

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEADERS



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Dear school and district leaders,

With the urgency and challenges surrounding young people’s learning and well-being, your leadership is more crucial than ever. School and district leaders shape the educational experiences and outcomes of young people not just through policies and programs, but through your influence with educators, parents, and community members. Your voice can inspire, inform, and transform your community’s understanding and support of children’s learning and healthy development.

As education leaders, you know the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL) to children’s academic success, school climate, mental wellness, and future readiness. At the same time, in an increasingly contentious political landscape, many school and district leaders are finding it challenging to communicate effectively about longstanding educational priorities.

We have gathered extensive insights from conversations and surveys with thousands of people across the country about what resonates, common concerns, and frequent questions about SEL. This toolkit is designed to share key takeaways and adaptable guidance on effective SEL communication strategies. These tools and guidance are tailored specifically for school and district leaders; you can find additional communications toolkits for parents/caregivers and school board members at LeadingWithSEL.org.

Here’s what we’ve learned:

The more that people know about SEL, the more supportive they become. When people hear an accurate SEL definition or see examples of what SEL looks like in classrooms and schools, the majority of the general public supports SEL. Although there are some loud voices spreading misinformation and negative messages, the reality is that very few people oppose SEL outright. Even supporters, however, often struggle to describe what SEL looks like in practice. Therefore, simply defining SEL—in a variety of ways—can be highly effective in garnering support. When people understand what SEL is and how it works, they are likely to become SEL supporters. Once people understand what SEL is, stories that demonstrate the impact of SEL raise that support even more!

That’s why **your best tool is a proactive communications strategy** that ensures the first messages your community hears about SEL are accurate and positive. This is especially true before facing potentially contentious school board meetings or public discussions. By sharing concrete, compelling examples of what SEL is and the positive impact it has on students, you can effectively counter negative messages without engaging in unproductive debates. Instead of trying to dispel disinformation point by point, focus on delivering proactive messages that share what SEL is and highlight the tangible benefits of SEL.

So how do you do this effectively? **Personal stories and examples of what SEL looks like in classrooms and schools, paired with concrete data points, are particularly powerful.** The rest of this toolkit will share examples, templates, and guidance on how to craft these types of effective messages that can help build broad support for SEL in your community. We shaped this toolkit around these five actions:

- **Define SEL early and often.** Don't assume that people already know what SEL is. Explain it in jargon-free, easy-to-understand language.
- **Show what SEL looks like in classrooms and schools.** Use specific examples, videos, and/or concrete descriptions to demystify SEL.
- **Highlight the impact of SEL by combining stories and data.** Use narratives and statistics to bolster your message and demonstrate that SEL works.
- **Connect SEL to academic learning and benefits for all students.** Align with themes that parents and community members value for everyone.
- **Position parents as SEL leaders.** Through actions and messaging, emphasize that parents are strong SEL leaders and valued partners in this work.

Thank you for your dedication to every student's academic, social, and emotional learning. We hope this toolkit empowers you to communicate the power of SEL with confidence and clarity.

Sincerely,

The Leading with SEL Coalition



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Why it's important

The more people learn about SEL, the more likely they are to support it! Through our research, we've found that **simply defining SEL is an effective way to garner support.**

When asked about SEL, most people in the general public say they are “on the fence” because they’re unsure what it is. And even people who support SEL don’t always feel confident defining or describing what it looks like in classrooms and schools.

Defining SEL early and often helps you:

- Educate parents and community members
- Increase support
- Get ahead of misinformation and “inoculate” against disinformation



How to do it

We tested many different ways of defining SEL with thousands of parents and community members across different backgrounds. We found that every single definition helped increase understanding of and support for SEL in schools. As long as the definition is accurate, there is almost no “wrong” way to define SEL—so focus on defining early and often!

The most impactful definitions:

- Avoid jargon and use simple, easy-to-understand explanations.
- Include a quick description or example of what SEL looks like in schools and/or classrooms. (Find more information about those types of examples in the next section, “Describe What SEL Looks Like.”)
- Make connections to academic learning and/or other priorities and goals. Remember, SEL is complex and multi-faceted, and your definition doesn’t need to cover every aspect or benefit. If you’re unsure what to focus on, think about how SEL is connected to the top priorities and goals of your families and community.



Examples

Here are three different definitions we've tested that were effective at building SEL support. (Note that the second half of each example below describes how SEL is implemented in schools and classrooms):

SEL develops lifelong skills

Social and emotional learning (SEL) helps kids learn and practice the skills they need in every area of life—from the classroom and the workplace to their relationships with themselves and others. These skills include understanding emotions, achieving goals, taking the perspectives of others, communicating effectively, and making responsible decisions. In schools, SEL includes dedicated time set aside to learn about social and emotional skills, as well as opportunities to build positive relationships and collaborate during academic subjects. Through SEL, teachers, school staff, parents, and other adults work together to make sure the classroom and school environment supports student learning.

SEL creates supportive environments

Social and emotional learning (SEL) in schools is all about creating a supportive and motivating space for students to learn and grow. It involves educators and parents working together to ensure that every student feels valued and supported. Through SEL, students get the chance to develop strong, positive connections with their classmates and teachers. They also spend time learning important life skills, like staying motivated and working well with others. These skills aren't just talked about—they're integrated into daily lessons, helping students succeed both in and out of the classroom.

Social Media Example:



Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotion... Follow ...
48,178 followers
1mo · 🌐

Social and emotional learning can help build life skills, can be taught & applied at various developmental stages & across diverse contexts. It can also be leveraged to support academic success, school & civic engagement, wellness, & careers. Follow now for more #SEL content.

Social & Emotional Learning Builds Life Skills

-  **Self-awareness** to develop a healthy sense of who you are, and better understand your thoughts and feelings
-  **Self-management** to manage your thoughts, feelings, and actions toward goals
-  **Social awareness** to better understand different views and have empathy for others
-  **Relationship skills** to communicate and connect, problem solve together, and stand up for others
-  **Responsible decision-making** to make constructive choices, analyze our actions, and find solutions

From "What is the CASEL Framework?" on caseLorg



Examples

SEL supports academics

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is all about creating a strong foundation for students to succeed academically and achieve their goals. It's based on the understanding that students are better prepared to learn when they feel motivated, valued by their teachers and peers, and have strong social and emotional skills. Through SEL, teachers and staff focus on making learning more engaging and relevant, while building positive relationships with and among students. They also teach and give students plenty of opportunities to practice important social and emotional skills—such as goal-setting, persistence, and communication—to help them achieve academically and beyond.



Cautions

Position SEL as essential for every student rather than framing SEL as a targeted support needed only by some students. After all, the environment and skills fostered through SEL benefit everyone!

This can also help you prevent misinformation that conflates SEL with mental health services. While SEL supports all students in developing healthy skills, it is not therapy or a replacement for mental health services. To prevent this type of misinformation, we found the most effective strategy was to focus on a clear and accurate description of what SEL actually is (rather than repeat the misinformation and try to dispel it point by point).



Why it's important

Showing what SEL looks like in classrooms and schools is even more impactful than telling. You can combine a clear definition of SEL (see previous section) with a clear example or story of what it looks like in practice to create a powerful message that builds support.

Even people who support SEL often can't explain what it looks like in practice. What does an "SEL classroom" look like and feel like? What do teachers and students do? What do students learn?

Sharing concrete examples increases both support for and understanding of SEL. When we tested descriptive narratives like the examples below, people felt both more supportive of SEL and more confident in their ability to define it.



How to do it

Messages from students and teachers are particularly effective—after all, they have the best insights on what actually happens in classrooms.

Ask teachers to share:

- What specific practices do they use in the classroom to promote SEL?
- How do those practices connect to academic learning?

Ask students to share:

- What specific SEL activities have they participated in?
- What specific skills have they learned, and how do they use those skills?
- How has SEL improved their school experience or made them a better student?



Examples

Descriptions of what SEL looks like are especially effective when teachers and students themselves share their real experiences. Here are a few examples of descriptions from educators and students that were highly effective at building SEL support and understanding across people from many different backgrounds and political leanings:

**Student's
description**

My name is Cordelia and I just turned 8 years old! I love SEL in my school. SEL means “social and emotional learning,” and it helps my school keep us safe and happy so that we can learn. The whole school learns about being respectful. It means to be kind to others. We practice being kind all the time, like taking turns in class and making sure everyone has someone to play with on the playground. I also have an SEL class, just like gym and music. One thing they taught me is what I could do when I get mad at school or at home: First, you pause and breathe. That means three slow, deep breaths. Then, you rewind. That means to think about what happened and why it made you feel that feeling. Last, you make a good choice. We also learn courage and gratitude. For courage, we made a sun and if a grown-up ever saw you do something that was brave, they'd give you a sticker and you put it on the sun. Gratitude means that you're thankful for something. We made a gratitude tree and wrote what we were thankful for on the leaves. That's why I love SEL!

See the video version of this message:
<https://bit.ly/CordeliaGoestoWashington>





Examples (continued)

English teacher description

I'm Melanie, a seventh grade English teacher. I want to share how social and emotional learning (SEL) has transformed my classroom into a place where all students are engaged and ready to learn. SEL is a method I use to connect with my students and teach them essential skills for school and life. Every day, I make time to build positive relationships with my students. This might be an afternoon team-building activity, or a quick morning check-in. Each week, my school also has 45 minutes set aside for me to teach a curriculum focused on social and emotional skills. For example, I might teach a lesson on empathy, managing stress, or making responsible decisions. I also incorporate SEL during English lessons, like discussing character emotions when we read a piece of literature. I organize group work to enhance collaboration and effective communication among students. My students set learning goals, and we review these goals regularly to track progress and foster self-motivation. I recognize these skills are also learned at home. By collaborating with parents and reinforcing what they teach at home, we help prepare all my students for future success.



Cautions

A common question people raised about SEL is whether teachers are qualified or trained to implement SEL in their classrooms. To address this question proactively, share how educators are supported to do this work. Ask teachers to share how they implement SEL, what it looks like in their classrooms, and how they know it's effective with their students.



Why it's important

People want to know what SEL is, what it looks like, and how it impacts students. Does it work? What are the benefits of implementing SEL? How does it affect school culture, academic achievement, well-being, and future readiness?



How to do it

There are several ways to communicate the impact of SEL, including through:

- Personal narratives from students, teachers, and school leaders
- Concrete statistics from your school (e.g., data on grades, test scores, discipline, attendance, graduation rates, etc.)
- Research and evidence on SEL, including expert quotes

We found that all of these methods help increase support for SEL. Overall, narratives were more effective than numbers. But the most effective approach was combining a narrative with concrete statistics.

Anatomy of an Effective Message

Here's an example of a message that garnered strong support for SEL among a variety of audiences because it combined multiple elements of effective messaging.

My name is Principal Sanders, and I lead a high school in Kansas. When I started as principal four year ago, I asked parents what they wanted their students to know and be able to do when they graduate from our school. Parents told me over and over again that they wanted their students to be prepared for their future and the real world. They wanted their students to not only learn academic skills, but develop essential social and emotional skills, like awareness of themselves and others, communication skills, teamwork and leadership skills, and how to make responsible decisions. We started implementing social and emotional learning, or "SEL," as part of our advisory classes to focus on teaching students this essential skills and now SEL is part of everything we do. When students are learning math, they work in teams and practice communication. When they read literature, they discuss different perspectives and practice resolving disagreements. Before we started SEL our graduation rate was a dismal 62 percent. This school year, we saw a record high graduation rate of 84 percent, and over \$2 billion in scholarship offers for the graduating class. Because of SEL, our students are ready for their futures.

Trusted, relatable speaker

Future readiness theme

• Clear definition and specific skills
• Description of what SEL looks like in classrooms

Concrete data points



Examples

The example above, which combines a narrative with concrete statistics, was one of the most effective messages among a broad swath of audiences. Here's another example of an effective message by a student on the theme of "future readiness":

Student on future readiness

My name is Will, and I'm a junior in high school. Social and emotional learning, or "SEL," has been a really important part of my education. It has helped me stay motivated, find my purpose, and love learning again. The last few years have been really tough for me. During the COVID pandemic, I was lonely and bored, and I didn't feel motivated to pursue my interests. Even after we were back in school, I did everything I could to avoid going to class. But when my school started focusing more on SEL, some things changed. I had more time to build positive relationships with my teachers and other students, which made me want to go to school. Our advisory class started to teach us life skills, like ways to communicate more effectively with others and resolve conflicts. We also learned and practiced these skills as part of our academic subjects. For example, we learned about the impact of stress in science class, and worked together to test how different strategies might help reduce stress. Because of SEL, I feel more prepared to graduate high school and go out into the real world.



Examples (continued)

But don't be afraid of sharing how SEL supports priorities such as school inclusion. In our tests, we found that these themes resonated across backgrounds and politics when explained through concrete examples and narratives. In fact, these messages also helped counteract disinformation and negative political messages about SEL:

Student on racial inclusion

I'm Bella, and I am in 10th grade at Collins High School. At our school, we are learning skills that we will use in the real world. As part of social and emotional learning, or "SEL," we learn how to work together to create a better community for everyone to live in. This year, our school learned through student surveys that a lot of students didn't feel their cultures or backgrounds were represented and valued in the classroom. Instead of the adults in the school deciding on a solution for us, they decided to involve the students! First, we had class discussions about our experiences in school. This helped teach us how to understand perspectives of people who are different from us. Then, we worked in teams to brainstorm solutions. This taught us teamwork and collaboration and helped us feel like we could take action and make a positive difference. Based on student recommendations, our school created a student curriculum advisory group, and I was selected to be part of it! Students on the advisory team work with teachers to plan ways for students to learn about each other, our cultures, and our experiences so everyone feels a sense of belonging. I think SEL is really important because it's teaching us about who we are and the world around us.

Student on ability inclusion

I'm Justin, and I'm a senior in high school. Going to school and making friends with my classmates hasn't always been easy. I'm in a wheelchair, and I use an app on my iPad to communicate by typing with my nose. But since middle school, I've been lucky to experience the positive benefits of social and emotional learning, or "SEL." In schools that use SEL, there is a culture of belonging and inclusion that helps every student feel supported. For me, this made it much easier to feel comfortable and welcomed. I was able to engage with my classes, learn the skills I'll need for life, and build relationships. In middle school, I was even elected class president—with a whopping 66 percent of the vote! I know firsthand that SEL makes a big difference for students like me. But this isn't about gaining an advantage for one set of kids. When schools provide the right environment, every student benefits.



Examples (continued)

Additionally, here are some examples of effective messages about the research on SEL. While these were not as powerful as narratives or combining narratives with data, they helped build support for SEL:

Meta-analysis

In a study of social and emotional learning (SEL) programs serving over half a million students, researchers found statistically significant positive outcomes for students in SEL programs, compared to control groups of students who did not receive SEL instruction. There were improvements to school climate, civic attitudes, social and emotional skills, and relationships with teachers and peers. Additionally, students who participated in SEL programs did better in school: academic achievement, homework completion, attendance, and engagement in learning were all positively impacted. These students also experienced less stress, anxiety, and depression. More schools should implement SEL programs to help all students succeed!

Evidence quote

Social and emotional learning (SEL) helps kids learn and practice the skills they need in every area of life—from the classroom and the workplace to their relationships with themselves and others. These skills include understanding emotions, achieving goals, taking the perspectives of others, communicating effectively, and making responsible decisions. “SEL programs appear to have as great a long-term impact on academic growth as has been found for programs designed specifically to support academic learning,” says education researcher and psychologist Dr. Joseph Durlak, emeritus professor of psychology at Loyola University. In his review of hundreds of independent studies, Dr. Durlak found that SEL had significant positive impacts on students’ academic achievement, mental wellness, positive behaviors, and long-term future outcomes. As an evidence-based approach to supporting children’s learning and development, SEL is a crucial tool that educators can use to build productive learning environments and teach students skills that help them thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.



Why it's important

Families and communities want to know that SEL supports outcomes they care about. Listening to stakeholders' priorities, goals, and hopes, then highlighting how SEL can help achieve them, is an excellent way to build common ground and support.

Academic learning and achievement is a common priority in the wake of pandemic learning loss. In the messages we tested, connections to academics and other benefits for all students, such as future readiness, significantly impacted support for SEL.



How to do it

When you communicate about SEL, highlight the ways it supports students to learn and achieve academically. There are several ways to do this:

- Narratives from students: How has SEL helped them learn? How has it impacted their grades?
- Narratives from teachers and parents: What impact have they seen on students' engagement, learning, and achievement?
- Data: Have you seen measurable improvements in students' grades, test scores, graduation rates, etc.?
- A combination of narrative and data

Academics is a top priority for many families and communities, but there may be other priorities for your stakeholders. Creating a portrait of a graduate is one way to learn more about key priorities in your community. A portrait of a graduate answers questions like, "What skills and mindsets do young people need to be successful in the world?" and "What are your hopes, dreams, and aspirations for young people in our community?" Use what you learn from these conversations to shape both your implementation of SEL and the way you communicate about SEL.



Examples

Student on academics

My name is Corey, and I'm a senior in high school who is graduating as valedictorian this year! For a long time, this wouldn't have seemed possible. In middle school, I didn't enjoy school or feel comfortable there. I was making C's and D's and reading below grade level, and I didn't have close relationships with my classmates or my teachers. I felt invisible and discouraged. Then, I went to a high school that does social and emotional learning, or "SEL." This meant the school was really focused on creating an environment where we all felt like we belonged, so we could learn and build life skills. For the first time, I felt like I had teachers who cared about me and wanted me to succeed. The result was that I was excited to be there and willing to learn, and I felt comfortable asking for help when I needed it. Over time, my grades improved. I joined the debate team and even started tutoring younger students. The past two years, I've earned straight A's, even in AP classes, and now I get to graduate as valedictorian and continue my education in college. I'm so grateful that my high school used SEL, and I hope other students like me get the same opportunity.

Superintendent on academic impact

I'm Dr. Haverford, a school district superintendent in Ohio. Our students rank #1 in the state for reading and math recovery since the pandemic, and literacy rates for our youngest learners have quadrupled over the last school year. We achieved these successes because we prioritized social and emotional learning, alongside academics. Social and emotional learning, or "SEL," helps students develop the tools they need to be problem-solvers, to be resilient, and to work collaboratively with others. I decided to adopt SEL more than five years ago because research was showing it gets outcomes like improved reading and math scores, improved attendance, and fewer disciplinary problems. And we saw that the longer we implemented SEL, the more we saw improvements in each of these areas. Our successes have shown that SEL is absolutely essential to getting to the rigor of academic content that students need.



Examples (continued)

Study on academic outcomes

Social and emotional learning (SEL) has a major impact on students' short-term and long-term success, found researchers from the University of Chicago. They observed six groups of students from their eighth grade year through their ninth grade year in Chicago high schools between 2011-2012 and 2016-2017. Then, they checked in on these students in 2023 to see how their high school experiences had impacted their long-term trajectories. In the short-term, they found that the high schools that helped students improve in test scores, behaviors, and SEL had a greater impact on student success than schools that focused on test scores alone. When they checked in years later, they found that the schools that prioritized both SEL and academics had positive impacts on students' high school graduation and college enrollment. More schools should implement SEL programs to help all students succeed!



Cautions

Watch out for the misperception that SEL is “fluff” or “just being nice.” Avoid relying on vague concepts around the values of SEL, and instead share tangible examples that connect SEL to academic learning or other concrete goals of quality education. For example, Principal Sander’s message on future readiness (see p. 11) and Bella’s story about SEL helping her build real-world skills (see p. 13) were both particularly effective at dispelling concerns that SEL is a trade-off for academics.



Why it's important

Parents and caregivers are children's first teachers and play an essential role in cultivating children's social and emotional skills throughout their lives. When schools and families partner to support children's social and emotional development, teachers enrich their ability to support their students, and families gain an ally in the social and emotional skill-building they're already doing at home.

Through your actions and your messaging, emphasize that parents are valued partners in this work.



How to do it

- Seek and use input from families as you develop your school's SEL vision statement and specific goals, evaluate curriculum options, and determine ways of measuring progress.
- Make it clear that SEL in schools builds on and reinforces the work that is already happening at home.
 - Ask parents about their goals and hopes for their children, and make the connection to how SEL supports shared priorities like academic achievement and future readiness skills.
- Support teachers in their efforts to partner with families by creating time and encouragement for positive phone calls or emails home.

Find more information about partnering with families in the [CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL](#).

Hear from Xiaohong, a parent in Illinois, about her family's experience with SEL.





Examples

In the example messages we've shared throughout this toolkit, we have included several references to the value of family partnerships.

- From a definition message: "Through SEL, teachers, school staff, parents, and other adults work together to make sure the classroom and school environment supports student learning."
- From a teacher narrative: "By collaborating with parents and reinforcing what they teach at home, we help prepare all my students for future success."
- From a principal narrative: "When I started as principal four years ago, I asked parents what they wanted their students to know and be able to do when they graduate from our school. Parents told me, over and over again, that they wanted their students to be prepared for their futures and the real world."

Narratives from parents who support SEL can also help convey that parents are valued and trusted partners in this work, and these narratives are relatable for other parents.

Parent on academic impact

My name is Dewand, and I'm the father of a high school senior who is getting ready to graduate as valedictorian this year! But it hasn't always been like this. In middle school, my son was reading below grade level and struggling both academically and emotionally. When he entered high school, I learned that his new school does social and emotional learning, or "SEL." It means the school is really focused on creating an environment where kids feel like they belong, so that they can learn and develop skills they need for life. For the first time, my son genuinely loved his teachers and going to school. He always came home talking about things that made him feel joyful—and that made a difference in his grades. He earned straight A's and became more involved in activities at his school, like the debate team and even tutoring younger students. Because of SEL, he found his voice and became a man in high school. SEL deals with the child on a whole different level so that every kid feels embraced and supported. As a father, SEL is something I believe in.



Examples (continued)

Parent on student well-being

My name is Jason, and I'm a father in Ohio. In the fourth grade, my son became the unfortunate target of bullying. He was struggling with his confidence, relationships, academics, and ability to tackle challenges. I was worried about his well-being, and decided to change schools. His new school prioritized social and emotional learning, or "SEL," to make sure kids feel safe and supported. Within less than a year, our son transformed into a strong, confident, self-asserting young man. He found himself and his value at a critical moment. That has everything to do with the intentional focus on SEL at his school.

For more examples of real stories about SEL from real parents, listen to these [audio stories](#).

How to model SEL with parents

[Modeling SEL in interactions with families](#) can positively impact their perceptions of school climate and create spaces of belonging. Each staff member at a school has the opportunity to model SEL with families. For example:

- In a video tour of the school, the principal describes strategies the school uses to build supportive relationships and environments and how they listen to families' ideas and concerns and gives examples of ways families have influenced the school.
- **An administrator** calling home about a disciplinary incident describes the event without blame and asks the student and caregivers for additional background information to gain a clearer picture of the situation. They work with the family and student to develop and articulate goals for the student and a plan to achieve them.
- **The front office staff** at a school greets parents and caregivers warmly, makes an effort to remember who their children are, and helps answer their questions or connect them to someone who can.
- **A teacher** uses parent conferences to build relationships with families and better understand their hopes and concerns for their students. They position families as experts on their children as they share their own experiences and observations of the student.
- **An SEL team** shares power and models responsible decision-making by hosting forums for families to share their perspectives and impact SEL implementation decisions throughout the school year.



Cautions

- Avoid language that could suggest students are not learning social and emotional skills at home or that any student's family life is an obstacle to success.
- Be persistent and creative when seeking input; a low response rate to your first push is important information to learn from when designing a second attempt, not an indication that families are apathetic. When designing a structure to include/engage families, work with representatives from the parent community to figure out what will work best.

There is significant overlap among the messaging best practices we've shared here. When you craft your own messages, these pieces don't need to be separate; in fact, they are often stronger and more impactful together. You can combine definitions, descriptions, and impact in ways that connect SEL to academic learning and position parents as leaders.

Three S's Formula for Effective Messages

You can put these messaging insights together into an effective message by using the "Three S's" formula:

Soundbite

Start your message off by getting right to the point in the first sentence or two. Make your main point clear and compelling—and remember, simply defining SEL clearly helps to garner support.

Story

A concise, concrete anecdote or example illustrates your point and helps your audience understand SEL more tangibly. Consider concrete examples that show what SEL looks like in your classroom, school, or community. Or, tell a short, personal story that describes how SEL has impacted you or others.

Statistic

Whenever possible, bolster your message with specific data points or evidence.

Bonus: Also consider your **Spokesperson**. Sometimes the right messenger is as effective as the right message! Student stories and examples are especially helpful in demonstrating what SEL looks like in classrooms and schools and why it's important. Parents, teachers, and principals are also effective messengers who can speak to what SEL is and the impact it has made.

SEL messaging checklist

DO more of this ...	And less of this ...
<p>Put it in your own words and spell out acronyms. Whenever possible, use the full phrase “social and emotional learning” rather than the acronym SEL—this helps ensure that your messages are understood by anyone who sees/hears them in any context.</p>	Avoid acronyms, edu-speak, and jargon.
<p>Use concrete examples and stories that demonstrate what SEL is and its impact.</p>	Avoid vague concepts or ideas as the rationale for SEL.
<p>Elevate parent and caregiver stories about SEL.</p>	Avoid framing schools as the only “expert” on SEL.
<p>Elevate diverse voices to share their SEL stories.</p>	Avoid letting small but vocal groups drive the narrative.

Additional Resources

Social media

- [Student ambassadors at the SEL Exchange](#)

Newsletters

- [Winston-Salem/Forsyth](#)
- [Austin Independent School District](#)
- [Grand Rapids Public Schools](#)

Videos

- [Recording guidance](#)

Interactions with parents (e.g., parent nights)

- [Back-to-School Nights: A Missed Opportunity](#)
- [CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL: Family Partnerships](#)
- [SEL Discussion Series for Parents and Caregivers](#)