

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING LANDSCAPE SCAN

Systems & Structures that Support Whole
Child Outcomes in the Road Map Region

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YDEKC
Youth Development Executives
of King County

Whole Child, Whole Day: A Social Emotional Learning Symposium 2018, hosted by YDEKC

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I. INTRODUCTION: A Whole Child, Whole Day Approach

For young people to succeed in school, work, and life, they must have access to learning environments where every child feels safe, supported, connected, and inspired to learn and thrive.

A rich and growing body of research points to the idea that learning is inherently social and emotional (Aspen Institute, 2017). For academic skill development to occur - especially for youth that have been marginalized because of race, poverty, or other circumstances - families, schools, expanded learning providers, and community members must work together to build environments that promote social and emotional learning (SEL), inspire a sense of belonging, and reflect and value the diversity of the youth we serve. This comprehensive approach to SEL that includes school culture and climate as well as classroom instruction in both formal and informal (expanded learning) settings, has led us to use the phrase “whole child, whole day” to describe the broader context of SEL-related efforts.

Over the past few years, there has been an increased understanding of the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL). Education leaders are seeing that intensive focus on academics alone will not give youth what they need to succeed in school. SEL is broadly understood as the process through which youth and adults build awareness and skills in managing emotions, setting goals, establishing relationships, and making responsible decisions, leading to success in school and life (CASEL, 2018). These skills develop in a complex system of contexts, interactions, and relationships, indicating that a comprehensive approach is needed for each child to thrive (Aspen Institute, 2018). Research confirms that “integrating social and emotional development with academic instruction is foundational to the success of our young people, and therefore to the success of our education system and society at large” (Aspen Institute, 2018).

Taking a whole child approach means weaving social, emotional, and academic skill development together in an environment that is welcoming, supportive, and inclusive for all youth. A whole child approach acknowledges that learning doesn’t only happen during school time, but across the whole day in a variety of settings. A whole child, whole day approach recognizes that families, schools, expanded learning providers, and community members must work together to build an integrated system of supports for our youth.

Why Whole Child, Whole Day in the Road Map Region?

We believe that our region needs this whole child, whole day approach. The recently released Road Map Project Results Report points out that our region is in “a state of emergency.” Although we have seen substantial job growth and a decrease in unemployment rates, our region is confronting tremendous hardships. Our state’s longstanding challenge of adequately funding K-12 systems, the more than doubling of student homelessness in the region, and the evident and persistent existence of institutionalized racism are huge and complex barriers that only a committed and aligned effort across sectors can break down (Community Center for Education Results (CCER), 2018). Although the collective efforts of the Road Map Project have made progress on many indicators, the reality is that there are still unacceptable achievement and opportunity gaps for students of

color. We believe that a whole child, whole day approach that emphasizes environments where students feel connected, engaged and inspired is essential to addressing these long-standing challenges.

The Youth Development Field as Whole Child, Whole Day Leaders

Since 2011, [Youth Development Executives of King County \(YDEKC\)](#), a coalition of youth-serving organizations and a cross-sector convener working to improve holistic outcomes for young people in our region, has been elevating the importance of “non-academic” student success skills and dispositions. Over one hundred youth-serving non-profit organizations are YDEKC members working to ensure all young people in King County thrive. YDEKC builds bridges between organizations and across systems to create an ecosystem of supports for young people. One way we do this is by collaborating with school districts and community-based organizations to support efforts related to motivation and engagement and social and emotional learning. We host activities such as Social and Emotional Learning Symposia; we share research and resources through newsletters, our website and trainings; and we staff collaborative working groups focused on expanded learning and whole child outcomes. YDEKC partners closely with the [Road Map Project](#), a community-wide effort to drive dramatic improvement in student achievement from cradle to college and career in South King County and South Seattle.

Landscape Scan Goals and Methodology

During the 2017-2018 school year, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, YDEKC undertook a landscape scan to better understand how school districts and youth programs in the Road Map Project region (South Seattle and South King County, Washington) are addressing social and emotional skill development through the lens of a whole child, whole day approach. The scan aims to better explain what systems, strategies, and practices are in place that support whole child outcomes across the whole day, and what supports are available in each of the seven school districts across the Road Map region. To produce this scan, YDEKC surveyed participants from YDEKC’s 2017 SEL Symposium (62 respondents), conducted key informant interviews with district and community leaders (16 individuals), reviewed national and local reports, and captured insights from SEL-related cross-sector convenings in the Road Map region (9 meetings). We intend for this landscape scan to be used by YDEKC, school districts, community partners, and funders to identify opportunities for cross-sector collaboration, alignment, and learning to support whole child outcomes. The scan aims to serve as a launch point to deepen SEL-related efforts in the region. Ultimately, we hope this leads to more youth-serving environments where every child feels safe, supported, connected, and inspired to learn and thrive.

Landscape Scan Limitations

The scale and scope of a scan attempting to describe whole child efforts in the region could be limitless. We focused this scan on those system-level efforts in school districts and youth-serving organizations that seemed most closely aligned to social and emotional learning efforts, and about which less is publicly known. This scan does not include information on holistic support areas such as mental health, nutrition, and housing, though we recognize that these are critical to whole child outcomes. The YDEKC team focused on collecting information from school districts leaders to complement our knowledge of the youth development sector in King County. Because of this, a majority of our key informant interviews were with school district staff. During the process, we also discovered there was a vast amount of information captured in local Road Map reports and convenings, which we sought to synthesize rather than replicate.

In this initial stage, we did not focus on collecting information at the school or site level, or from young people and their families. However, we recognize that school- and site-level work is critical, and we believe that a better understanding of conditions at that level, and the ways that young people and families experience them, will be important to future efforts. We hope this scan will lead to future collaborative work between school districts and community partners, and that this collaborative work will include meaningful engagement with families, young people, and with the people who serve them in schools and youth programs.

II. Core Principles

In reviewing themes and findings from recent local and national reports, participant feedback and presenter content from Road Map SEL symposia, and key informant interviews, the following core principles emerged for a whole child, whole day approach. These principles are not about specific programs or initiatives, but guiding principles that must be woven throughout all efforts to build effective and equitable learning environments.

A Commitment to Racial Equity:

The Road Map project is committed to supporting King County's highest need young people and closing the opportunity gap for children of color. This commitment needs to inform the systems we build and the practices and strategies we implement in this whole child, whole day approach. The [Road Map System-Wide Racial Equity Essentials](#) goal of **increasing culturally relevant school climate and supports** is a key action for shifting racial equity into the center of our learning environments. This means pursuing cultural responsiveness and cultural relevancy in settings, and in curricula and pedagogy. It also means re-imagining instructional practices so that teachers and youth development professionals can tailor their approaches to uplift the strengths and respond to the needs of the youth of color they serve. School districts and youth organizations working in the Road Map region should focus on equipping their staff with the tools they need to develop their own social and emotional skills and to reflect on how their own biases may affect their work. Talking about race and equity among staff is a difficult and complex journey but is a key piece in building a culturally relevant climate in our schools and youth programs. The recent Aspen Institute brief, *Pursuing Social and Emotional Development through a Racial Equity Lens: A Call to Action* explains how SEL and racial equity work are mutually reinforcing:

"Most educators and school system leaders have good intentions and are committed to equity. But good intentions do not obviate the need to understand historical context and the role of race, racism, white privilege, and implicit bias in holding students back. Research indicates that teachers, like everyone, are subject to implicit biases associated with race and ethnicity, which can affect their judgments of student behavior and their relationships with students and families." (Aspen Institute, 2018)

Many of the school districts and youth-serving organizations in the Road Map region have powerful racial equity statements, and many are actively working towards addressing issues of racial inequities internally with staff. We need to support these efforts, and to work toward changing systems that perpetuate a white-dominant culture.

Youth and Family Centered:

Strong family engagement practices are another key piece of the Road Map Project’s equity work. A whole day, whole child approach affirms this core principle, and posits that youth need to be at the center as well. This means seeking, valuing, and **honoring the ideas, perspectives, and knowledge of both youth and families**. It was pointed out in several discussions that this is often an afterthought or a “last step” rather than the “first step” in informing decisions. School districts in the region are enhancing family engagement efforts and taking steps such as creating task forces that include families and creating positions such as community liaisons. The March for Our Lives movement that was inspired by the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, has highlighted the value and importance of youth voice and activism around the country. Our youth have much to teach us and we need ways to not only tap their voice, but to incorporate their opinions and ideas into the systems that serve them.

The recent report *Start with Us - Black Youth in South King County and South Seattle* from the Community Center for Education Results (CCER) is one example of how listening to the voices of youth can provide us with valuable information on what is and is not working in our schools. The listening sessions that informed this report shed light on how the racism that black students experience in schools directly affects their levels of engagement (Cooley, 2017). We hope that these findings will inspire educators to make changes.

Learning Environment Essentials (Cooley, 2017):
When Road Map Project Black youth were asked, “How would you like to feel when you walk into a school?” Student responses fell into four categories.

- ❖ “Safe and Supported by Adults.”
- ❖ “Engaged and Ready to Learn.”
- ❖ “Happy and Confident.”
- ❖ “Valued and Accepted.”

Authentic and Collaborative Partnerships:

The Road Map Project could not exist without the commitment and collaboration of partners from various sectors. This is true for a whole child, whole day system as well. **Access to high quality out-of-school-time programming** is another [racial equity essential](#) for the Road Map region. Many parts of the region have insufficient offerings after school and during the summer. Where they are available, high-quality afterschool programs provide expanded learning opportunities in culturally relevant and engaging programs. These programs are most effective when they are able to partner closely with schools, families, and other programs. In many discussions about partnerships, we are reminded that “it takes time” to build relationships and this is a piece that needs to be accounted for at the beginning of all projects. Resources such as [YDEKC’s Partnership Toolkit](#), the [User’s Guide for Road Map Family Engagement Survey](#), and [PSESD’s Authentic Community-School Partnerships Institute](#) have emerged from the need for schools to be more thoughtful and inclusive when engaging partners. Tapping into past learnings and taking the necessary steps to build **trusting relationships between schools and partners** is vital to building a system of supports across the whole day.

High- Quality Practice:

The environment in which youth spend their time is tied to how they feel about themselves, their community, and their chances of achieving the future they desire. It is well established that the quality of the learning environment affects outcomes. This is true in both school and youth development settings. Teacher assessment tools (the Charlotte Danielson, 5-D, and Marzano models being used in WA state) mirror in many ways the Youth Program Quality Assessment (Youth PQA) tool used by many youth development organizations in King County to assess the quality of

instructional practice. All of these tools stress the importance of providing safe, supportive, interactive, and engaging environments for youth. **Remaining focused on the quality of experiences** young people are having in our classrooms and youth programs is essential to improving youth outcomes (YDEKC, 2014a).

Moving Forward:

The remainder of this scan focuses on describing existing whole child, whole day efforts (rather than evaluating these efforts), and offers recommendations for moving the work forward in the coming years. The core principles shared above serve as touchpoints throughout the report and are infused into our recommendations at the end of the report. Moving forward, these core principles could also be used as a “strategy screen” when decisions are being made about future efforts, by asking the following questions:

- ✓ How is racial equity centered in this strategy, structure or practice?
- ✓ How are youth and families engaged in informing the strategy?
- ✓ How are partners included, supported and engaged to inform and support the strategy or practice?
- ✓ Is the experience within the program, strategy or activity of high quality? How do we know?

III. Defining our Whole Child, Whole Day Approach

At the heart of a whole child, whole day approach is the social and emotional development of both youth and adults. Social and emotional learning (SEL) principles inform how we teach, how we build learning environments, and how we partner to support families and young people. As we scanned the region for systems and structures that support whole child outcomes, we learned that social and emotional learning is defined in many different ways. In the literature, in our key informant interviews, and in SEL-related trainings, we heard repeatedly that defining SEL is a challenging task. Part of the difficulty stems from the fact that SEL has become a catch-all phrase for a broad range of skills, dispositions, mindsets, beliefs, and competencies demonstrated through research in a wide range of disciplines to be critical to succeeding in school, work and life. This has made SEL difficult to succinctly articulate, measure, and advocate for.

When defining SEL, most regional partners (including Washington State’s own SEL standards) refer to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) definition: *SEL is the process through which children, adolescents, and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions* (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2018). Studies have shown that good social and emotional skills can lead to improved outcomes in education and employment, as well as improved physical and mental health, and reduced chances of substance abuse, antisocial behavior, and relationship problems (Durlak et al., 2011).

More recent frames for defining SEL have emerged through the work of the Aspen Institute’s Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Development (SEAD). This work focuses on the conditions that need to be in place for young people to develop social and emotional skills. “These skills and competencies develop in a complex system of contexts, interactions, and relationships, suggesting that organizations must take a comprehensive approach to promoting social and emotional development- addressing adult skills and beliefs; organizational culture, climate, and norms; and routines and structures that guide basic interactions and instruction- and that such approaches are most effective when designed to match the needs and contexts of specific organizations and communities” (Aspen Institute, 2018).

In 2015, the Washington State Legislature directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to “convene a workgroup to recommend benchmarks for developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning for grades kindergarten through high school that build upon what is being done in early learning” (OSPI, 2018). The Social Emotional Learning Benchmark (SELB) Workgroup, comprised of statewide representatives from education, community, and government met monthly from October 2015 to September 2016 to develop recommendations regarding a comprehensive SEL framework.

As a result of their work, the SELB Workgroup released the “Addressing Social Emotional Learning in Washington’s K-12 Public Schools” [report](#) that includes guiding principles, standards, and benchmarks to support SEL development in schools. In 2016, the Washington State Legislature directed OSPI to create a [SEL online learning module](#). This online learning module can be accessed on the OSPI website and gives an overview of what SEL is, why it is important, and ways educators can incorporate SEL in the classroom. In 2017, the Washington state legislature “charged OSPI with continuing the initial work of the 2015 SELB Workgroup to develop detailed, culturally relevant grade level SEL indicators for the existing benchmarks, solicit feedback from statewide stakeholders, and develop a model of best practices for implementation of grade level SEL indicators. The report on this body of work must be completed by June 30, 2019” (OSPI, 2018). At this time, the SELB is meeting monthly and is currently focused on making sure the proposed standards and indicators are culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and are accessible to schools, families, and community partners.

SEL’S BENEFITS (Durlak et al., 2011) **A 2011 META-ANALYSIS FOUND THAT SEL...**

Raises Student Performance

- Higher academic achievement
- Better social emotional skills
- Improved attitudes about self, others, and school
- Positive class behavior

Reduces Risk for Failure

- Fewer conduct problems
- Less emotional stress

Washington State’s SEL Benchmarks provide guidance on the skills we hope young people develop; however, we do not believe they are sufficient to guide the essential cross-sector work needed to reach our vision of a whole child, whole day system of supports. YDEKC’s 2014 report *Skills and Dispositions that Support Youth Success* points out that the definition of SEL does not adequately include all the skills and dispositions identified by other studies as important for our youth. Dispositions such as future orientation, growth mindset, sense of belonging and identity, and creativity were also identified keys to youth success (YDEKC, 2014). Furthermore, as we dug deeper into the conditions that need to be in place for SEL development to occur, we realized we needed to widen our focus to a whole child, whole day approach, where social and emotional learning is at the core. This distinction on SEL informed how we structured our landscape scan interview questions and how we articulated our project goals. While conducting this scan, we framed our questions in terms of a whole child approach, by asking what supports are in place that foster a positive climate and social and emotional skill development.

“Whole child” in the context of this report means that the focus is on social, emotional and academic development (SEAD) and on the climate and culture needed to cultivate this development; “whole day” means that alignment and intentionality of SEL supports must span a child’s whole day, from the time they wake up in the morning to the time they arrive home from their afterschool activities.

What does a Whole Child, Whole Day System look like? When we asked Road Map educators and system leaders about bright spots in the region, where schools were working with partners (community, families, and youth) to support the whole child across the whole day, we were able to create a picture of what an optimal system might look like. Further review of relevant reports and local efforts elevated these key attributes of a sustainable whole child, whole day system:

- ✓ **Stable Leadership and Whole Child Vision:** Stable leadership that can articulate a vision for supporting the social, emotional and academic needs of young people; and can lead, inspire, and collaborate with staff and partners to implement that vision is a driving force for a whole child, whole day approach.

WASHINGTON’S K-12 SEL FRAMEWORK GUIDING PRINCIPLES

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In order to implement SEL into the classroom and foster SEL skills, professionals working in the K-12 education system must receive on-going, job embedded professional learning.

SCHOOL/FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Two-way respectful and collaborative communication between schools, families, and community partners is essential to the development of effective, culturally responsive SEL supports in school.

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Recognizing that there is a reflection of culture in any selection and implementation of standards requires us to be thoughtful and responsible to the many diverse cultures of the students, families, and educators, and staff that make up school communities.

(Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction-Social Emotional Learning Benchmark Workgroup 2016)

- ✓ **Positive Climate and Culture:** Climate and culture are influenced by the practices and approaches a school or youth program implements to intentionally build a safe, supportive, respectful, and engaging environment for youth, families, and staff. A positive school or program climate promotes a sense of belonging and puts relationships at the forefront. Essential to a positive climate and culture are intentional efforts to ensure all experiences for young people are affirming and promote identity safety.
- ✓ **Social Emotional Learning- Related Curriculum and Instruction:** There are many programs and curricula that explicitly teach social and emotional skills and competencies in schools and in youth programs. There are also SEL-related practices that can be embedded in instruction in a classroom or youth program to promote whole child outcomes. SEL is sometimes narrowly associated with explicit SEL curriculum. Having explicit time and lessons to develop SEL skills is valuable; however, there are a myriad of opportunities across the day to integrate and reinforce SEL through the interactions we have with youth. Building relationships is central to SEL-related instruction and a key to engaging youth in learning.
- ✓ **Professional Learning and Capacity Support:** All SEL-related efforts require adults to build their own SEL skills and competencies. Professional learning is critical to helping administrators, teachers, and youth development professionals to improve their knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness. Capacity support emphasizes *on-going* support, resources, or activities that enable people to do their jobs effectively.
- ✓ **Partnerships and Collaboration with Youth, Families, and Community:** Schools, youth, families, and community partners working together to build a system of supports for youth across the whole day and year takes intentional planning and coordination. In a thriving partnership ecosystem, schools and partners are committed to effective site coordination; shared leadership; aligned, responsive implementation; and shared accountability for success (YDEKC, 2017).
- ✓ **Continuous Improvement Strategies:** As in other practice domains, improvements in SEL require an organizational and professional commitment to an ongoing process of learning, self-reflection, adaptation, and growth.¹ Assessments that focus on adult practices, youth perspectives, and the learning environment itself can provide valuable information on how schools and programs are progressing in their SEL-related efforts. Remaining focused on the quality of experiences young people are having in our classrooms and youth programs is essential to improving youth outcomes.

¹ Retrieved from <https://www.edglossary.org/continuous-improvement/>

IV. Scan Findings- Whole Child, Whole Day Efforts across the Road Map Region

What follows is a snapshot of efforts districts are making towards a whole child, whole day system organized by the 6 key attributes laid out in the previous section of this report: Leadership and Vision; Positive Climate and Culture; SEL-Related Curriculum and Instruction; Professional Development and Capacity Support; Partnerships and Collaboration; and Continuous Improvement Strategies. Detailed profiles for each school district are forthcoming in Fall 2018.

The table below provides general information on student demographics in each of the seven Road Map region school districts.

ROAD MAP SCHOOL DISTRICTS AT-A-GLANCE

	Auburn	Federal Way	Highline	Kent	Renton	Seattle	Tukwila
2016-17 Student Enrollment²	16,182	23,218	18,983	27,896	16,029	19,991 Road Map ³ (54,424 in District)	2,961
# of Schools in Each District	14 elementary schools	21 elementary schools	18 elementary schools and 1 early childhood center	28 elementary schools	15 elementary schools and 1 early childhood center	24 elementary schools (62 in district)	3 elementary schools
	4 middle schools	2 K-8th grade schools, 6 middle schools	4 middle school (7-8)	6 middle schools	4 middle schools	2 middle schools, 2 K-8 schools (11 K-8 schools, 12 middle schools in district)	1 middle school
	3 high schools, and 1 alternative high school	4 high schools, & 5 specialized schools	6 high schools, 1 skills center	4 high schools, and 3 academy schools	4 high schools	6 high schools, 4 service schools (11 high schools, and 8 service schools in district)	1 high school
Youth of Color⁴	59%	72%	77%	65%	73%	53% ⁵	88%
Free/Reduced Price Meals	52%	59%	63%	48%	50%	34%	73%

² State of Washington, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). (2017). *Washington State report card*. Retrieved from <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx?groupLevel=District&schoolId=1&reportLevel=State&yrs=2016-17&year=2016-17>

³ Community Center for Education Results (CCER). (2017). *Road Map Project results report*. Retrieved from <http://roadmapproject.org/data-center/reports/2017resultsreport/>

⁴ Youth of color include all that do not identify as non-Hispanic White.

⁵ Percentages for Seattle Public Schools is based on the whole district.

	Auburn	Federal Way	Highline	Kent	Renton	Seattle	Tukwila
Transitional Bilingual ⁶	18%	20%	27%	20%	18%	13%	38%
Special Education	12%	14%	16%	11%	14%	15%	9%
Experiencing Homeless ⁷	2%	2%	6%	2%	3%	7%	11%

1. Leadership and Vision:

Stable leadership that can articulate a vision for supporting the social, emotional and academic needs of young people and that can collaborate with staff and partners to implement that vision is a driving force for a whole child, whole day approach. Many bright spots across the Road Map region are products of the sustained efforts of system leaders within school districts, individual schools, government agencies, and communities. When a vision can be shared across sectors and by more than one leader, the chances of a sustained effort become greater. While leaders with positional power can help create a mandate within a district or community to move this work forward, community leaders, educators, and young people themselves are also leading efforts forward, sometimes without any direct support or an explicit mandate from those with positional authority.

We found an awareness of and support for whole child efforts across the region and in all seven school districts’ central administrations. While a holistic approach has long been a focus for youth development organizations and intermediaries such as School’s Out Washington and YDEKC, alignment with districts is now growing. At the County government level, the Best Starts for Kids implementation team is taking a very holistic approach to ensure all young people can be “happy, healthy, safe and thriving” (King County, 2018). At the State level, OSPI’s refresh on their mission and values includes a “focus on the whole child” (OSPI, 2018a). These statements by governmental leadership at multiple jurisdictions provides language that could catalyze SEL-related efforts in the region and across the state.

As we scanned the region for bright spots, we were able to find examples where stable and talented leadership was the catalyst for inspiring, driving, and sustaining a whole child vision. Bright spots that we encountered had collaborative leaders who laid out concrete steps to build relationship-rich environments where students, teachers, families, and community partners felt valued, supported, and included. We heard repeatedly from leaders that addressing barriers to learning so that all youth have access to education in an environment where students *can* and *want* to learn is a key piece of districts’ strategic plans. A review of each of the school districts’ strategic plans reveal that each district has at least one goal specific to building a positive school climate and/or supporting the social and emotional development of their youth. Below are a few examples:

⁶ Transitional bilingual describes children who meeting the following conditions: 1) The primary language of the student is other than English; and 2) The student’s English skills are sufficiently lacking or absent as to delay learning and are therefore eligible for the Transitional Bilingual Program.

⁷ Community Center for Educational Results (CCER). (2017). *Follow the money update*. Retrieved from <http://roadmapproject.org/resources/presentations-materials/follow-the-money/>

In **Kent**, the strategic plan explicitly calls out social and emotional learning in their vision and in one of their four goals. The strategic plan was developed by a collaborative process that documented over 5,000 conversations, survey questions, and comments from various stakeholders in the community. The result is a set of informed priorities for the next five years- "[Blueprint: Leaning Forward Together 2016-2021](#)." The plan lays out specific strategies and indicators for supporting social and emotional growth and for building a safe and respectful school culture. By specifically laying out these strategies, district and school staff are required to prioritize these pieces in their school plans and budgets. By documenting and adopting this plan, the district has ensured that this vision is broadly shared, rather than dependent on a single leader.

In **Highline**, the strategic plan was recently refreshed, and its foundation includes supporting the SEL needs of all students. Families, community members, and staff were invited to answer open-ended questions via a virtual exchange about how the district can better support students' social and emotional wellbeing at school. They heard from nearly 300 people who pointed to specific social emotional skills, such as communication skills, empathy and emotional intelligence, and character development, need to be developed. The feedback also identified specific supports, like professional development of adults, as a key factor in supporting this work, specifically creating safe learning environments. One way Highline has moved towards this goal is by working with staff on developing charters that state how they want to feel in their school and in the central office. This is one of the initial steps in their implementation of RULER, an evidence-based approach to integrating SEL into school culture.

Additionally, as we scanned the region for bright spots, we were able to find examples where stable and talented leadership was the catalyst for inspiring, driving, and sustaining this whole child vision. When asked where the bright spots for whole child work were, many pointed to schools with principals that had an established history and an unwavering commitment to working towards building positive school culture. This insight was further validated by an influential study wherein researchers studied 180 schools across nine states and concluded: "We have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership" (Louis et al., 2010).

In **Renton**, Jessica Calabrese-Granger is one of those principals, whose "talented leadership" and whole child vision, was able to transform Lakeridge Elementary School. In 2011, Lakeridge Elementary School was identified as a persistently low-performing school by the federal government. Required changes, such as lengthening the school day and the hiring of a new principal, were implemented. Principal Granger worked with the staff to develop an action plan to raise academic performance of the students. This plan focused on supporting the teachers with collaborative professional learning communities (PLCs) across grade level and subject matter. Additionally, Ms. Granger and her team realized that in order to address academics, she must also address social and emotional factors. They included in their action plan teacher training on a trauma-

KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Goal #1: Prepare all students to be college and career ready by raising the academic and **social emotional learning bar** and closing the PreK-16 gaps to student achievement and college completion.

Objective: Ensure social growth appropriate for college and career readiness.

Strategy: Implement social development curricula with fidelity in every school and ensure that all staff are trained in a normed system of behavioral and social supports.

Indicator: Percentage of schools with full, high-fidelity implementation of social emotional curricula (PBIS, Second Step, Restorative Justice).

informed approach and strategies to support positive discipline. Partnerships with [UW College of Education](#) and [Sound Discipline](#) provided the training and the support to dig deep in those areas. In two years, Lakeridge Elementary saw an increase in 5th grade math scores of 35% and in reading scores of 25%. Ms. Granger is now Chief of School Improvement for the district, and oversees 5 elementary schools, called the Renton Innovation Zone. She continues to lead these schools with an intentional focus on making sure principals and teachers have the tools and support they need to be effective.

2. Positive Climate and Culture:

Positive climate and culture within a school building are essential to child and staff well-being and success. School culture includes the practices and approaches a school implements to intentionally build a safe, supportive, respectful, and engaging environment for youth, families, and staff. A positive climate is the outcome of a socially and emotionally rich environment that promotes a sense of belonging and puts relationships in the forefront.

Racial Equity, High Expectations, Fostering a Sense of Belonging

Schools are recognizing that climate and culture are not just about how we approach discipline and interventions but about how we intentionally build spaces for “promoting a sense of belonging and supporting excellence for each and every student” (Seattle Public Schools, 2018). **Seattle** has defined what a positive climate includes: a vision based on shared beliefs, values, rituals, and stories that grow as part of the culture; collaborative relationships and respectful interactions between students, families, and staff; fair and equitable treatment that respects and values all cultures; a physical environment that is welcoming, safe, and accessible to all; and regular assessment and review of school climate survey by students, families, staff, and stakeholders (Seattle Public Schools, 2018). One way Seattle does this is by encouraging every school to have a race and equity team as part of their district-wide racial equity policy that focuses on goals such as student motivation and engagement through strength-based, culturally responsive instruction and by amplifying the voices of students and families in building policies and practices. Other districts such as **Highline, Auburn, Tukwila**, and most recently **Kent** also have adopted racial equity policies that formalize the district’s commitments to providing an inclusive environment and to breaking down institutional barriers for students of color. **Federal Way** will also be adopting a racial equity policy in the fall. Further review on how these policies are being implemented and their impact on climate and culture is needed.

In **Auburn**, one goal is to integrate culturally responsive teaching in all classrooms. They are in their second year of implementing a Deep Equity framework across the district. This framework is based on the work of Gary R. Howard and helps schools and districts establish the climate, protocols, common language, and common goal of implementing culturally responsive teaching practices. [Gary R. Howard](#) is a local

“Culturally responsive teaching means teaching and leading in such a way that more of your students, across more of their differences, achieve at a high level and engage at a deeper level, more of the time, WITHOUT giving up who they are.”

Gary R. Howard

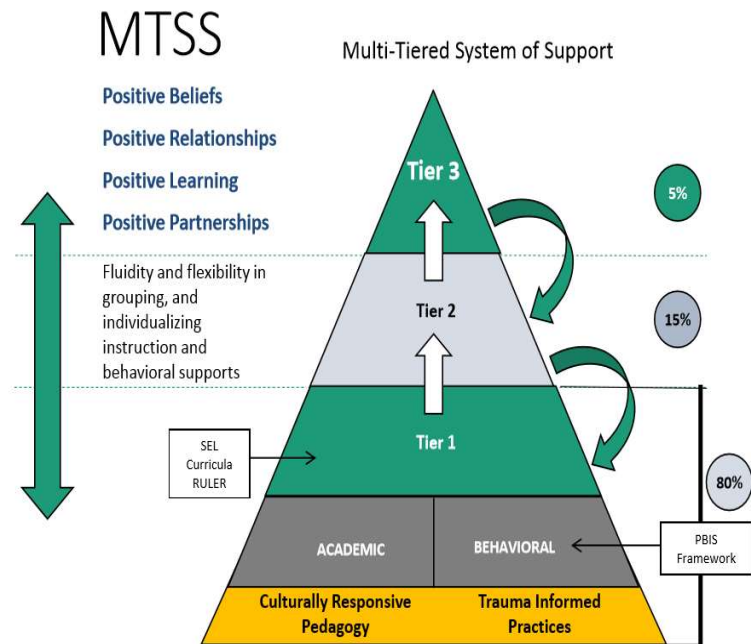
professor at Seattle University and author of *We Can't Teach, What We Don't Know- White Teachers, Multiracial Schools* working to support schools and districts in strengthening their culturally responsive practices. Auburn is also using other frameworks such as [Courageous Conversations](#) and No Excuses University to tailor the district's approach to supporting teachers and staff in this work. [No Excuses University \(NEU\)](#) is focused on building a culture of universal achievement when "the critical mass of the staff believes that each student is capable of meeting academic standards in reading, writing, and math AND that the school has the power to make that opportunity a reality."⁸ The program focuses on developing a college-going culture starting in kindergarten. Additionally, schools are emphasizing practices that promote a sense of belonging for all students. An example of a practice reported include: school wide events such as Black High 5, a morning with local African-American community leaders and parents, dressed in their work clothes, lined up to greet students at they enter their school.

Alternatives to Punitive Discipline

While discipline practices are only one component of the climate of a school, they are often the starkest example of the ways in which students are either engaged or excluded in their schools. Across the board, school districts report implementing restorative practices and/or trauma-informed practices at some or all of their schools. This is a notable increase from 2016 when the [Seattle Times](#) reported that three school districts in the region were implementing this practice. This is partly due to the passing of HB 1541 in Spring of 2016. The bill requires school districts to support disciplined students in keeping up with studies and to shorten expulsions, among other efforts aimed at closing the opportunity gap. Additionally, the roll-out of [Best Starts for Kids](#) investments that support this practice has provided much-needed funding to support staff in implementing restorative practices. In addition to using these funds to help with training of staff, districts and community partners are using them for cross-sector alignment. For example, in **Federal Way**, a partnership, between the district, Communities In Schools of Federal Way, and CHI Franciscan Health, held five information sessions for youth-serving organizations to learn and connect on building positive school climates and stronger communities through restorative practices. Opportunities like these serve as a way for districts and partners to share best practices and develop a common language around serving young people.

Tiered Intervention Systems

Organizing and coordinating supports and services that best meet the needs of individual students – both academic and social and emotional – can be challenging. Most Road Map districts are implementing a three-tiered student support framework such as Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and/or Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS). These are school-wide



⁸ Response to YDEKC Online Landscape Survey, 2017

approaches that emphasizes a continuum of evidence and research-based instruction and practices to support all students and build positive school environments.

In these frameworks, universal supports that are provided to all students are called Tier 1. Tier 2 are targeted supports and available to some students. Tier 3 are intensive supports and provided to a few students who have significant barriers to overcome. **Seattle** and **Highline** are examples of districts that have invested significant resources in creating an extensive MTSS framework and implementation guide for their schools. Their frameworks make the explicit connection between academic and behavioral supports with the understanding that each piece is not exclusive of the other. Both districts have staff at the central office to support this work and schools are encouraged to have a MTSS team at each school.

Although district central offices are all working towards building a vision and comprehensive framework for supporting all students, the "how" of bringing this vision to life varies from district to district and even more widely, from school to school. Strong leadership, buy-in from staff, the availability of resources, and partnerships with families and community partners were noted as essential preconditions for effective implementation. In the chart below, you will see examples of some practices that schools are using to promote a positive culture and climate:

Climate & Culture	Auburn	Federal Way	Highline	Kent	Renton	Seattle	Tukwila
<p>A Snapshot of Practices that Support Positive Climate and Culture</p> <p><i>Each district administers these practices, but implementation varies school to school.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restorative practices - Trauma-informed Practices - No Excuses University - Positive discipline approach (Sound Discipline) - Racial Equity Policy - Deep equity teams at schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restorative practices - Trauma-informed practices - PBIS - Racial Equity Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MTSS - PBIS - Restorative practices - Trauma-informed practices - Positive discipline approach (Sound Discipline) - Equity Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MTSS - PBIS - Restorative practices - Trauma-informed practices - Racial Equity Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PBIS - Trauma-informed practices - Restorative practices - Positive discipline approach (Sound Discipline) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MTSS - PBIS - Restorative practices - Trauma-informed practices - Positive discipline approach (Sound Discipline) - Racial Equity Policy and Race & Equity teams at some schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PBIS - Restorative practices - Trauma-informed practices - Racial Equity Policy

3. SEL-Related Curriculum and Instruction:

Often the clearest implementation of social and emotional learning activities is when there is an adopted program or curriculum to explicitly teach

social and emotional skills to students. While an important piece of a comprehensive whole child, whole day strategy, it is insufficient in isolation from the other important core components outlined in this scan. Additionally, we found that SEL- related instruction and strategies in the classroom, such as restorative practices or culturally responsive pedagogy, regardless of the academic subject being taught, is necessary to creating a learning environment that addresses the whole child. Implementing an explicit SEL curriculum across a district, or even a school, can be cost-prohibitive and challenging to embed across the day. On the other hand, SEL- related instruction and strategies are manageable and effective ways to embed SEL in the classroom or program setting. These strategies may be similar to practices used for creating positive climates at the building level as well. Finding ways to embed SEL into existing efforts and academic subjects is needed to ensure that SEL is not just an add on, but core to instruction. A Common Sense Media blogger sums it up well: “SEL might not be core content, but it is the core of all content.”⁹

Most schools across the seven districts have an explicit SEL curriculum at primary sites, but fidelity of implementation of the curriculum varies. All districts report some of their primary schools using the Second Step curriculum. [Second Step](#) is a research-based curriculum provided by Committee for Children, a Seattle-based non-profit, whose mission is to foster the safety and well-being of children through social-emotional learning and development. The Second Step program is a classroom-based curriculum that teaches foundational social-emotional and self-regulation skills to all students, from early learning to 8th grade. **Renton** and **Kent** have implemented Second Step across all primary schools. [RULER](#) is another evidence-based SEL curriculum used in most **Highline** and **Seattle** primary schools. RULER, developed by Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, teaches the skills of emotional intelligence, in particular those associated with recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotion. While Second Step activities are mostly implemented within individual classrooms, RULER provides support for school-wide “charters” that support building-level agreements around the creation of a positive school climate.

In **Seattle**, they recently adopted a new English Language Arts Curriculum from the [Center for the Collaborative Classroom](#) (CCC). This curriculum intentionally embeds SEL into literacy instruction. The CCC curriculum has a focus on working together and explicitly teaches students how to engage each other in learning. Curricula with SEL-related approaches, like CCC, provide tangible steps for teachers to take to embed SEL into their instruction in core subjects. Ongoing coaching on culturally responsive instruction and healing practices is another way to provide educators practical ways to embed SEL-related instruction in the classroom. On the national level, this need for practical strategies is being addressed by the [Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning \(EASEL\) Laboratory](#), led by Dr. Stephanie Jones and supported by the [Chan Zuckerberg Initiative \(CZI\)](#). EASEL is currently developing research-based SEL Kernels, low-cost, low-burden strategies for SEL that can be tailored and personalized for specific needs in the classroom. Their approach involves drawing “kernels” from a content analysis of 25 evidence-based SEL curricula and piloting and refining the kernels with school partners. Locally, Tacoma Public Schools is working towards adopting a similar approach across the district, but call these low-cost, low burden strategies “SEL signature practices.” Tacoma aims to provide training for this approach so that all teachers and OST providers are on the same page when embedding SEL in the classroom. Districts also report using various SEL-related instructional practices at some schools. These include culturally responsive teaching and other approaches, such as [Mind Up](#) and [Capturing Kids Hearts](#), that prioritize relationship building and creating the conditions for learning as core elements.

⁹ Retrieved from <https://www.common sense.org/education/blog/we-all-teach-sel-inspiring-activities-for-every-classroom>
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Most of the SEL-related efforts that were shared with us were happening at the primary level. When asked what was happening at the secondary level, most interviewees at the district level were not able to articulate SEL strategies being implemented, especially in high school. Programs such as [GEAR Up](#) and [AVID](#), that target specific students who need additional support, were mentioned; but how SEL is implemented as a school-wide effort still needs to be further investigated at the secondary level. One emerging trend is to explicitly include SEL content in advisory classes, which are small-group classes led by teachers and focused on advising. In **Seattle**, district leaders are working with the Seattle Education Association (SEA) to develop a plan to integrate SEL and college and career readiness into all advisories. This is a promising step towards equipping teachers with time and resources to embed SEL into the school day at the secondary level.

Although we were not able to capture every SEL-related practice that teachers implement in schools, the chart below gives an example of some of the practices currently being used. As noted earlier, explicit SEL-related curriculum was reported at the primary level. But, we did not see this trend at the secondary level, except for some middle schools implementing Second Step and RULER. However, there are many programs and activities that focus on student mindsets and learning strategies at the secondary level that may not be named SEL, but function to support students' social and emotional skill development. For instance, in **Kent**, two high schools were implementing [School Connect](#), an 80-lesson multimedia curriculum designed to strengthen social and emotional skills and relationships, for incoming 9th graders. Advisory classes, college and career readiness programs, and a couple of intervention models were cited as examples of SEL-related instruction happening at the secondary level.

SEL- Related Curriculum and Instruction	Auburn	Federal Way	Highline	Kent	Renton	Seattle	Tukwila
Some districts have an explicit SEL curriculum at primary sites, but most SEL-related instruction at schools varies, especially at the secondary level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second Step (some primary) - Culturally responsive pedagogy - CHAMPS - Capturing Kids Hearts - Mind Up - Social Thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second Step (some primary) - Culturally responsive pedagogy - Capturing Kids Hearts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RULER (almost all of primary) - Second Step - GEAR Up - Culturally responsive pedagogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second Step (all primary and some middle) - Kelso's Choice - School Connect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second Step (all primary) - Kelso's Choice - Check & Connect - Culturally responsive pedagogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RULER (all primary) - Second Step - Center for Collaborative Classroom - Project ALERT - Culturally responsive pedagogy - SEL and college and career readiness will be in every Advisory next school year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second Step (one primary) - Culturally responsive pedagogy

4. Professional Development and Capacity Support:

Professional development is essential to the implementation of all SEL-related efforts; adults need ongoing skill-building to not only teach SEL content, but also to build a supportive environment within our schools and communities. This is true for all adults interacting with youth throughout their days. Site-based professional development and support are often insufficient for full implementation of new frameworks or strategies adopted by districts. For successful whole child, whole day efforts, much greater focus needs to be placed on deepening adults' own social and emotional skills, such as self-awareness and anti-bias, rather than strictly learning curriculum to teach.

Survey respondents from YDEKC's fall 2017 survey of SEL Symposium attendees spoke to the great need for more professional development opportunities. 39 percent of respondents spoke to the need for more training for adults who work with youth—more time for training, coaching on practices learned in training, and training on specific topics. Topics of interest included: intersection of trauma and SEL, SEL goal-setting and supporting students to reach goals, cultural awareness, curriculum, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), strategies that can be used in various settings, and working with secondary students. Said one respondent, "Educators need support and better understanding around the impact of social and emotional needs on kiddos." Some respondents suggested ways for adults to learn from each other, including co-trainings with school districts and CBOs and more collaboration with community partners that are skilled in the field.

Nearly a quarter of respondents pointed out the need for additional capacity supports beyond professional development to ensure effective knowledge and skill-building for adults and successful implementation of new practices or curriculum. They expressed a range of perspectives on what kind of support would be helpful. Some focused on program or classroom needs, including more time for planning and implementation, materials such as curriculum, additional staffing, information on how to train volunteers, and support for adults in their skill development so they can support students with wide-ranging needs. Others identified a need for implementing supports across a full system in a uniform way, and one expressed an interest in being connected to specific organizations that are providing curriculum, professional development, and/or school-wide support in their region.

District-Level Staffing Structures

Resources to support this work from district central offices vary widely across the region. Most oversight of SEL-related efforts resides in the student supports division at the district office. One interviewee aptly described student supports as the district office that "addresses any barriers that prevent kids from learning." Most of our interviews were with staff on those teams. However, because SEL intersects with other department such as Teaching and Learning, Family Engagement, Community Partnerships, Equity, and Data Management, it was challenging to connect all the dots within the district central offices to find out how districts are supporting the work of building positive school climates and students' social and emotional skills. This was most often the case with the larger school districts. For smaller districts such as **Tukwila** and **Auburn**, having fewer central administration employees means that multiple duties (family engagement, community partnerships, equity) often rest with one person or a "small and mighty" team. While SEL was not necessarily called out specifically as anyone's primary duty, it became clear that the core (or heart) of much of the essential work of family engagement and equity efforts is directed toward ensuring that schools are creating a sense of belonging and a positive climate for all young people, and especially for youth and families of color.

Three of the seven Road Map region districts - **Federal Way**, **Seattle** and **Highline** - have specific roles explicitly focused on supporting SEL across the district. In **Federal Way** and **Highline**, they each have 2 full-time PBIS/SEL specialists that support schools in implementing these frameworks. In **Seattle**, one full-time district staff person oversees the roll-out and support of RULER and is currently working on further SEL support in the district. **Highline** recently hired their first SEL Director. In **Renton**, they recently expanded their Student Support team by hiring a director to lay out a plan for rolling out SEL across the district. In **Kent**, although there is momentum in supporting SEL in the district through the student supports team, it is unclear at this time how significant budget cuts will impact this work. Overall, capacity for supporting SEL-related work across the districts from the central offices is limited. It was noted that internal alignment of departments is a potential growth area. The tiered intervention framework (e.g. MTSS) that most districts are using represents a step towards alignment between departments, but “figuring out the how” is a moving target.

School District Professional Development

Much professional development (PD) for school-based staff is centered at the building level, which is based on the school’s needs, interests, and budget. Because professional development needs vary from building to building, consistent PD is challenging to scale across the district. Strategies such as professional learning communities, ongoing coaching models, and a focus on principal training are identified areas to explore for strengthening this system element. There are some district-wide supports that are offered to schools. Because resources are often tight, this is mostly centered on supporting schools in rolling out new district-adopted approaches such as MTSS, PBIS, and specific curricula. At the school level, we did hear that recent district trainings have focused on trauma-informed and restorative practices.

Optional district-wide professional development is offered at various times throughout the year, often right before the beginning of the school year. An example of how district central offices support PD is by providing one-time trainings that respond to emerging needs in the field or focusing on a theme as a kick-off for the year. For example, as a response to the growing concerns after the presidential election about hate speech and the targeting of refugee and immigrant youth and other youth of color, **Seattle** hosted an Identity Safety Institute- a day-long symposium focused on providing staff with strategies to create identity safe schools. “Identity safety” refers to the practice of making classrooms safe and inclusive for students with a variety of social identities. An identity-safe classroom is one in which teachers strive to help students feel that their identities are an asset rather than a barrier to academic success.¹⁰

Youth Development Professionals Professional Learning

Promising practices are emerging for professional development for youth-serving organizations, though SEL is not a new concept for many youth program providers. Youth programs in the region have been working on building high-quality programs that promote social and emotional learning and identity safety for quite some time. [School’s Out Washington \(SOWA\)](https://www.seattleschools.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=627&pageId=20860465), a state-wide intermediary organization dedicated to building community systems to support quality youth development programs, led the process of developing a set of [Quality Standards](#) for the expanded learning field rooted in social and emotional learning practices. These standards provide guidance to youth development professionals in the areas of Cultural Competency and Responsiveness, Relationships, and Youth Leadership and Engagement. Since 2009, over 600 youth programs in our state have

¹⁰ Seattle Public Schools. (2017). District Holds Teach-in on Making Classrooms Safe and Inclusive for All Students. Retrieved from <https://muires.seattleschools.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=627&pageId=20860465>

participated in a continuous quality improvement process aligned to the Standards utilizing a validated, research-based assessment tool from the [David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality](#) called the [Youth Program Quality Assessment](#). In the upcoming school year, 400 programs in SOWA's quality improvement system will be leveling up to a revised quality improvement tool that expands on SEL efforts. This revised tool introduces scales in empathy, emotion coaching, problem solving, and mindfulness.

Professional learning in collaboration with school districts in the region to deepen alignment between school-based staff and youth program providers is also growing. In **Seattle**, the district's Partnerships Department will offer its third full year of trainings for partners in community-based organizations. **Highline** and **Federal Way** school districts also offer quarterly partner meetings that provide an opportunity for sharing key initiatives or curricula with partners.

5. Partnerships and Collaboration with Youth, Families, and Community Organizations

Schools and partners working collaboratively to build a system of supports for youth across the whole day and year requires intentional planning and coordination. In a thriving partnership ecosystem, schools and partners are committed to effective site coordination; shared leadership; aligned, responsive implementation; and shared accountability for success (YDEKC, 2017). Only an integrated system of supports will meet the needs of every child, and we cannot do this without authentic collaborations with various partners including with families, communities, and young people themselves. Partnership and collaboration takes time, resources, and commitment to ensure seamlessness for young people throughout their day. Even where there is commitment, many districts and schools in the region lack the time and resources to build out systems of collaboration to support school-based partnerships. YDEKC's [Partnership Toolkit](#) provides a place for youth programs and schools to start solidifying their partnerships, recognizing that relationships between partners is essential.

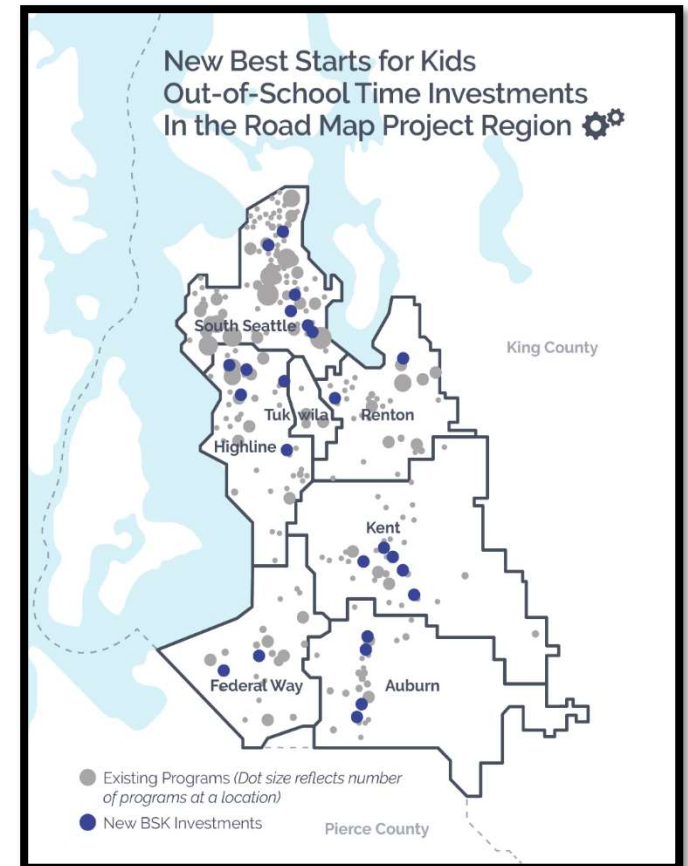
Findings from Race to the Top's Deep Dive grants, which invested in place-based partnerships, also remind us that strong leadership and central coordination are essential to build and sustain collaborative partnerships between schools, families, and community organizations (Road Map Race to the Top, 2017). Coordination is key to promoting a whole child, whole day approach. When we asked district interviewees about what partners they were working with to build an ecosystem of supports for youth, four of the seven districts mentioned [Communities In Schools](#). While Communities In Schools (CIS) supports vary by district and school, they often provide a site coordinator at schools to coordinate a comprehensive range of service providers to meet the academic and non-academic needs of students. Effective site coordination creates, strengthens, and maintains a bridge between a school and partner organizations. Site coordinators provide leadership for collaborative processes and coordinate a continuum of services. A site coordinator or coordination team can act as a liaison for many different areas, such as: family engagement, community engagement, youth development, academic alignment, partner programs and services (physical and mental health services, after school enrichment opportunities, mentoring, early childhood education, etc.). Not all schools have the capacity for site coordinators or community liaisons. By default, principals and counselors often end up filling this role.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

Community partners are essential to providing whole day supports for children and youth. Expanded learning opportunities (ELOs), or enrichment opportunities for youth outside of school, often provide a level of social and emotional support to young people during non-school hours that is difficult to replicate during the school day. High-quality youth programs build safe, supportive, engaging learning environments for kids that nurture their social and emotional development. One district leader pointed out that “community partners and families are often further along than the district” in regard to collaborating and intentionally working towards whole child outcomes. Youth organizations like the [Boys and Girls Club of King County](#) explicitly implement activities focused on building social and emotional skills in their afterschool and summer programs. [Techbridge Girls](#), a local non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring girls in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), talked about partnering with schools to create safe spaces so that girls could build not only their STEM skills, but also their self-esteem, perseverance, and grit. These are just a few examples of how youth programs approach the development of social and emotional skills. **Communicating to districts about this sector’s expertise in SEL** and commitment to on-going quality improvement will enable more collaborative partnerships and high regard for the youth development sector.

While ELO programs are essential spaces where young people grow their SEL skills, there are far too few programs to serve all of the young people who could benefit. An [Out-of-School Time Landscape Scan](#) of King County commissioned by School’s Out Washington in 2017 identified the following needs:

- ✓ Transportation and space. While there are several needs that would require more than available dollars to support, transportation could be solved with investment. Place-based investment is a strategy to address both space and transportation together.
- ✓ Smoothing and streamlining funding. A wide variety of funding sources are used across the system. The proportional burden of funding a program tends to increase as program size decreases. Funder alignment with efforts such as streamlined proposal processes and applications can help reduce this burden on programs, allowing them to reallocate resources toward direct programs.
- ✓ Community vision and strategy for providers. Providers report interest in a strengths-based approach to partnership and collaboration that allows them to build on each other’s assets.
- ✓ Concerns around scale and meeting standards. The size and financial resources of providers vary significantly. Funding should consider equity among organizations with regard to size and capacity. Culturally relevant groups are often small, and without support to bolster their programs, the field may be dominated by large organizations.



This report concluded that serving low-income youth and youth of color alone “would likely exceed the capacity of all identified programs, even before accounting for the right mix of service types, ages, and geographies” (BERK Consulting, 2017).

New investments through King County’s Best Starts for Kids out-of-school-time funding are an important step in filling some of the gaps in afterschool programming in the region. Twenty-eight grants (\$7.2 million over three years) are going to the Road Map region. One example is that in 2018-2019, [Neighborhood House](#) will continue a long standing partnership with Dick Scobee Elementary and Cascade Middle Schools in the **Auburn** School District to provide afterschool and summer programming to 320 children and youth living in and around the King County Housing Authority communities of Burndale Homes and Firwood Circle. In addition to working to fill gaps in service through public and private philanthropy, programs are also working towards improving their quality and focus on SEL.

Mental Health and Service Coordination

In interviews with school district staff we asked for examples of schools and partners working together to build supports for whole child outcomes. Some districts pointed out how integral community partners were in tier 2 and 3 supports. For example, in **Kent**, [Valley Cities](#) provides mental health counseling one day a week in eight schools and other providers come to campus to provide targeted supports. Most districts partner with at least one, and sometimes many, behavioral health organizations within the Youth and Family Services Association to complement and supplement the work of district mental health staff (counselors and psychologists). Communities In Schools (CIS) was also mentioned as a valuable partner in several districts for supporting community partner coordination and mentoring. In **Federal Way**, [CIS Federal Way](#) is at all high schools and middle schools. They implement an integrated student support model that provides a comprehensive range of services to students. A CIS coordinator at each school identifies needs of students, gets referrals, case manages the students, and collaborates with partners to bring resources to the school. This model has proved to be an effective way for community partners to connect with school sites.

In **Tukwila**, Foster High School is working with a number of community partners to integrate community volunteers through [Church by the Side of The Road](#) into the school and into classrooms at both Foster High School and Showalter Middle School. Primarily African American men from the group are volunteering regularly to support mentorship and school engagement with young men of color. This additional community support is leading to an increased sense of belonging for students, as well as an increased ability for young people to build their self-efficacy skills to advocate for their own needs and approach their school environments with more confidence. Given the difference between teacher and student demographics in the region,¹¹ having more community-based volunteers and staff in schools during the day can improve the sense of belonging of students of color.

Family Engagement Partnerships

Collaboration with families was also pointed out as a key to creating a safe and positive school culture. For example, in **Tukwila**, they have four community liaisons on staff to reach out to the four largest non-English-speaking communities in their district (Somali, Nepali, Burmese, and Spanish). The community liaisons connect families to school information, resources, and assistance in navigating the school system. Community

¹¹ See the most recent Road Map Project Results Report (Community Center for Education Results (CCER), 2018) for a detailed breakdown.
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liaisons are also able to respond to urgent needs of the community by connecting families with community resources. For example, some Burmese families in the community were receiving alarming letters directing them to return to their “point of entry” for questioning. The district promptly organized a family night with immigration lawyers to answer questions and provide support. Family engagement efforts throughout the region are increasing in scale and reach. The Family Engagement Institute hosted by the Road Map Project in the summer of 2018 resulted in more than 20 school-based plans to enhance family engagement.

6. Continuous Improvement Strategies:

As in other practice domains, improvements in SEL require an organizational and professional commitment to an ongoing process of learning and improvement. Identifying the data that will support continuous improvement in the SEL domain remains challenging. Measures of social and emotional skills at the individual level are in a fairly emergent stage, and their relevance to adult practice at the classroom, school, or youth program level is unclear. Furthermore, there is general concern about the potentially stigmatizing effects of assigning SEL scores to individual young people in school or youth program contexts. A more fruitful approach could be to focus on measures that provide information on the environments in which young people spend their time.

Across the Road Map region, school districts are collecting data on school climate and culture using student, staff, and parent surveys. Schools that are “in improvement” (i.e. those identified as struggling in accordance with state accountability systems) use a common climate survey tool administered by the [Center for Educational Effectiveness \(CEE\)](#). Several districts administer their own climate surveys that are more closely aligned to district priorities in addition to the CEE tool. However, use of this data for program planning purposes varies from district to district, and from school to school. In addition to surveys, observational assessment tools like the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) used in hundreds of youth programs around the state can provide information on the extent to which the environment supports social and emotional development. Similarly, the classroom-based observational assessments that are part of Washington State’s Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) describe teaching practices that “foster and promote safe and inclusive learning environment[s]” that take into account the “physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being of students” (OSPI, *n.d.*). Placing existing data more explicitly into an SEL framework, and focusing on its use in a continuous improvement context, could be a growth opportunity for the region.

School District Continuous Improvement Strategies

Since individual student measures are problematic, we asked districts how they were assessing the progress students, staff, and schools are making in supporting SEL and positive school climates. In early learning, all districts report using the [WaKIDS: Whole Child Assessment](#). The state is currently phasing this assessment in for all state-funded full-day kindergarten classrooms. Classroom teachers use an observation tool (administered before October 31 of the school year) called Teaching Strategies GOLD to take inventory of their students’ developing skills. Teaching Strategies GOLD includes skills in the social and emotional learning domain. Use of individual-level measures for older students is a rarity; however, all districts reported they are using climate surveys to some extent.

As mentioned above, all Road Map districts use climate surveys from the [Center for Educational Effectiveness](#) (CEE) for schools that are required to submit improvement plans to the State. These surveys are intended to monitor organizational effectiveness, student engagement and motivation (using the Student Engagement and Motivation Survey (SEMS) module developed by YDEKC with the Road Map Project in 2012), and parent and community involvement. Many districts also use surveys of their own choosing in order to assess their own strategic priorities. **Seattle** is in the process of redesigning their survey to better capture their progress toward racial equity across the district. In **Renton**, they also recently redesigned their climate survey and aim to have it fully implemented during the 2018-19 school year.

SEL-related Data Sources	Auburn	Federal Way	Highline	Kent	Renton	Seattle	Tukwila
Continuous Improvement Strategies <i>Most schools use data to inform site-based action plans.</i>	<u>WaKIDS¹²</u> Includes SEL measure through Teaching Strategies GOLD for K “Deep Equity” Assessment at each school site.	<u>WaKIDS</u> Includes SEL measure through Teaching Strategies GOLD for K Tiered Fidelity Inventory	<u>WaKIDS</u> Includes SEL measure through Teaching Strategies GOLD for K	<u>WaKIDS</u> Includes SEL measure through Teaching Strategies GOLD for K	<u>WaKIDS</u> Includes SEL measure through Teaching Strategies GOLD for K	<u>WaKIDS</u> Includes SEL measure through Teaching Strategies GOLD for K	<u>WaKIDS</u> Includes SEL measure through Teaching Strategies GOLD for K
Climate Surveys <i>Most districts have district-wide climate surveys but how that data is used varies from school to school.</i>	EES climate survey ¹³ at all schools every 2 years.	EES climate survey at all schools.	Gear Up Student Motivation Survey (all secondary) EES climate survey at mandated schools.	District-wide school climate survey at all schools. EES climate survey at mandated schools.	District-wide school climate/SEL survey developed by RSD (adopted in Spring 2018) EES climate survey at mandated schools.	Student/Staff/Parent climate survey developed by Panorama & SSD. Available online. EES climate survey at mandated schools.	EES climate survey-Students/Staff/Parents at all schools. Data is available online.

While all districts use climate surveys for at least a portion of their schools, the use of climate data at the programmatic level varies widely. **Seattle** and **Highline** are two districts that provided us insight on how schools are using their data. Seattle uses a survey developed by their data team and

¹² WaKIDS- Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills: Teacher observation Tool that monitors a child’s developing skills in six areas: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy, and mathematics.

¹³ Educational Effectiveness Survey (EES) from the Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE)- climate survey intended to monitor organizational effectiveness, student engagement & motivation, as well as parent/community involvement. This is also an OSPI mandated survey for “schools in improvement”.

Panorama Education. Historically, all schools have administered surveys in the spring, and reviewed the data during the following year's strategic planning process. There are currently several schools that have opted to administer surveys three times per year in order to test interventions and monitor change over time. In **Highline**, they administer a district-designed GEAR-UP Student Motivation Survey at the secondary level. Highline is the only district that currently codes surveys to allow for the connection of survey data to student early warning indicator data. While they are careful to safeguard student privacy around individual responses, they are able to look for relationships between how young people feel about the climate of their schools and their own motivation and engagement, and their attendance, behavior, and course performance. This has led to valuable conversations with school staff about groups of students, leading to changes in staff perception and actions.

ELO Continuous Improvement Strategies

Expanded learning programs have a well-established approach to using program data for continuous improvement. School's Out Washington (SOWA) is an intermediary organization dedicated to building community systems to support quality afterschool, youth development, and summer programs for Washington's children and youth ages 5 through young adulthood. Since 2008, SOWA has been developing a quality improvement system that now includes over 600 youth programs across the state. SOWA uses Weikart's Youth Program Quality (YPQ) framework and tool (the Program Quality Assessment, or PQA) that provides the training and support to improve staff practices in creating high-quality youth programs that have positive climate and culture at the core. This year, they have been introducing the SEL PQA, which adds an explicit SEL component to the PQA tool and process. There are 140 programs across the state implementing SEL PQA. Starting in the fall of 2018, another 260 programs will be implementing SEL PQA as well. In addition to assessing the extent to which program environments support the development of social and emotional skills, many ELOs use SEL outcomes assessments to monitor individual skill development. These include observational assessments like the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) and self-report measures like the Holistic Student Assessment (HSA), the Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (SAYO), or YDEKC's Engagement, Motivation, and Beliefs Survey. However, the connection of data from these tools to program practice is less clear than it is with the YPQA tools, which come with aligned professional development and coaching to improve quality.

An Emerging Local SEL Research Consortium

In order to clarify issues related to measurement of SEL efforts locally, the [3DL Partnership](#) at the University of Washington recently established a SEL Research Consortium. The consortium, which includes YDEKC, researchers, school districts, and other partners in the Road Map region, represents an attempt to build a community of practice around SEL measurement. During its first full year of convening (the 2017-2018 school year), the consortium has worked to establish shared purpose around SEL research and measurement strategies for SEL. The group is asking questions about how to implement, assess, and sustain SEL programs for impact—tasks complicated by the limitations of commonly used measures. Monthly meetings have helped advance several research projects that are linked to priority issues identified by participating members and their organizations. Ongoing work centers on goals for SEL assessment, data literacy, and evaluation. Projects within one school district have furthered goals around survey use for the assessment and study of SEL and racial equity in relation to academic outcomes. The work has also helped add youth voice to an ongoing survey refinement process within Seattle Public Schools. These recent projects reflect a growing interest of the consortium in making connections between SEL, racial equity, cultural identity, and school climate.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS- WHOLE CHILD, WHOLE DAY SYSTEM BUILDING

Based on the synthesis of the data and information gathered through the scan process, YDEKC has arrived at several recommendations for the region. None of our recommendations are simple or offer a way to just “check the box.” All of our recommendations require deep time and commitment for building relationships, integrating systems and practices, and putting complex pieces together to form an effective whole child, whole day experience for each and every child in the Road Map region. Our recommendations also build on, and deepen, recommendations that came from our earlier symposia; namely, that the region needs to better understand and articulate a vision that explicitly incorporates social and emotional learning, define what an integrated system of supports looks like, and create alignment and a common language for this work among all stakeholders in the region.¹⁴ Progress is slowly being made to heighten the emphasis on social and emotional development of young people and adults in the region, and we believe the following recommendations can speed that progress.

1. Develop consistent messaging about the holistic needs of youth and the systems and structures needed to cultivate SEL across the day.

Social and emotional learning involves more than just developing specific skills and competencies; it also depends upon the environments, interactions, and relationships that youth encounter throughout their day and throughout their year. Whether we call it a whole child approach, Social Emotional and Academic Development (SEAD), non-academic skills, 21st century skills, personalized learning, or MESH (Mindsets, Essential Skills, and Habits), we essentially are working towards creating learning environments that support the growth of happy, healthy, safe and thriving individuals. We can no longer afford to segregate our efforts in supporting academics, behavior, and the social well-being of our children and youth. **Developing coherent language and messages so that all sectors and partners (this includes families and community) can see clearly how they connect and contribute to a whole child approach is a start towards building more alignment within the region and state.** This is also an opportunity to explicitly make the connection of SEL, racial equity, and the role it plays in building positive climate and culture. From a policy perspective, developing a coherent language for SEL is also necessary for garnering support and influencing various stakeholders, such as funders and policy-makers, for support and resources.

¹⁴ Notes from SEL Symposium 2016, table discussions with system-level stakeholders
Road Map region SEL Landscape Scan | Youth Development Executives of King County | 9.28.2018

All in all, our region’s leaders need to communicate widely what we mean by SEL, how SEL is a vehicle to closing the opportunity gap, and how SEL can create the conditions for every child to learn and thrive. One district interviewee points out that SEL is “not an add-on, but how we do business.” Washington State is working towards adopting SEL standards and a best practices/guiding document, slated to be released in July 2019. This is an opportunity **to develop a common message and explicitly make the connection of SEL, racial equity, and the role it plays in building positive climate and culture.** Although the standards are geared towards the social and emotional skills that educators should be developing in children and youth, the guiding document has the potential to clarify what we mean by SEL and all the factors, conditions, and sectors that have a role in developing the system to support this work.

Also at the state level, the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee ([EOGOAC](#)) is working to address the achievement gap in the state. In 2016, EOGAC recommended an extensive set of interdependent strategies outlined in Bill 4SHB 1541 for schools to implement for closing the opportunity gap. One of those strategies was building an integrated student approach and engaging families and partners. When the bill passed in 2016, the Washington State Legislature created the [Washington Integrated Student Support Protocol](#) (WISSP), which outlines this strategy. The WISSP emphasizes that a collaborative, systemic approach is needed to meet students’ needs (OSPI, 2017). The protocol outlines essential features for implementing ISS which align with several of this scan’s findings, including support for a whole child approach and deliberate steps to creating safe, inclusive school environments (see Table 1). The protocol also encourages the creation and expansion of community-based support which aligns with a whole day approach. Connecting SEL/whole child efforts with this protocol has the potential to clarify and communicate how SEL informs systems such as this. Specifically linking this protocol with the forthcoming WA SEL standards could be an opportunity to build a foundation for this work in schools.

Table 1. Features of an Enabling Context for Implementing Integrated Student Supports

Context Feature	Description
Buy-in and Support	There is broad support among staff and the larger school community for a whole child approach to education and moving student supports in from the margins, to the center of educational improvement strategies.
Distributive and Collaborative Leadership	A culture of distributive and collaborative leadership engages all students, staff, families, and community leaders.
Funding	There is dedicated funding (from either a single, or multiple sources) for implementation and ongoing supports.
High Expectations	Families, school, district, and community leaders set high expectations for the academic, social, emotional, behavioral, mental health, and physical development of all students.
Opportunities to Learn in Multiple Contexts	Student learning and development at school, home, and in the community is connected and complementary.
Positive School Climate and Culture	Leadership teams take deliberate steps to create a positive school climate and to foster the development of a school culture that is safe, inclusive, and supportive where all students, their families, and community members feel welcome.
Professional Learning	Training, coaching, and other structured supports provide all staff, families, and community members with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to support the learning and healthy development all students.

Specific recommendations include:

- ✓ **Washington State Government:** Integrate (or at least align) related work within OSPI including the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL) and the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee ([EOGOAC](#)), OSPI’s SEL Benchmarking and Indicators group, and the OSPI Expanded Learning Opportunities Council. Build clear mechanisms for collaboration and integration between OSPI and the new Washington State Department for Children Youth and Families (DCYF).

- ✓ **School Districts and Youth Organizations:** Align efforts with the Washington State SEL Benchmarks as articulated in the 2016 SEL Benchmarks workgroup report; engage in ongoing opportunities to shape the SEL benchmarks and indicators through 2019.
- ✓ **Youth Organizations:** Clearly and consistently articulate expertise around supporting the social and emotional development of young people and explore partnerships to support schools to better meet the holistic needs of young people.
- ✓ **System Leaders across Sectors:** Amplify and align with King County’s Best Starts for Kids whole child approach, and Executive Constantine’s vision for all young people to be “happy, healthy, safe and thriving.”

2. Strengthen connections and alignment within districts and across sectors to connect whole child supports.

Integrating SEL across learning environments across the whole day is still an aspirational goal. Even though each district recognizes the value of a whole child approach, **many districts and schools need explicit time and resources to align their efforts internally and externally with partners and families.** SEL touches many departments such as Teaching and Learning, Equity, Partnerships, Student Supports, and Data Supports. However, in most districts, especially larger ones, it is challenging for these teams to bridge their work. In some cases, it is not clear who should lead this connection of whole child efforts. In our interviews, we only encountered two leadership positions explicitly in charge of leading SEL efforts across the districts. In most cases, SEL was one of many domains in a director’s job description, and was not necessarily explicit. In one meeting, a district staff person pointed out that “it isn’t clear who owns SEL”; therefore, the question of who within a district should lead alignment efforts remains to be answered. MTSS and integrated support models are a good start in aligning efforts, but internal departments need dedicated time to continually make connections between their bodies of work. Some connections are not as obvious as others. For example, SEL and racial equity work within a district need to be connected, especially when building relationships with youth and families and creating inclusive, safe school climates. Partners and families also need to be involved in alignment efforts from the beginning.

In YDEKC’s fall 2017 survey of SEL Symposium Attendees, many people expressed excitement over expanding networks of support and an increased awareness and emphasis on social emotional learning across sectors. At the same time, many respondents saw the need for adults to build connections and alignment between all of the different efforts, departments, initiatives, and sectors related to this work. Within sectors, respondents expressed a desire for “breaking down silos between departments and programs internally” and “opportunities to connect/link with other schools.” Many acknowledged the shared responsibility schools, community partners, and families have in supporting students in building social and emotional skills, stating that their top needs are “continuing to share best practices, tools, and language across sectors,” “more time...to talk with school/community partners regarding social emotional success of students in programming,” and integrating school and community partners into common frameworks, such as “community partnerships in MTSS.”

Most districts expressed interest in learning how other districts are approaching SEL and whole child outcomes. However, they did not know whom to connect with. Pairing up district staff who have similar roles to learn and share with one another is one strategy to help connect SEL-related work. Learning institutes or Road Map-related workgroups that include all seven districts do exist. But, district staff realize district-specific priorities come first and this makes it challenging to attend these regional meetings in a consistent manner. Pairing up district staff across different districts,

who are on similar trajectories, to support, learn, and share from one another is one way to strengthen connections in a way that may be more manageable from a scheduling perspective.

Additionally, we discovered that implementation of SEL-related goals varies from school to school. Principals are key to how the work is being implemented and what supports are in place for the staff. Recognizing, supporting, and sharing the expertise of principals who have had great success in producing whole child, whole day learning environments could help to grow this work. This scan did not investigate how principals are hired, prepared, supported, and managed. However, we do know that without a strong leader and a sustained commitment to whole child outcomes, we cannot move this work forward.

Specific recommendations include:

- ✓ **Districts and Intermediaries:** Pair or group district staff who have similar roles across districts to learn from and share with one another to connect SEL-related work across the region, potentially in a professional learning community or in more informal ways.
- ✓ **Districts:** Recognize, support, and share the expertise of principals who have had success in producing whole child, whole day learning environments. This scan did not investigate how principals are hired, prepared, supported, and managed. However, we do know that without a strong leader and a sustained commitment to whole child outcomes at the school level, we cannot move this work forward.
- ✓ **Districts and Youth Organizations:** Build cross-sector integration and alignment teams to ensure that efforts supporting whole child, whole day efforts are complementary and additive. Road Map districts can use the individual district profiles (forthcoming in Fall 2018) as a launching point to bring a cross-departmental team, including partners, together for further planning and alignment.

3. Increase professional development and capacity support for educators and leaders to strengthen their own SEL skills and the practices to create learning environments that foster SEL in youth.

Recent national reports have been released by the Aspen Institute and CASEL that emphasize the need to address adults' skills and beliefs as they play an integral role in promoting social and emotional skill development. The conversation has shifted from what skills and dispositions *youth* need to succeed in school and life to what skills and dispositions *adults* need to create the conditions and supports for every child to thrive. Although many have expressed their enthusiasm for SEL-related professional development, there is still inadequate support for the adults and educators who are doing this work. We are seeing more professional development towards SEL-related approaches like restorative practices, trauma-informed approaches, and culturally relevant pedagogy. The recent influx of Best Starts for Kids investments has helped to support training in Trauma Informed and Restorative Practices (TIRP); however, there is a need for ongoing support to ensure high-fidelity implementation of these practices and to sustain the work moving forward. In one instance, we heard of a school team being trained to implement SEL curriculum, but with staff turnover and competing priorities, they were unable to teach the curriculum in a consistent manner. In some cases, a counselor is the only designated staff person charged with "teaching" SEL. Some teachers have reported not "having time" to teach SEL. Ongoing coaching and providing teachers with time and resources to teach explicit SEL curriculum and/or SEL-related instruction are needed to sustain this effort.

We heard continuously that SEL needs to start with adults and that this is often difficult. In multiple conversations, the challenge of shifting adult mindsets, actions and behaviors to prioritize and model social and emotional skills in the classroom was a prevalent and urgent theme. For example, each district had some school sites implementing restorative practices or trauma-informed approaches. These practices require a fundamental shift in the way teachers and staff respond to behavior management in the classroom; and this is not an easy task to implement. First and foremost, leaders and educators need to better understand how the stresses that they have themselves experienced create internal barriers to learning, and that adults need to work toward repairing that internal harm before they can effectively work with young people. In several meetings we heard the question, “How can we develop social and emotional skills in youth when we, adults, struggle with it?” Additionally, the challenge of developing a system to support teacher learning while keeping in mind teacher union agreements and the daily demands of teaching make answering this question difficult.

Specific recommendations include:

- ✓ **System Leaders Across Sectors:** Promote efforts such as the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) micro-credentialing efforts on SEL using the OSPI-created online SEL Modules and SOWA’s Youth Program Quality methods trainings focused on SEL.
- ✓ **Secondary Leaders:** Explore how to support teachers and school staff to deliver tier one SEL supports at the secondary level such as integration into Advisory Classes, as well as focusing on college and career supports.
- ✓ **Districts:** Offer ongoing SEL training and ongoing support for professionals – both district employees, and partner staff - that focuses on “how” adults interact with young people and their families in addition to providing support for SEL-related curriculum and resources.

4. Increase and build upon existing collaborative partnerships with families and community partners by integrating explicit SEL efforts in partnership ecosystems in the Road Map region.

Families and community organizations are critical thought partners on what their children and youth need and must be involved in our effort to integrate and align SEL practices across the school day and out-of-school time. Past efforts in the Road Map Region, such as the [Race to the Top](#) grant that provided initial funding to the seven school districts in the Road Map region to improve student achievement, supported investments such as intensive school-community partnerships at various school and community sites. These one-to-four-year investments were called “Deep Dive” grants, as they allowed school districts and community partners to investigate what it takes to build an intensive school-community partnership to achieve student success for families in the opportunity gap. Furthermore, Best Starts for Kids has invested in partnerships in schools and communities across the county that “address the many factors that support physical, social, and emotional well-being”¹⁵. A review of these investments is an opportunity to build upon and align SEL efforts within these partnerships.

One example of a sustained partnership is the Kent East Hill Partnership. The Race to the Top Deep Dive 1 grant supported the growth of this partnership between the Kent School District, King County Housing Authority (KCHA), Kent Youth and Family Services (KYFS), and Communities In

¹⁵ Best Starts for Kids Blog. (May 2018). Celebrating Best Starts for Kids’ School Partnerships. Retrieved from <https://beststartsblog.com/2018/05/24/celebrating-best-starts-for-kids-school-partnerships/>

Schools of Kent (CIS). The Deep Dive 1 work was place-based, focusing on students who lived at Birch Creek Apartments and attend Pine Tree Elementary and Millennium Elementary. This grant also supported the Parent Academy for Student Achievement (PASA) programs at several of Kent's Title I schools. The partnership continues, now with funding from Best Starts for Kids and from KCHA. An outcomes report was released in August 2017 and outlines their efforts in building an infrastructure for a whole community, whole village effort and the success they had in raising school and community engagement with both youth and parents (Road Map Race to the Top, 2017).

Specific Recommendations Include:

- ✓ **System Leaders and Funders:** Build on past and current investments in school-community partnership efforts (such as RTTT Deep Dive sites and BSK investments) to share lessons learned, ensure sustainability and continuity of existing partnerships, and invest in additional sites.
- ✓ **System and District Leaders:** Invest in partner coordination to connect in-school and ELO opportunities at the school/building level to align SEL-related efforts/practices and ensure appropriate supports are accessible to individual students.
- ✓ **System Leaders and Funders:** Funding and support to community-based organizations to provide direct services is needed. There are still many areas of South King County that are extremely under-resourced with few partners available to provide expanded learning opportunities.
- ✓ **Principals:** Invite youth organization staff to school-based professional development opportunities to better integrate programming.

5. Support the use of data for continuous improvement that emphasize the learning environment, adult practices and youth and family perspectives.

How do we know whether our SEL-related efforts are having an impact? Measuring students' social and emotional skills for accountability purposes is a controversial subject; research in this field is still emerging locally and nationally. While some measurement tools – both self-report and observer ratings - are available, they have important limitations. Many have limited evidence of validity, especially with diverse populations. Furthermore, the self-report measures that currently exist are highly vulnerable to a number of types of bias, most notably social desirability bias and frame of reference bias, which calls their value for evaluation purposes into question (Duckworth & Yaeger, 2015; West et. al., 2016). While tools are available that enable adults to assess children's social and emotional skills, these can be even more problematic than self-report. For one thing, they carry an inherent risk that implicit (and explicit) bias will play a role in how adults perceive young people's social and emotional competencies, particularly when they are making judgments across differences in race and culture. Also, social and emotional skills do not develop on a linear, grade-level continuum, but are related to many other factors in a child's life, including whether they have experienced trauma or are affected by poverty, violence, or homelessness.

Given the limitations of individual skill assessments, we believe that assessments that focus on the learning environment itself can provide the most valuable information on how schools and programs are progressing in their SEL-related efforts. All school districts are currently using climate surveys to some extent, and many schools are actively integrating climate data into their planning processes. Another advantage of climate assessments is that, in the case of surveys, they can bring in the voices of young people and their families. Young people and families are well

positioned to report on the ways they do or do not feel safe and supported in schools and in communities. As much as possible, their voices should contribute to planning and improvement efforts. In addition to gathering information from them, educators and youth leaders should involve young people and families in the process of making meaning from data, and of designing strategies to improve learning environments. We need to support these efforts, and to continue to develop our understanding of the kinds of data that are proving most valuable to educators in their efforts to build safe and inclusive schools. Additionally, the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) has SEL-related scales which are currently undergoing a validation process. We need to encourage youth program providers to engage in this process, and to share their learning with their partners in the K-12 sector. Work in both of these areas can further our understanding of how specific actions in the classroom or youth program relate to the development of social and emotional competencies.

Specific recommendations include:

- ✓ **Districts:** Support school leaders in their use of data from student, staff, and parent surveys. Climate surveys can provide a more complete picture of the learning environment than traditional academic outcome measures, and can help school leaders and staff to make tangible, positive changes in practice. For secondary schools, the Healthy Youth Survey can provide insights on students’ holistic health and well-being.
- ✓ **Youth Organizations:** Participate in the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI), a continuous improvement process supported by School’s Out Washington, ideally one that uses the newly developed YPQA SEL subscales as a part of the process.
- ✓ **All:** Honor the voices of young people and their families. Young people and families are well positioned to report on the ways they do or do not feel safe and supported in schools and in communities. As much as possible, their voices should contribute to planning and improvement efforts.
- ✓ **All:** Focus on the environment over the individual. Measures of SEL-related outcomes at the individual level are at a fairly early stage of development, and may not provide practitioners with clear signals about what is and is not working. Measures that focus on the environment may provide better data for improvement purposes.
- ✓ **All:** Promote and sustain a strong data culture within and across sectors. Approach all data with a spirit of inquiry and a desire to do better for the young people in our region. Support the active and objective use of data within and across sectors to improve SEL practice.

VI. NEXT STEPS

In the fall of 2018, YDEKC will share this report, and associated district-level profiles, with key stakeholders in the region to inform next steps in building the ecosystem of supports young people need to ensure that they are happy, healthy, safe, and thriving. Specifically, YDEKC intends to cultivate an SEL Action Team to help shape the vision for the Road Map Project and define YDEKC’s role and priorities moving forward in the SEL Landscape. YDEKC also intends to continue to build relationships with the seven school districts in the Road Map region to work toward internal alignment and/or school-CBO alignment on SEL-related efforts.

We hope that readers of this scan will initiate conversations about how the themes outlined here and whole day, whole child attributes are or are not manifest at their school or youth program sites. We also hope readers bring these recommendations forward to their own stakeholders and decision makers to explore how they can advance SEL efforts within their own areas of work, and that they will share with us how the scan has been, or could be useful.

To share your feedback, request a presentation on the scan, or to request to be included on the mailing list for YDEKC's quarterly SEL Newsletter, please contact Mona Grife, mgrife@ydekc.org or visit YDEKC's website at www.ydekc.org

VII. SOURCES AND METHODS USED IN THIS SCAN

1. Public Data: This includes information from school district websites (Auburn, Federal Way, Highline, Kent, Renton, Seattle, Tukwila) and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), with enrollment data for the 2016-2017 school year.
2. Synthesis of past outreach and research. Several outreach efforts in King County over recent years have produced qualitative data about SEL-related efforts and needs. This report leverages this data to minimize respondent fatigue and incorporate input on an accelerated timeline. These sources include:
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 - YDEKC (2017). Initial Report from YDEKC's Regional SEL Survey. Retrieved from [YDEKC Online Landscape Survey 2017](#)
 - Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Climate Priorities Survey 2017
 - SEL Consortium- SEL and School Climate Assessment Interview Notes, Winter 2018
 - Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). SEL Indicator Workgroup Panel Notes. January 2018. Retrieved from <http://www.k12.wa.us/Workgroups/SELB-Meetings/IndicatorsWorkgroups.aspx>
 - Education Northwest. Executive Summary- Overview of the Social-Emotional Learning Development Efforts. 2015
3. Key Informant Interviews with 16 leaders from Road Map school districts and youth development field. The YDEKC team focused on collecting information from school districts leaders to complement our knowledge of the youth development sector in King County. For a list of interviewees, please see the Background and Acknowledgement section at the end of this report.

4. Cross-Sector Meetings (Approx. 9 meetings)- Most of these meetings were not explicitly convened to inform the scan. YDEKC team took the opportunity to ask for input for the SEL landscape scan and/or made a concerted effort to attend meetings that already had SEL as a meeting topic.
 - YDEKC Advisory Board Meeting- January 2018
 - YDEKC Member Summit Roundtable Discussion- February 2018
 - SEL Consortium- Meeting- February 2018
 - King County OST Taskforce Meeting- March 2018
 - Various SEL meetings that included: Sound Discipline, School’s Out Washington, Best Starts for Kids, SEL for WA, Puget Sound Educational Service District

5. Local and National Reports- For a list sources referenced in this report, please see below:
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- Seattle Public Schools. 2018. *Discipline*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattleschools.org/cms/one.aspx?pagelId=18282>
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VIII. BACKGROUND AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Who is YDEKC?

Youth Development Executives of King County (YDEKC) is a coalition and cross-sector convener supporting the holistic success of children and youth in King County. Our members represent more than 100 non-profit organizations directly serving youth ages 5 through young adulthood within King County. YDEKC works to build bridges between organizations and across systems to create an ecosystem of supports for the whole child across the whole day.

What is the Road Map Project? (staffed by the Community Center for Education Results)

The Road Map project is a collective impact initiative that began in 2010 to improve student achievement from cradle through collage and career in seven King County, Washington school districts: Auburn, Federal Way, Highline, Kent, Renton, (South) Seattle, and Tukwila. Together, this region is home to 92 percent of the county's high-poverty schools. Among the Road Map region's 127,290 K-12 students: 71 percent are of color, 55 percent are low-income, and 22 percent are English language learners. Through multisector collaboration with hundreds of partners and individuals, the Road Map Project aims to increase equitable policies and practices in education systems to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps, and for 70 percent of its region's youth to earn a college or career credential by 2030.

This report was written by: Mona Grife, YDEKC, with Jessica Werner, YDEKC

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