ajo Unified School District	AZ	Mashpee Public Schools	MA
Citizens of the World Charter Schools-Los Angeles	CA	Baltimore City Public Schools	MD
City Charter Schools	CA	Minneapolis Public School District	MN
Health Sciences High and Middle College, Inc.	CA	Neshoba County Schools	MS
LA Promise Fund - LA Promise Charter Schools	CA	Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District	MS
Marin County Office of Education	CA	Northern Cass School District	ND
Thrive Public Schools	CA	Clark County School District	NV
Silverton School District	CO	Washoe County School District	NV
Regional School District No. 7	CT	East Ramapo Central School District	NY
Hillsborough County Public Schools	FL	New York City Department of Education Urban Assembly	NY
The School Board of Broward County, Florida	FL	Austin Independent School District	TX
Honolulu, Hawaii	HI	Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City Independent School District	TX
Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200	IL	YES Prep Public Schools	TX
Boston Public Schools	MA	Albemarle County Public Schools	VA
Cambridge Public Schools	MA	Mt. Adams School District	WA
Hadley Public Schools	MA	Potosi School District	WI

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Kenai Peninsula Borough School District • Soldotna, AK

Educators see the impact that trauma has on children and youth every day. Understanding how Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) affect students' learning and behavior will help educators improve health and academic outcomes for students. To further our understanding of ACEs on student learning, KPBSD is inviting Dr. Linda Chamberlain, an expert on ACEs, brain development and trauma to conduct a series of ACEs training and discussions for our educators and community partners. Our goal is to build school cultures where students who are struggling or who are in emotional and/or social distress have access to adults in their lives who have the skills and resources to help them.

Ajo Unified School District • Ajo, AZ

This year, the Ajo Unified School District will deepen integration of Holistic Trauma-Informed Restorative Practices in our rural school district in the Arizona borderland. In the spirit of restorative practices, we seek above all to strengthen relationships. To do this, we'll draw upon local resources, empowering our students, staff, parents and high school peer mentors to share existing knowledge and increasingly apply restorative tools. Creative community partnerships will allow Ajo Schools to fund a part-time Restorative Coordinator for the first time. We're thrilled to incorporate curricular programming including the return of Challenge Day and the Choose Love SEL curriculum. Expert restorative consultation will help us establish systems for sustainability over the long haul. We look forward to continued transformational work together with our entire community as we innovate at the intersection of restorative strategies and trauma-informed practices, attuned to the needs and gifts of our unique place.

Citizens of the World Charter Schools Los Angeles • Los Angeles, CA

Citizens of the World Los Angeles ("CWC LA") will build upon the organization's work of defining outcomes at each grade level for our "graduate dispositions" (habits of character that represent our graduates' readiness to act in a certain way) by focusing intensively on the implementation of these dispositions. The grant will focus on the refinement and implementation of a three-year plan to implement our graduate dispositions in each of our schools, with this upcoming first year being vital to gaining momentum. This focus on implementation will also help us build capacity throughout our region regarding our graduate dispositions.

City Charter Schools • Los Angeles, CA

Through the proposed All Means All project, City Charter Schools will build on our codification of SEL outcomes, strengthening practices at each school site. We will operationalize our stated SEL outcomes and strengthen our practices in alignment with those outcomes. Each school has assessed our existing practices against the outcomes we are defining and has identified a need to address student socio-cultural context as it relates to social and emotional development. They have each devised a process for strengthening those outcomes and will leverage grant resources to implement identified initiatives.

Health Sciences High and Middle College, Inc. • San Diego, CA

We plan to launch a significant focus on social and emotional learning through a series of events and experiences for our 700+ students. We will mobilize a group of student leaders who will become ambassadors of equity and respect. These students will mentor peers and teachers. We will also launch a year-long professional learning experience for teachers and develop an introductory week of school culture activities that break down barriers between various groups of students. Finally, we will create a Day of Understanding for the entire school and other invited schools to come together

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to celebrate with an event that will include a TED Talk competition focused on social awareness and relationship building.

LA Promise Charter Schools • Los Angeles, CA

Conceived of as exceptional learning environments for youth in the hardest of learning circumstances, LA Promise Charter Schools are ready to systematically embark on integrated social and emotional learning supports, training and metrics. We present an integrated strategy, rather than a program, that will serve ALL students, to embed SEL strategies deep and wide in our schools and become, in the long term, a sustainable and indispensable part of the overall learning framework of LA Promise Charter Schools. We are committed to preparing positive, resilient and confident students for the world beyond our walls and for the hardships they face every day.

Marin County Office of Education • San Rafael, CA

The SEL Innovation project with Marin COE places equity at the center of programs. We have identified a professional development focused on equity, specifically race, encompassing all student groups. Learning starts with the educational/administrative leads who support the work with students, parents and community. Beginning with self-awareness of bias, progressing to self-management and responsible decision making, we will use an equity lens across classroom practices, school/district culture, and most importantly student engagement. Philosophical in design and practical in approach, with potential to impact all students. Imagine examining education through an equity lens: Looking at how, what, and most importantly, who you are teaching.

Thrive Public Schools • San Diego, CA

Thanks to the support of the Social and Emotional Learning Innovation Fund, Thrive Public Schools will take our current social and emotional learning work to the next level by implementing Council practices in each of our classrooms. These practices build students' self-awareness and empathy through a regular exercise of listening and speaking from the heart. Thrive recognizes the need for our students to grow not only as individuals who manage their own needs, but as members of a community who are able to hear and respond to the needs of others in a healthy and affirming way.

Silverton School District • Silverton, CO

Silverton School District is continuing multiple efforts to infuse SEL into our school culture. We are supporting a social and emotional leader to guide students, teachers and parents in SEL; we are creating school-sponsored family support circles for a targeted audience of English Language Learning families and families with children that have endured a significant number of adverse childhood experiences; and we are working to integrate restorative practices within our entire school community. SEL will be a major focus of professional development days as teachers will travel to other districts to see strong examples of SEL in action in different school settings.

Regional School District No. 7 • Winsted, CT

Kindness in Motion originated in RSD No. 7 in 2015. Students apply for a \$100 grant by describing an idea they would like to put into motion. Most use the grant as seed money. They recognize a need, reflect, create a plan and put it into action. Examples include: sending handmade dolls to an orphanage in China, rebuilding a deck for an elderly neighbor, stuffing backpacks for children taken into DCF custody, teaching painting to the elderly, etc. Students contribute to the greater good in deeply meaningful ways. It's recognized by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, Facebook and InspiRED.

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Hillsborough County Public Schools • Tampa, FL

Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) proposes to expand its current implementation of the Latinos in Action (LIA) program to two additional sites: Shields Middle School and Lennard High School. These schools were selected for inclusion in the project given their large Hispanic populations coupled with a demonstrated high level of need. The LIA program is designed to help Latino students leverage their personal assets in order to learn to excel academically, serve their community, and emerge as leaders. Key LIA activities include weekly tutoring at local elementary schools, engagement in additional service opportunities, extracurricular involvement and leadership committee participation.

The School Board of Broward County • Fort Lauderdale, FL

“Psyched: A Mindset. A Purpose” is a multi-tiered teacher and student fellowship program that infuses culturally responsive social and emotional programs to strengthen the mind and body (mental and physical) of underserved student populations. The full year fellowship program will develop teachers and students as social and emotional learning (SEL) intelligent leaders through SEL coaching and leadership development. Fellows will co-create and implement school-based social and emotional learning and character development initiatives to improve school culture and climate. Through their culminating project, fellows will elevate to SEL Ambassadors, mentoring and addressing issues and challenges of the district’s most struggling communities.

Honolulu, Hawaii • Honolulu, HI

The Hawaii SELA (Social Emotional Learning in Action) program focuses on the development of youth leadership and peer mentorship. The program is a collaboration between University Laboratory School, Castle High School and Kailua High School. It is an innovative approach to cultivating global citizenship in youth, through a student centered, experiential learning, youth-led program where students develop skills such as facilitation, communication, social action and leadership development. Students explore themes, drawing connections to current events, local issues, and their own lives – as native students, immigrants, first generation, refugees, and youth discovering their identities and place in the world.

Oak Park River Forest High School - District 200 • Oak Park, IL

The *Student at the Pillar Project* is a continuation of our SEL efforts to bring more healthy culture, positive connections, and increased transparency into our district. We are in the process of piloting a web and app based system of communication between educators, counselors, coaches and mentors within a student’s network. This past school year, we researched what kind of real-time basic information shared across normally disconnected groups of educators will have the most positive impact on a student’s life at OPRF. This school year, our plan is to engage a tech developer to further pilot the project.

Boston Public Schools • Boston, MA

Boston Public Schools’ History and Social Studies Department will create a comprehensive scope and sequence plan for Ethnic Studies electives centered around Boston-area ethnic communities, Latinx, African and Asian/Asian-American studies. Students enrolled in these courses will benefit from the greater cultural insight that comes from these classes and will be able to understand how the intersectionality of culture, race, family, environment and identity affect their lives. Processing these ideas is key for several groups like English Learners and LGBTQI+ students of color in our diverse communities. The work will be done in collaboration with teachers and selected students.

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Cambridge Public Schools • Cambridge, MA

Over the last several years CPS has seen an increase in the number of students, staff and family members who do not fit traditional gender norms. The district has responded by offering district-wide training about general gender identity development and sexuality, as well as consultation to school administrators and staff on a case-by-case basis. The resulting heightened awareness of issues surrounding gender identity and expression has led some school staff to request more in-depth information about how to support students, families and colleagues in order to create more welcoming school communities for people of all genders. Our project will provide professional learning opportunity for 50 Cambridge teachers and assistant teachers in the best practices for supporting gender expansive and transgender students in an inclusive and welcoming environment, which will lead to increased opportunities for healthy social and emotional development for students of all genders.

Hadley Public Schools • Hadley, MA

The Hadley Public Schools place social and emotional learning (SEL) at the center of our educational practice. Our expanded SEL program will foster academic success and the development of students' sense of autonomy, agency and social justice. The project integrates social justice and equity learning into district schools and classrooms through the research-based practice of Intergroup Dialogue. Intergroup Dialogues are a series of small group, co-facilitated, structured experiences that encourage dialogue. Intergroup Dialogue can prepare our students to participate in civic engagement while providing a common language and starting point from which to address our different identities in constructive ways.

Holyoke Public Schools • Holyoke, MA

The Pa'lante Restorative Justice Program at Holyoke High School works to build youth power, center student voice, and organize for school discipline and educational policies and practices that actively dismantle the school to prison pipeline in Holyoke and beyond. Student leaders use indigenous circle practice to support our school community to address conflict and harm, grieve, solve problems, heal from trauma and oppression, as well as to celebrate victories. In addition to hosting circles, students design a Youth Participatory Action Research project each year, where they engage in research to address a problem that is relevant to their lived experience.

Mashpee Public Schools • Mashpee, MA

There are more than 12 million children with social, emotional and behavioral challenges in North America alone. Historically, interventions to address these challenges revolved around punitive responses. Instead, Mashpee Public Schools (MPS) will flip that paradigm to help educators consider changes they can make to their own instruction, curriculum and environment that result in improved outcomes for students through further implementation of MPS's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), the integration of trauma-sensitive spaces and routines, and by empowering students to collectively solve problems results in long-lasting improvements in executive function skills and social and emotional skills.

Baltimore City Public Schools • Baltimore, MD

RISE: Refugee and Immigrant Student Empowerment, is a social and emotional learning program for immigrant and refugee students facilitated by the Newcomer Project in Baltimore City Public Schools. The *RISE* model is based on a simple principle: that the immigration experience is a source of strength for young people. In *RISE* groups, we establish a safe space in which students can voice thoughts and feelings about the experience of immigration and adjustment to a

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new culture. Through social and emotional learning and project-based learning, students uncover and reinforce individual and group strengths, develop greater agency over their emotions, explore changing identities, and learn to navigate their community of peers and adults.

Minneapolis Public Schools • Minneapolis, MN

Ogichidaa Oyate, meaning “Young Warriors” in Anishinaabe and Lakota, is the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) district-wide American Indian Youth Council. With generous funding from our 2017-18 grant, we have been able to build the foundation for our work in growing strong American Indian tribal and community leaders. Our focus for the 2018-19 school year will be multifaceted; we will be engaging with existing council participants while inviting newly seated members to this work. There will be continued development of American Indian identity and advocacy; building professional skills; culturally specific learning opportunities; and, the opportunity to build leadership skills.

Neshoba County School District • Philadelphia, MS

Neshoba County School district’s 2018-2019 SEL project will build on the hands-on training and research on Choctaw culture from our 2017-2018 project. Our Native American students, with assistance from our general student population, in grades K-4 through 12 will compile their research material into a student-produced book about the Mississippi Band of Choctaws. Videos about their tribe’s arts, crafts, history, language, and folklore will be student created for the school webpage and a YouTube channel. The focus of these two project is to strengthen student understanding of "Choctaw Self-determination" and share that with the global community.

Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District • Starkville, MS

This program will ease the immersion of ELL students into their schools. There are two main components of this program. The first is the involvement of professors and staff at Mississippi State University who have matriculated from other countries and experienced immersion issues firsthand. They will work with SOCSU teachers to help determine strategies that can be used to aid ELL students and their immersion experiences. The other component is that each ELL student will be assigned a classroom “buddy” that can assist them with their needs. The ELL students will be equipped with a tablet that will allow them to use a translation app to communicate with their buddy. By creating these pairs, ELL student will feel instantly more at ease socially and then the emotional component will follow. Data collection throughout the program will include interviews and observations of all participants.

Northern Cass School District 97 • Hunter, ND

To promote healthy emotional wellbeing, all stakeholders need to be educated and participate in the process. We aim to bridge the gap that often exists from our school building to our students’ communities. Through extending our partnership with North Dakota State University (NDSU) to provide family and individual counseling, offering community-based SEL workshops and providing SEL training for staff, Northern Cass will create an innovative program to educate not only the whole child, but the entire community. This will help our communities, families, staff and students experience authentic learning opportunities in evidence-based practices related to wellness, resilience, gratitude, social connection and self-care.

Clark County School District • Las Vegas, NV

The Clark County School District will continue cultivating partnerships with community-based organizations like the Smith Center for Performing Arts, the West Las Vegas Arts Center and the Southern Nevada Writing Project to foster the development of newcomer and immigrant students’ social and emotional skills and competencies through creative

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expressions. Students will engage in storytelling, visual arts and creative writing to increase their language proficiency, connect with others and gain knowledge about attitudes and behaviors that will help them be successful in their new lives.

Washoe County School District • Reno, NV

SEL holds great promise for helping students graduate on-time and college and career ready, but only if it reflects the diverse array of cultures, values, and languages represented across the student population. WCSD's Nuestro Aprendizaje Social y Emocional ("Our Social and Emotional Learning"; NASE) Project will establish a cohort of 5th-12th grade students who are English Learners from high poverty schools to investigate the cultural and linguistic responsiveness of WCSD's SEL practices, assessments and lessons. Recommendations provided through this student voice project have potential to improve the delivery and impact of its SEL curriculum for WCSD's fastest growing student demographic.

East Ramapo Central School District • Spring Valley, NY

The Nurturing Inclusive Community Environment (NICE) Program is a social and emotional support program that integrates school curricula with community-building, restorative justice techniques. The NICE program plans to expand programming by providing Social Emotional Learning support in two ERCSD high schools with a large population of English Learners and recent immigrants from Central America. The expansion of the program will include a girls group, designed to increase positive connections and strengthen resiliency skills, and a new arrivals and English learners structured support group that would utilize a restorative approach of community building circles to increase positive connections between students.

New York City Department of Education Urban Assembly • New York, NY

The Urban Assembly has been using a guided implementation model to support the quality of implementation and sustainability of social-emotional programming in urban high schools. The implementation design process has decreased suspensions and enhanced school climate and academic achievement. SEL assessment is an important aspect of this work. Feedback from teachers revealed that assessment is used to measure outcomes but students had minimal opportunities for their own reflection. Our project will create a network-wide model that the Urban Assembly and other districts can use to help students understand their social-emotional strengths and needs through peer-based dialogue.

Austin Independent School District • Austin, TX

"Educators Leading the SEL Way" is a leadership capacity-building project that recognizes each campus as a community of diverse students, families and faculty. We know that SEL is not "one size fits all." To achieve authentic SEL implementation that is responsive to campus strengths and needs, an SEL Specialist will guide each campus's SEL Steering Committee in a multi-day planning process. Emphasis will be placed on creating a vision and an action plan for SEL implementation, both informed by campus data and student input, with the ultimate goal of culturally responsive and relevant SEL implementation driven by teacher leaders.

Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City Independent School District • Schertz, TX

We SERVE Too aims to improve the social and emotional states of Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City Independent School District's military connected students (MCS). SCUC ISD is over 40% military connected, and many of those students are categorized at risk as well. We will create and/or improve SCUC's We Serve Too clubs for MCS at eight elementary schools, and focus on creating growth mindsets through service learning projects.

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YES Prep Public Schools • Houston, TX

The YES Prep Girls' Leadership Development Project is designed to support some of our highest-risk students in remaining in school and, ultimately, on the path to college. Recent YES Prep Public Schools discipline data and student survey questions demonstrate a need for improved proactive supports for our female students. At several YES Prep campuses, there are higher incidents of relational aggression and higher withdrawal rates among female students. The Girls' Leadership Development Project will support the social and emotional learning of a cohort of female students with the ultimate goal of enhancing academic success.

Albemarle County Schools • Charlottesville, VA

Pupusas, Cassava Cakes and Falafel! "Bridges through Bread" fosters community and cross-generational communication through cooking and conversation. Immigrant and refugee parents and elders will be the leaders and experts, teaching students and families how to cook international meals. Aided by interpreters, the cooks will teach about different dishes and customs from their countries of origin. Participants can replicate the delicious cuisine with the help of our community cookbook and cultural anthology, culminating projects compiled and created by newcomer ESOL students in the Albemarle County, Virginia Public Schools. Our program is a partnership between community organizations and students and families in the Albemarle County and the Charlottesville City Schools.

Mt. Adams School District • White Swan, WA

The Mt. Adams School District SEL project is designed to facilitate the development of a learning environment that fosters the social and emotional growth of its unique student body. We intend to achieve this goal by deepening teacher understanding of historical trauma and the role of local values, practices and traditions in learning while enhancing teachers' use of trauma-informed practices and positive behavioral supports.

Potosi School District • Potosi, WI

The focus of our project is the infusion and integration of CASEL's five social and emotional learning competencies into classroom instruction and routines so that all students are given an equitable opportunity to be in a classroom that ensures quality academic instruction, simultaneously fostering the social and emotional development of our students. We will achieve this task across multiple systems of support through the services of a social and emotional learning coach who will guide teachers to a common understanding of SEL and provide feedback regarding effective SEL practices. SEL teacher and student rubrics will be created to guide discussions and assess SEL growth. The SEL coach will also train student peer coaches who help support the development of SEL competencies with students needing more support and guidance.