



MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

NC Department of Public Instruction

Social-Emotional Learning within NC MTSS- A Brief

The North Carolina MTSS model is a school improvement framework utilized to assist schools in effectively and efficiently organizing supports for all students in order to maximize success. The heart of the model is effective instruction. Although early adopters of tiered support systems focused most often on academic and behavioral instruction, thinking has evolved over time to include social-emotional skill instruction/support as well. As North Carolina moves forward with effective implementation of MTSS, further guidance around social-emotional instruction and support is a logical next step. This brief is meant to begin the conversation around social-emotional learning within MTSS and also to assist teams in identifying already existing practices as well as possible opportunities for further problem solving.

What is SEL (Social-Emotional Learning)

“Social and emotional learning is the process of acquiring the skills to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively” (CASEL.org). These skills are used throughout school, career and community settings. They are essential to developing critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, emotional health and resiliency. A review of the literature concludes the development of these skills is associated with greater academic success, employment and positive effects on overall health.

Why addressing SEL is important in an MTSS?

MTSS is about effective instruction in all settings for all students, and research has demonstrated **these skills are as teachable as academics and behavior expectations**. These skills can be shaped in students well into adolescence, therefore having a continuum of support is a pillar of the model. The five competencies (in the table below) encompass “soft skills” that will assist students across settings and throughout the lifespan. Social emotional learning goes beyond teaching discrete behaviors, schools wish to see, to increase a positive learning environment.

How would a team get started to ensure Social-Emotional Learning is included in their MTSS?

Teams will examine the information provided in the table below to first come to an understanding about research based social-emotional learning competencies. These come from decades of research regarding skills that students need for success across settings. The links in the table provide more information about a variety of ways to integrate SEL within instruction at school, at home and the community. After careful examination of the competencies and resources provided, teams can take stock of where they are in SEL in their sites. As with all changes to practice, programming or curriculum in schools and districts, teams should follow the guidelines of [implementation science](#) to ensure that appropriate implementation frameworks are built to support the work.



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Universal (Core) Social-Emotional Practices for Success

(This table is based on current research recommendations for effective universal support for social-emotional learning. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of standards or pedagogical practices. These are areas to start the discussion about effective environments in schools that can enable learning in a well functioning MTSS. MTSS is a way to structure academic, behavioral, social-emotional and attendance supports for all students to maximize effectiveness for students and efficiency for adults.)

A review of the current literature finds that Social-Emotional Learning has been generally defined around **five basic competencies (described below)**. Many of the concepts underlying these competencies are also embedded within the [NC Essential Standards for Guidance](#), [NC Essential Standards for Healthful Living](#), [NC Essential Standards for Social Studies](#), and the [NC K-3 Formative Assessment Process Construct Progressions](#).

Research shows that attention to these competencies through experiences at school, home and community result in increased academic performance, decreased behavior problems and an overall more positive school climate.

Attending to these can take place embedded within academic subject areas and/or through stand-alone lessons. More information can be found [here](#). For lists of vetted curriculum programs for social-emotional learning, click [here](#).

Self-Awareness- the ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism and a "growth mindset".

- Identifying emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy

Self-Management- the ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations- effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- Impulse control
- Stress management
- Self-discipline
- Self-motivation
- Goal setting
- Organization skills

Social Awareness- the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and recognize family, school and community resources and supports.

- Perspective taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others

Relationship Skills- the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively and seek and offer help when needed.

- Communication
- Social engagement
- Relationship building
- Teamwork

Responsible Decision Making-the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

- Identifying problems
- Analyzing situations
- Solving problems
- Evaluating
- Reflecting
- Ethical

Core SEL Competencies. (n.d.). Retrieved April 19, 2017, from <http://www.casel.org/core-competencies/>
Comprehensive guidance including case studies: www.casel.org