



# Transformative Social Emotional Academic Learning

## TSEAL Success Framework

### Vision:

#### *DPS Statement of Equity*

Racial and Educational Equity is our collective responsibility. We will achieve equity when we dismantle deeply rooted systems of oppression that have historically resulted in inequitable access and distribution of opportunities and resources for those who represent marginalized identities, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, language and ability. We will create conditions where we all belong, are included, have clear purpose (why) and have the autonomy to lead in our respective areas. By creating these conditions, we will eliminate the predictability of success or failure for our students and team members.

### Mission

Cultivate a District Wide Culture of Transformative Social Emotional Academic Learning

### Goal

All students and educators feel a sense of belonging, thrive (feelings are nurtured, and grown; personal goals are met and are engaged with the world around them) in a **liberated** learning environment.

### Transformative Social Emotional Academic Learning

"Transformative SEAL" is a process whereby young people and adults build strong, respectful, and lasting, relationships that facilitate co-learning to critically examine root causes of inequity, and to develop collaborative solutions that lead to personal, community, and societal well-being.

This form of SEAL is aimed at redistributing power to promote social justice through increased engagement in school and civic life. It emphasizes the development of identity, agency, belonging, curiosity, and collaborative problem solving

It's critically important that school wide TSEAL implementation intentionally nurtures an environment in which educators gain social and emotional competence by learning, collaborating, and modeling their social and emotional skills. Along with these social and emotional skills, schools must also fold in conversations about race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, language and ability so that the conversation about TSEAL takes into account the student's fullest identities. It is recommended that schools do a deep dive into understanding how educators, students, and community can navigate conversations about race, sex, gender, ableism and other social identities in order to establish systems and supports that strengthen both adult and student Social Emotional Academic Learning.

### What we have learned:

Over the past 4 years, Denver Public Schools (DPS) and Denver Afterschool Alliance (DAA) entered into a partnership through the Wallace Foundation's Partnership for Social and Emotional Learning Initiative (PSELI). Denver was one of six communities chosen to build the capacity of schools and youth-serving programs by integrating Social Emotional and Academic Learning (SEAL) into both the day school and out-of-school time



(OST) core curriculums. The goal of the PSELI was to design, observe and document practices in day school and out of school time (OST) that aligned social, emotional, and academic learning strategies and would enhance adult practices and improve youth experiences in schools. From the data collector, the 2 top findings are below. You can read the full reports [HERE](#).

1. Establish a leadership team that prioritizes a SEAL-rich climate and culture that seamlessly weaves together high-quality social and emotional learning with sound academic instructional practices. Designate a SEAL champion to lead a multi disciplinary team to monitor data, climate and culture, and relationships, throughout the year, and collaborate with district implementation supports
2. SEAL is the responsibility of all - Schools are more effective at teaching and reinforcing SEAL for students when they also cultivate [SEAL competencies](#) in adults. Implementation plans should leverage many adults - from teachers to lunchroom team members to out-of-school time partners - to take an active role in learning about and promoting SEAL. It's critically important that school wide SEAL implementation intentionally nurtures an environment in which staff gains social and emotional competence through learning, collaborating, and modeling their social and emotional skills.



## Getting Started, Seven Successful Components of TSEAL

1. [Shared Leadership](#) - name your commitment and prioritization of this work through shared ownership that is inclusive of schools and community partners.
2. [Climate and Culture](#) - Create schoolwide and classroom learning environments that are supportive, culturally responsive, and focused on building relationships and community.\*\*\*
3. [Explicit SEAL instruction](#) - Provide 20 minutes a day of explicit skill development\*\*\*
4. [Academic Integration](#) - Make explicit connections to SEAL skills during content instruction throughout the school day through a common language
5. [Continuous Improvement](#) create progress monitoring system to reflect on school wide SEAL data to determine and prioritize student needs (Ex: BESS screener, curriculum progress monitoring tools, District data, etc)\*\*\*
6. [Adult SEAL](#) - Reflect and grow personal SEAL skills and [CRE mindsets](#)
7. [Partnership](#) - Prioritizing partnerships with families and community partners

\*\*\*Universally Implemented Expectations

Universal Expectations [Look for Document](#)



## Seven Successful Components of TSEAL - SEAL as a Lever For Equity

<b>Shared Leadership</b>	
Build awareness, commitment, and shared ownership that is inclusive of community partners where student and community voice and the voice of the historically marginalized and are incorporated at all levels of SEAL engagement	
<p><b>Culture and Climate:</b></p> <p>Create a welcoming, supportive, and culturally and linguistically reflective environment that fosters learning and growth through an equitable learning environment that is culturally responsive, trauma responsive and restorative in nature</p> <p>This positive culture is the foundation for modeling and practicing SEAL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberated learning environments where explicit and intentional cultural connections are frequently made</li> <li>• Classrooms are containers for learning</li> <li>• Student voice is valued and elevated</li> <li>• Relationships are a priority</li> <li>• Learning is fun</li> </ul>	<p><b>Adult SEAL</b></p> <p>Staff members study, engage and reflect on racial and other identities and how those identities have impacted their personal development of <a href="#">social emotional academic learning competencies</a> (decision making, self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and social-awareness) and <a href="#">CRE mindsets</a></p> <p>All staff engage in the equity experience modules to reflect equitable practices including strategies for educator and parents on having conversations with young people in school and at home about race, racism, racial violence, understanding bias, and how to advocate for racial justice</p> <p>Leadership models and encourages self care practices across the entire campus</p>
<p><b>Explicit Instruction:</b></p> <p>Explicitly teaching the DPS SEAL competencies (Self Awareness &amp; Self Management, Social Awareness &amp; Relationship Skills, and Decision Making) through intentional lessons focused on specific SEAL skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 mins a day, 5 days a week</li> <li>• Grounded in practical skill application (moving past teaching skills to applying the learning)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Mosaic</a> by ACT for those schools adopting in the 2021-2022 school year</li> </ul>	<p><b>Academic Integration:</b></p> <p>Infuse SEAL skills and competencies into rigorous content delivery and throughout program activities. This provides context and reinforcement of lessons taught during explicit instruction and brings relevance to skill acquisition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEAL integrated lessons that teach social emotional competencies and academic (CLO)</li> <li>• Co create objectives with students</li> <li>• Students reflect by critically thinking about academic &amp; social-emotional learning as well as on successes and challenges. (effort based reflection)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Continuous Improvement</b></p> <p>Establish processes to continuously improve transformative social emotional academic learning through inquiry and data collection</p>	<p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <p>Developing partnerships with the community, afterschool programs, mentor programs (Denver Kids) and all providers in the building (facilities, food services, etc.). This creates a school-wide community that fosters a SEAL-rich environment for adults, youth and families.</p>



- Determine and prioritize students' needs and areas of support by administering Universal Screener for all students
- [Walkthrough Tool](#)

- OST partners are valued contributors and collaborators in students' learning experience
- Mentoring relationships exist

## The HOW

**Regularly reflect on guiding questions to deepen your understanding of how your own SEAL can benefit students.**

These question prompts can help you weave SEAL into your instructional practices and reflect on your interactions with students.

- What beliefs do I have about my students that may be impacting my instruction or lesson design? How do these beliefs help or hinder my students and myself?
- How can this lesson affirm the identities of the students in my class? How am I incorporating a counter-narrative?
- How will I strengthen my relationship skills with my students, or their relationships with one another, through this lesson? What specific actions can I take?
- How will I practice self-management and be transparent about how I'm practicing it during this lesson?
- How can I model the traits and mindsets?

### Culture and Climate:

Creating a welcoming, supportive, and culturally and linguistically reflective environment that fosters learning and growth. This positive culture is the foundation for modeling and practicing SEAL.

- Create a liberated learning environment
  - Educators recognize and empower students with backgrounds different than their own and include all voices in the classroom by validating all feelings and welcoming the human experience
    - Create a list of all students interests
- Classrooms are containers for learning
  - Norms are co-developed (Develop Shared Agreements ( [Sample Lesson](#) )
  - Educators create ongoing opportunities for Students to feel brave, safe, respected, are encouraged to take social emotional and academic risks and bring their authentic selves, where multiple perspectives are encouraged
- Student Voice is valued and elevated



# Transformative Social Emotional Academic Learning

- Close attention is paid to group dynamics. Opportunities are created to bring in introverts as well as marginalized perspective and differing opinions
- Students have voice in school and classroom decisions
- Students see themselves represented in all aspects of the school community
- Students see themselves in leadership roles in all aspects of the school day
- Relationships are a priority
  - Adults understand how each interaction can be a bridge or barrier
  - Adults use a strength based approach and recognize that all students need to be met where they are at
  - The school recognizes that both students and adults have experienced trauma and thus have unsettled nervous systems. The school values the time it takes to regulate our bodies.
  - Individualized, student touchpoints that create a sense of belonging that allows for exploration, self expression, and self examination
  - Students can identify adult support systems in their school.

[Relationship Framework](#)

[Planning Tool for Restorative Practices Reintegration](#)

- Learning is Fun
  - Co create rituals and routines that make everyone laugh (joke time, class songs, self selected nicknames, etc)
  - Be willing to hit the pause button to appreciate each other
  - Laugh at yourself, admit your mistakes and recognize we are all on this journey together

### **Climate and Culture Resources:**

[RJ Partnership Implementation Guide](#)

Restorative Planning [Tool](#)

[Sample LEAD Culture Rubric](#)

### **Adult SEAL**

The process of helping educators build their expertise and skills to lead social and emotional learning initiatives. It also involves cultivating adults' own social and emotional competencies

- Adults positively model prosocial behaviors, label emotions, and demonstrate empathy, positive relationships, social awareness, and self-awareness with students. [SEL Self Assessment](#)
- Adult engage in self-care is especially important for adults in caregiving positions. Practicing self-compassion looks different for every educator depending on their schedule and specific needs
- Reflect on their own [SEAL Competencies](#), biases, and identities while learning how to deepen relationships with their students.
- [Reducing Teacher and Student Stress with SEL](#): Teachers with strong social and emotional skill are also more effective at creating optimal learning environments for their students by reducing classroom conflict and behavior incidents and promoting cooperation and effective communication

### **Explicit Instruction:**

Explicitly teaching the three SEAL competencies (Self Awareness & Self Management, Social Awareness & Relationship Skills, and Decision Making) through intentional lessons focused on specific SEAL skills.



# Transformative Social Emotional Academic Learning

- SEAL skills are communicated and directly taught with explicit reference to their value and when/how to apply them.
- Teacher/facilitator names, explicitly models, discusses and reinforces SEAL competencies and skills throughout class/program session
- Social Emotional Competencies are named, connected to and reflected on
- Students are provided multiple opportunities to develop, apply, reflect and refine skills as related to the 5 competencies

[Explicit Instruction Resources](#)

[Planning Resources](#)

CASEL SAFE [Resource](#)

## Academic Integration:

Infusing SEAL skills and competencies into rigorous content delivery and throughout program activities. This provides context and reinforcement of lessons taught during explicit instruction and brings relevance to skill acquisition.

- SEAL skills are effectively connected and embedded into all academic lessons; SEAL skill is relevant to content learning.
- SEAL goal is communicated and connected to grade level content, prior learning and personal experience.
- 3 SEAL Signature Practices throughout the class/session.

[Academic Integration Resource](#)

[SEAL / LEAP](#)

[3 signature Practices](#)

## Continuous Improvement -

Establish processes to continuously improve academic, social, and emotional learning through inquiry and data collection

- Determine look fors and areas aligned to UIP, BEP, Culture and Climate Plan to collect and review data quarterly
- Determine and prioritize students' needs and areas of support by administering [Universal Screener](#) for all students
- Collect pre SEL Screening data that determines [universal supports and interventions](#)
- Select the progress monitoring tool that aligns with your universal support and interventions
- Collect post SEL Screening data that helps determine effectiveness of interventions
- Align [resources](#) to [SEL Screener](#) and DATA

**Partnership** - Partners have regular, formal meetings. There is an established decision-making process that includes members from both partners and school staff. There are established communication systems.

[Collaboration tools for building SEL across school day and out-of-school time](#)

## Recommended Readings



# Transformative Social Emotional Academic Learning

- Why We Can't Afford Whitewashed Social-Emotional Learning, Dena Simmons [link](#)
- Creating A Culture of Connectedness Through Middle School Advisory [link](#)
- The Challenge of Advisory and Why It's Worth The Effort [link](#)
- [Avoiding Racial Equity Detours](#)
- [White Supremacy Culture - Showing Up for Racial Justice](#)
- [From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope](#), highlights the long-term benefits of prioritizing SEL in a student's academic journey:
  - *"Young people who have stronger social, emotional, and cognitive skills are more likely to enter and graduate from college; succeed in their careers; have positive work and family relationships, better mental and physical health, and reduced criminal behavior; and be more engaged citizens." (Ch. 1)*

## Additional Resources

### Universal Planning [Document](#)

- CASEL School [Guide](#)
- TSEAL school [reflection tool](#)
- Welcoming Students Back [Folder](#)
- Facing History and Ourselves, [Back-to-School Toolkit](#) (US History/Social Studies focus)
- Effective Adult SEAL [Strategies](#)
- Elevating Student Voice [DPS GUIDE](#) and CASEL [School Guide](#)
- HR / SEO / TSEAL Adult Resources [Link](#)
- K-5 [Resources](#)
- K-12 Explicit instruction [resource](#)

How can we support you / feedback form  
<https://forms.gle/K5Jr69gsqq9L7QzT8>

For more information or questions about this document please contact  
[Kim\\_Price@dpsk12.org](mailto:Kim_Price@dpsk12.org)

## Glossary

**SEL:** Social and emotional learning **skills**

**SEAL:** The social emotional academic learning **process** in which skills are acquired

**TSEAL:** Transformative Social and Emotional Academic Learning - SEAL as a **lever for equity**, moving from "doing" SEL to developing an ability to build an awareness of who we are AND how our system works, who it works for and what it will take to make an equitable environment for all.



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