

Making Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) a Priority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Technology plays an important role in enhancing systemic implementation of social and emotional learning (SEL) across a school district. While traditional SEL implementation often depends upon in-person interactions to build relationships and create opportunities for practicing social and emotional competencies, technology helps districts provide resources and support to teachers and staff and use data to inform high-quality SEL implementation.

Since spring 2020, COVID has highlighted the massive and growing gaps in access to high-quality educational experiences for our most vulnerable students. Distance learning and remote work during the pandemic have elevated the need for robust technology that can facilitate the type of engagement and sense of community needed for, and the imperative to prioritize SEL core principles across all district initiatives. Even as schools transition back to in-person learning, technology will continue to play an important role in helping district SEL teams communicate with staff and families, facilitate adult learning, support classroom instruction, increase student engagement, and reflect on data needed to track progress and improve outcomes. Here are four important ways that leaders overseeing educational technology can partner with SEL teams to promote high-quality implementation:

- 1) Facilitate two-way communication and build engagement with SEL across staff, families, and community partners.** Build buy-in and deepen family and community partnerships by identifying solutions for sharing information and receiving input and feedback from all stakeholders.
- 2) Identify interactive platforms for ongoing adult learning and collaboration around SEL.** Support staff with technology that allows for engaging professional learning and promotes reflection, collaboration, and relationship-building between adults.
- 3) Proactively support students, teachers, and families with technology that facilitates teaching and integrating SEL across classrooms.** Use technology to help facilitate both in-person and virtual SEL instruction, self-assessment tools to help gauge student agency/data points, including supporting educators in using platforms that allow for small groups and deeper interaction, collaborative work, and connecting SEL practices between classrooms and homes.
- 4) Develop robust systems for collecting, disaggregating, and reflecting on SEL-related data.** Develop or enhance district systems to facilitate data collection and sharing, and meaningful analysis of SEL-related data alongside academic and other pertinent data.