## Contents

**Section A: Overview**
- How to use this resource .............................................. 1
  - State Data Profile Contents ........................................ 1
  - Preparing for the Data Discussion ................................ 2
  - Who should be involved? ........................................... 2
  - Can we use other data? ............................................. 3
  - How do we prepare? ................................................ 3
  - What norms should we use? ...................................... 4

**Section B: Initial Reflection: Considering Assumptions and Weighing the Current Status of SEL, School Culture and Climate, and School Safety** ............................... 6
- Step 1: Reflect on assumptions ........................................ 6
- Step 2: Consider the current status of SEL, school culture and climate, and school safety within your state ......................... 7

**Section C: Diving In: Reviewing, Analyzing, and Acting upon State Data Profiles** ......................................................... 9
- Step 1: Build an understanding of available data .................. 10
- Step 2: Identify key takeaways from those data ..................... 10
- Step 3: Discuss and analyze takeaways ............................... 11
- Step 4: Connect to goals and priorities for improvement ........... 12
- Step 5: Document next steps and action items .................... 15
  - Define other data needed ........................................... 15
  - Accessing internal and external support to plan for action and implement the change package .............................. 16

**Section D: Resources** .................................................. 18
- Social and Emotional Learning: Selecting and Using Measures and Data ............................................................... 18
- School Climate and Safety: Selecting and Using Measures and Data ................................................................. 19
- Developing SEL and/or School Safety Standards or Guidance ............................................................. 20
Section A: Overview

How to use this resource

This resource is intended to be used by state-level leadership teams in conducting initial discussions of the data presented in the State Data Profiles to support social and emotional learning (SEL) and school safety across your state. This initial discussion may serve as a catalyst for deeper, longer-term work in data collection, data analysis, and action planning to support social and emotional learning and school safety across your state. Ideally, these activities would culminate in the creation of a strategic or action plan that prioritizes SEL and school safety across your state.

Student and school outcome data provide important information about student and teacher needs, progress, impact of policies and programs, and other information integral to supporting student success.

The Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety has compiled State Data Profiles to offer state-level leadership teams a starting point from which to launch a deeper exploration of the SEL and school safety goals, policies, and programs in your state. The Center defines “school safety” broadly, to include both physical and emotional safety. As such, the Center sees significant overlap between school safety and school climate and culture initiatives and data. The State Data Profiles are limited in their scope to what is publicly available and consistently reported across the nation.

STATE DATA PROFILE CONTENTS

Although the profiles provide data and information about a standardized set of metrics across all states, these data are not intended to be used for comparison or accountability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Metric</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td>• NAEP State Achievement Level Results, % at or above proficient, 8th grade reading and math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Student Data</td>
<td>• % students with one or more out-of-school suspensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• % students chronically absent (15 or more days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Four-year adjusted high school graduation rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Per-pupil spending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Populations</td>
<td>• % students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• % students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• % students who are English Language Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>• % students who identify in each race/ethnicity category</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social and Emotional Learning</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Indicators for whether or not the state has:
- Adopted SEL standards or guidance
- Collected School Climate/Culture Data
- Reported School Safety Data

State-level teams have the ability, by virtue of their position within a state agency, to request, gather, and analyze data that may not be available for public review. By connecting the dots between local-, regional-, and state-level data, education leaders can develop a more comprehensive understanding of their state’s SEL and school safety landscape and can use this to inform the future development of programs, policies, and practices.

When examining multiple sources of data, it can be easy to assume that two elements are linked or that one element causes another. The Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety urges caution when reviewing multiple data sources, in order to avoid making false conclusions, particularly with regard to causation, in the absence of rigorous empirical research.

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**PREPARING FOR THE DATA DISCUSSION**

The purpose of the discussion is to build a foundational understanding of the status of SEL and school safety in your state. This can create the conditions for ongoing data inquiry sessions and more data-informed decision-making at the state and local levels.

**WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?**

The most meaningful data conversations are those that involve a wide array of decision-makers and actors, particularly those people closest to the data, goals, and actions. It is important to bring educators, counselors, and other adults from the school or district community — as well as students and families, where appropriate — into these conversations, to ensure that the diverse perspectives and needs of all students are represented in the data discussions.

How should discussions be framed?

- The State Data Profiles are intended to spark conversations focused on SEL and school safety data, priorities, policies, and initiatives.
- Although the profiles provide data and information about a standardized set of metrics across all states, these data are not intended to be used for comparison between states or for accountability within them.
- Participants should use an equity-focused and strengths-based lens when unpacking and interpreting data. This means avoiding using biased assumptions, and referencing assets instead of gaps — for example, focusing on which districts and schools have bright spots and asking, “What systems and practices are in place there that we could learn from and potentially scale?”
- Including a discussion of the policies, programs, events, and other contexts that may be contributing to the data will support deeper understanding.

*Example of asset-based language:* “I notice that the chronic absenteeism rate for high school students, on average, is nearly twice as high as the rate for middle school students. I wonder if there is something in how we approach discipline and attendance in middle school that we can leverage to strengthen attendance rates in high school.”
While academic outcome data are included in the State Data Profiles, it is not appropriate to make direct causal inferences about the connections between SEL, school climate and safety, academics, and/or behavior with this information alone. While research has shown that students need strong social and emotional competencies and a climate supportive of learning in order to achieve academic growth, simply improving social and emotional competencies or fostering more favorable school climates may not lead directly or quickly to academic growth. While discussions should focus on SEL, school climate, and school safety, understanding academic outcomes can provide a more complete picture and support more effective and meaningful policy and programming decisions.

**CAN WE USE OTHER DATA?**

Yes. If your state team has access to complementary data, such as social and emotional competency or school climate data, you should bring these to the conversation. These might include data broken out by student and school or district groupings such as demographic, socioeconomic, or grade-level data. In addition, longitudinal data that cover a longer time frame can also support a richer discussion of takeaways and next steps.

Additionally, if your state has adopted any standards, frameworks, goals, or priorities that relate to SEL, school safety, school climate, or related outcomes (e.g., suspensions, chronic absenteeism, graduation rates), you should bring these to the conversation. Consider also what programs, initiatives, curricula, and/or policies may be relevant to the discussion. These will be important to consider during Step 4 of the discussion, when the team will connect data to goals and priorities for improvement.

**HOW DO WE PREPARE?**

Strong planning and preparation are key to an efficient and effective data inquiry meeting. Some considerations include setting roles and choosing time and location.

**Set Roles, Including:**

- **A planner** who will convene the team and coordinate your efforts ahead of time (e.g., by scheduling meetings, arranging data access, and sharing data)
- **An agenda-setter** who will create a clear agenda that specifies who will lead each section and clarify which are discussion items versus decision items
- **A facilitator** to ensure that the discussion is conducted in alignment with agreed-upon norms and expectations (see next page)
- **A recorder** who will take notes and disseminate them to team members after the meeting
- **A timekeeper** to ensure that all agenda items are covered

Individuals can play multiple roles or the team can elect to have one person serve in only one role at a time.

**Review Data:** All participants should have an opportunity to review all data prior to the discussion, to begin developing a set of reflections and questions to bring to the table. Gathering data in advance of the meeting may take time, particularly if the team brings complementary data to the table. The team’s planner should reach out to the relevant data and/or program leads to build an understanding of how much time will be required to access and assemble the information prior to scheduling a final date for the meeting.

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1 See Transforming Education’s *Ready to Be Counted* ([https://www.transformingeducation.org/ready-to-be-counted/](https://www.transformingeducation.org/ready-to-be-counted/)) for a concise summary of the research to date on the relationship between SEL and academic outcomes.
The data in the State Data Profiles have been compiled from public sources. They represent sets of data that are publicly available for all fifty states. The State Data Profiles are intended to be used as a starting point; they do not represent the full set of data available to a state education leadership team.

As part of the data discussion, the team should consider what other data are available to bring to future conversations. If complementary data, such as disaggregated or longitudinal academic or other outcome data, are available at the time of the meeting, the team should bring these to enable a richer discussion and more targeted planning for next steps. Similarly, as previously noted, the team should bring any standards, frameworks, goals, or priorities adopted by their state that connect to this conversation about SEL, school climate, and school safety.

Choose Time and Location: Teams should seek to set aside at least half a day to dedicate to the discussion; a full day with a lunch break is optimal. If that length of time isn't possible, consider scheduling a series of shorter meetings to take place within a short timespan (an example schedule for this is provided on the following page). Team members should ensure that they are free to engage deeply in the discussion, without distractions, during meeting times. A comfortable room equipped with marker boards and projection can be helpful in managing the team’s discussion.

WHAT NORMS SHOULD WE USE?^{2}

All participants in the data discussion should come to the table with a shared understanding of the purpose of the conversation and the guidelines for engaging in discussion.

Effective teams typically begin their work together by naming their shared purpose and their expectations for their work together. Then, the team should engage in a norm-setting activity to identify a set of agreed-upon ways of engaging with the data and with each other in order to build trust and investment. The facilitator should walk the team through a conversation focused on two key questions:

- What are we here to do?
- What behaviors will we exhibit when we work together?

Our Team’s Purpose and Norms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are we here to do? Why?</th>
<th>What behaviors will we exhibit when we work together?</th>
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The facilitator or recorder should document the purpose and norms to ensure that the full team is in agreement and is willing to engage with these principles in mind.

Important norms to consider include:

- Maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality
- Be actively engaged (arriving on time, ignoring email during meeting time)

• Maintain an asset-based focus
• Respect each member’s contributions and listen in order to understand
• Specify assumptions behind all assertions
• Be cautious of assuming causation in sets of data

Once the team has defined its purpose and norms, they should be reshared at the start of every meeting (e.g., by including them in the agenda) to confirm each member’s commitment.

Sample Meeting Series
The team will meet for one-and-a-half to two hours each week for a period of one month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Number</th>
<th>Meeting Purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting 1</td>
<td>Norming/shared purpose: Self-assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting 2</td>
<td>Reaffirm norms and purpose; Complete Steps 1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting 3</td>
<td>Reaffirm norms and purpose; Complete Step 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting 4</td>
<td>Reaffirm norms and purpose; Complete Steps 4–5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Section B: Initial Reflection: Considering Assumptions and Weighing the Current Status of SEL, School Culture and Climate, and School Safety

Step 1: Reflect on assumptions

Before digging into the State Data Profiles and the status of SEL and school safety in your state, it is critical to first reflect on internal biases or assumptions that might color the analysis, and then to consider SEL, school climate and culture, and school safety. Once you have a solid understanding of these elements, your team will then be ready for the next step (see the next section) of considering how to develop new action plans against these efforts and how to coordinate them with other data and priorities that relate to student demographics, behavior, and academic outcomes.

Consider the assumptions that the team and its stakeholders have about the students, families, educators, and communities being served.

Before embarking on examining the data, reflect on the following questions:

- What are our assumptions about the students, families, educators, and communities we serve in our state?
  - What are our personal connections with these communities?
  - What are their strengths and assets? How do we know?
  - What are their needs? How do we know?
  - What are their hopes? How do we know?
  - What are our assumptions about the academic and college and career outcomes our students aspire to, and what are the obstacles they face in achieving them?
  - What role can we play in alleviating these challenges?
  - What strengths can we leverage in this pursuit?
Step 2: Consider the current status of SEL, school culture and climate, and school safety within your state

Next, look at the State Data Profile section labeled “Social and Emotional Learning” and consider the following questions about these data:

**1. Has the state adopted social and emotional learning (SEL) guidelines or standards?**

**YES**

» What areas of SEL do we currently prioritize or require as part of our statewide curriculum and/or policies or programming?

» What practices are these standards or guidelines intended to encourage?

» How have the needs and input of stakeholders — including teachers, families, and students — been integrated into these standards and guidelines?

» How are these priorities or requirements implemented at the district level? What types of guidance, supports, or resources are accessible to implementers and other stakeholders?

» How do we collect data to measure progress toward or achievement of these standards? Who has access to the data and how are these data used at the state and local levels?

**NO**

» Why not?

» Is the state on a path to creating these guidelines or standards? If so, in what ways?

» Have individual districts or schools within your state created their own SEL guidance or standards? If so, what do these look like, how have they been implemented, and how are they measured (if known)?

**2. Does the state collect school climate and culture data?**

**YES**

» What data do we collect, from whom, and how frequently?

» Are the data aligned to the state’s school climate or culture goals?

» Who has access to the data?

» How are the data used at the state and local levels?

**NO**

» Why not?

» Is there a plan to collect and use these data in the future? If so, how developed is this plan?

» Do individual districts or schools within your state collect their own climate and culture data? If so, what does this look like and how are the data used (if known)?
3. **Does the state report school safety data? The Center defines “school safety” broadly, to include both physical and emotional safety.**

**YES**

» What data do we collect, from whom, and how frequently?

» Are the data aligned to the state’s school safety goals?

» Who has access to the data?

» How are the data used at the state and local levels?

**NO**

» Why not?

» Is there a plan to collect and use these data in the future? If so, how developed is this plan?

» Do individual districts or schools within your state collect their own school safety data? If so, what does this look like and how are the data used (if known)?

4. **Does the state collaborate regularly to analyze data on SEL, school climate and culture, and school safety?**

**YES**

» What is the state’s intention in analyzing these data?

» What are the systems and processes for analyzing these data?

» What action steps have emerged?

» Do the appropriate stakeholders have access to these analyses and action steps?

**NO**

» Why not?

» Is there a plan to begin this collaboration in the future?

» What opportunities may be missed in your state by not reviewing these data?

Looking over your responses to these questions, how might you begin to use the data in the State Data Profile — and any complementary SEL, school climate, and/or school safety data — to plan for more strongly embedding SEL and school safety data analysis into your regular routines? Some options might include:

- Convening a task force to define SEL and/or school safety standards or guidelines in the state
- Collecting more data, or collecting data in a more standardized or longitudinal way
- Creating an SEL and school safety data team to regularly analyze data on these topics at the state level
Section C: Diving In: Reviewing, Analyzing, and Acting upon State Data Profiles

In addition to an overview of SEL, school climate, and school safety data practices, the State Data Profile includes aggregated academic and behavioral outcomes. Research shows that both of these types of outcomes are influenced by students’ social and emotional development. Having grounded your team in the basics of SEL and school safety with the self-reflection in the previous section, please turn to the other data in the profile, as well as to any complementary data that you have brought to the table, and use the following protocol to facilitate a conversation.

Remember, while achievement data are included in the profile to provide a more complete picture of student outcomes, the conversation should be focused on SEL, school climate, and school safety in your state. Research shows that academic outcomes, behavioral outcomes, SEL, and school climate and safety are interconnected. Teams should not focus primarily on performance outcomes data, but should instead seek to build a nuanced picture of SEL and school safety in their state.

Further, teams should avoid using SEL data as part of any high-stakes accountability processes or decisions. Most tools for measuring students’ social and emotional competencies are relatively new, were not designed for comparison across schools, and rely on students’ self-reporting. Observational SEL data reported by teacher questionnaires may be similarly subject to bias and thus are problematic for accountability purposes.

Step 1: Build an understanding of available data
Step 2: Identify takeaways from those data
Step 3: Discuss and analyze takeaways
Step 4: Connect to goals and priorities for improvement
Step 5: Document next steps and action items

Go to Step 1: Build an understanding of available data
Go to Step 2: Identify takeaways from those data
Go to Step 3: Discuss and analyze takeaways
Go to Step 4: Connect to goals and priorities for improvement
Go to Step 5: Document next steps and action items

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Step 1: Build an understanding of available data

While the quantitative data presented in the State Data Profiles may not be representative of the full set of data available to a state-level team (and may not even be the most recent data available), they do offer a standard starting point for all state-level teams engaged in reflecting on the status of SEL school climate, and school safety in their state.

The members of the data team should take time to familiarize themselves with the data in their State Data Profiles, including the resource footnotes at the bottom of their state’s Data Profile that indicate the data sources. If the team will consider complementary data (such as district or subgroup data) during this discussion, they should also be sure to familiarize themselves with these data prior to the initial discussion.

Questions to Consider:

- What data are presented here?
- How were the data sourced?
- What levels and time frames are presented?
- What context do the footnotes provide?
- Are any data missing from the data set?

The discussion should focus on the specific data shown in the State Data Profile and on any complementary state-specific data. The facilitator should take care to ensure that the team does not engage in comparative exercises (with other states, or between districts and schools) at this time. Step 5 will provide an opportunity to talk about other data that could be included in future conversations.

Step 2: Identify key takeaways from those data

Next, team members should review the data independently. The facilitator should encourage each team member to create at least three “I notice . . .” observations. These are objective statements of facts presented by the data. At the close of the independent work time, team members should read out their statements, to be captured by the facilitator or recorder. Statements should be:

- **Specific** to individual data elements included in the State Data Profile and/or to any complementary data sources being considered
- **Factual**, based on only the data in front of team members and not incorporating assumptions, biases, interpretations, or data from other sources
- **Related** to the topic of SEL and school safety in your state

Focus first on capturing team members’ statements; discussion will follow later.

Next, team members should independently develop “I wonder . . .” statements, which describe potential hypotheses about the “I notice . . .” statements made earlier. At the close of the independent work time, the group should read out their statements, to be captured by the facilitator or recorder.

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“I notice that our overall suspension rate is quite high.”

“I also notice that our state does not collect school climate/culture data.”

“I wonder if collecting school climate/culture data can help our schools identify the learning conditions related to student suspensions and inform efforts to reduce suspensions.”

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If time is limited, this activity can be amended in the following ways:

- Independent review and documentation time can be shortened, and/or the “I notice . . .” and “I wonder . . .” steps can be combined.
- Participants can be asked to document their “I notice . . .” and “I wonder . . .” statements ahead of time, to be shared out in the meeting.
- Participants can use shared document technology (such as Google Docs) to record their statements in real time, eliminating the need for a verbal share-out.

Step 3: Discuss and analyze takeaways

Once the team has identified the takeaways in the data and has surfaced ideas about what might be driving those trends and patterns (through “I notice . . .” and “I wonder . . .” statements), it is time to hold a deeper discussion about the status of SEL and school safety.

The team should begin this part of the discussion by summarizing the top three to five takeaways from the data and naming each as either a strength or a challenge.

**Strengths** are bright spots illuminated by the data. By identifying strengths, the team can ensure that they are sustained over time and possibly leverage these assets in addressing the challenges.

**Challenges** are trends or patterns, illuminated by the data, that may be impeding strong SEL and/or school safety outcomes or improvement. By identifying challenges, the team can begin to focus its future efforts to strengthen SEL and school safety. (Note that the challenges cited here should not be issues with data collection or a lack of data; these can be addressed in Step 5.)

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7 Ibid.

Team members should strive to adopt an asset-based approach to the data analysis exercise. This approach “looks at student success through the lens of strengths, or assets,” recognizing, naming, and building upon those strengths to achieve desired results for students.\(^9\) It is important for the team to frame the data takeaways in a way that diminishes or eradicates bias and shines a light on assets, even when describing challenges.\(^10\)

Suspension rates might vary by demographic subgroup. One takeaway might be that a particular group of students is a “problem group” with discipline issues to be addressed. That same data point can be raised more meaningfully and productively by identifying possible social and emotional supports that could be bolstered for students and/or by digging deeply into the precipitating factors and disciplinary policies that led to the suspensions.\(^11\)

Next, the team should define drivers of each of the takeaways, using their “I wonder . . .” statements as a starting point. By asking a series of questions about how the programs, policies, and funding structures in the state might be driving the strengths and challenges seen in the data, they can begin to identify how factors within their control can sustain the strengths and address the challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Takeaway Questions</th>
<th>Takeaway Responses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does this takeaway surprise us? Why or why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What policies or programs are in place that might be contributing to this outcome?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What policies or programs are missing that might be contributing to this outcome?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there other evidence that aligns with these assumptions about contributing factors?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do our stakeholders — including district leaders, school leaders, teachers, families, and students — believe about these takeaways? If we don’t know, how can we find out?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What else do we want to find out in order to understand this better?</td>
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**Step 4: Connect to goals and priorities for improvement**

The Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety can provide hands-on support for this work. You can contact the Center at selcenter@wested.org.

Next, team members will work to connect the takeaways and drivers from Step 3 to the state’s existing, emerging, or potential SEL and school safety goals and priorities. This step will provide further insights into the strengths and challenges in the data and will serve as a starting point for creating action plans in the next and final step of the discussion.

\(^10\) Ibid.
\(^11\) Ibid.
What do we do if we don’t have any statewide goals or priorities about SEL or school safety?

Even if a state’s primary goals focus on academic or behavioral outcomes, social and emotional and school safety data can provide important information on factors that contribute to that goal. As described in the recent *A Nation at Hope* report from The Aspen Institute’s National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, social and emotional development, school climate, and school safety are inextricably linked to students’ academic and behavioral outcomes. For example, the achievement of a statewide goal of increasing graduation rates by 10 percent over the next five years might require a variety of new whole-child support programs and policies in combination with investments in professional development, curricular adjustments, and formative assessments.

First, the team will identify the linkages between key statewide goals and priorities, social and emotional learning, and school safety. For the purpose of this activity, choose one substantial statewide education goal or priority. Review and discuss the following questions in relation to your selected statewide goal or priority. This conversation should highlight existing supports and identify needs that will inform your next steps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal/Priority Questions</th>
<th>Goal/Priority Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td>In what way(s) is this goal/priority related to the</td>
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<td>takeaways identified in earlier steps?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How might SEL and/or school safety initiatives or</td>
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<td>approaches contribute to the achievement of this</td>
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<tr>
<td>goal/priority? What SEL and/or school safety factors</td>
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<tr>
<td>are connected to this goal/priority?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What state-level policies or programs are in place that</td>
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<tr>
<td>promote these SEL and/or school safety factors?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What services or resources are in place that promote these</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEL and/or school safety factors?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What data about SEL and/or school safety are available to</td>
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<tr>
<td>test the impacts of these factors on our goal/priority?</td>
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**Reviewing the discussion so far, consider:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s Missing?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What SEL or school safety policies, programs, services,</td>
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<td>resources, and/or data seem missing or underleveraged that</td>
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<tr>
<td>could meaningfully contribute to the achievement of this</td>
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<tr>
<td>goal/priority?</td>
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To support this discussion, the team should consider:

- What does research suggest about the connections between social and emotional competencies, safe school environments, and the goal or priority in question?
- How are SEL and school safety addressed in such statewide policies as licensure standards, observation protocols, academic standards, and funding mechanisms?
- Does the state employ resources such as a central website, curricula or programming, and/or professional learning or technical assistance opportunities related to SEL and/or school safety?
- Are data about SEL and school safety accessible to district and school leaders, families, and other community stakeholders?
Considering the responses to these questions, the team should then begin to define a “change package” — a collection of ideas for implementation designed to bring about the desired change. These ideas should be related to SEL and school safety factors and are likely to fall into one or more of the following categories: 1) goals or priorities, 2) policies or programs, 3) services or resources, and/or 4) data.

Sample Change Ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Sample Ideas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals or Priorities</td>
<td>To support our goal of increasing graduation rates by 10 percent over the next five years, in combination with our state’s other investments in professional development, instruction, curriculum, and formative assessment, we will prioritize the development of students’ self-management and growth mindsets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policies or Programs</td>
<td>We will support districts as they translate existing SEL standards into effective evidence-based programs and practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services or Resources</td>
<td>We will develop a section of the state department of education’s website devoted to SEL and school safety strategies for students, teachers, and families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>We will administer student-level school climate surveys in grades 4–12 statewide and provide supports to school and district leaders for analyzing and acting on the results.</td>
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</table>

The team should consider which area(s) they want to address and identify one to three change ideas they may want to pursue.

Change Package

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change idea</th>
<th>How it will impact the goal or priority</th>
<th>Resources needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Step 5: Document next steps and action items

In the final part of the meeting, the team will identify and document its next steps, based on the change ideas defined in Step 4, such as defining other data needed and accessing internal and external support. These next steps should build toward a drafted action plan that articulates how the team will use SEL and school safety data to move forward. The team may want to consider sharing the plan with a variety of stakeholders, including families and/or students, to gather additional feedback.

DEFINE OTHER DATA NEEDED

This data discussion will have been anchored in a limited set of data provided by the State Data Profile (and, ideally, complementary SEL, school climate, and/or school safety data). However, in creating a comprehensive statewide change package focused on SEL and school safety, it’s likely that state-level teams will identify other data that would better reveal the condition of SEL and school safety in the state and/or more effectively measure progress of the change idea(s).

Some of these data will already exist and can be pulled together immediately. These data might include academic achievement, behavioral outcomes, and/or attendance data at the student, classroom, school, district, and state levels, as well as any additional SEL, school culture, climate, and/or school safety data that are available.

However, the team may also decide to collect new statewide or local data, particularly about SEL, school climate, and/or school safety. Data might be collected from various sources, including students, families, teachers, and other community stakeholders. While a substantial portion of these data may be quantitative, qualitative data such as family or student experiences or insights are equally important and meaningful. The more diverse the data set (by data type, level, and source), the more comprehensive a picture you will be able to build.

Some considerations when deciding to collect new data include:

- The additional workload that may be placed on school- and district-based personnel
- Testing or survey fatigue, particularly for students
- The validity and reliability of the selected measures
- The direct costs of data collection
- Whether similar information can be gleaned from existing sources (for example, observational data on classroom SEL practice)

Before deciding to collect any new data, team members should ensure that they are clear on what questions they are trying to answer and that they balance the need for new information with the cost in time and other resources for all involved. The team should also consider whether the appropriate voices are participating in providing data and making decisions, and that they are representative of a diverse set of perspectives. Finally, as noted earlier, teams should avoid using SEL data as part of any high-stakes accountability processes or decisions.
Choosing and Using SEL Measures

When choosing measures for state, district, or schoolwide decision-making, teams should consider:

- Using a strengths-based approach that focuses on promoting positive development and preventing problems
- Issues of equity and cultural relevance
- The developmental processes involved in social and emotional learning
- The emerging nature of SEL competency assessment
- How to address SEL data within the context of accountability

These factors and decision points are summarized further in a 2018 working paper by the Assessment Working Group and RAND Corporation, Choosing and Using SEL Competency Assessments: What Schools and Districts Need to Know, and in the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) 2019 state and district navigation guide, Measuring School Climate and Social Emotional Development.

ACCESSING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO PLAN FOR ACTION AND IMPLEMENT THE CHANGE PACKAGE

In order to move forward, it is critical to plan for appropriate internal and external support. At this point, teams will likely have identified a range of needs, including new data and/or ways to utilize existing data toward their SEL and school safety efforts, including how to best support districts and schools in using data to drive local policy, practice, and programs.

External supports can be critical to the success and sustainability of SEL and school safety efforts. A variety of free resources exist to help in this process, but states may also consider longer-term partners to assist strategically and/or technically. For example, the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety and the Regional Educational Laboratories provide support to states and districts in this work.

An action plan emerging from this discussion can be structured or informal. At a minimum, it should include a list of next steps emerging from the discussion, including a time frame and a named person responsible for moving each activity forward. These steps might include further data collection efforts, scheduling additional data inquiry meetings, and/or outreach for additional support.

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# Action Plan Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priorities/Goals</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Task Leader(s)</th>
<th>Targeted Stakeholder(s)</th>
<th>Progress Measures</th>
<th>Measurable Outcome(s)</th>
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Section D: Resources

This section provides some additional resources to support your data-informed work to address SEL and school safety in your state. The national Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety is available to provide guidance, troubleshooting, and direct support. The Center can be contacted at selcenter@wested.org.

Social and Emotional Learning: Selecting and Using Measures and Data

1. **Are You Ready to Assess Social and Emotional Development?**
   - [https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/AIR%20Ready%20to%20Assess_THINK.pdf](https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/AIR%20Ready%20to%20Assess_THINK.pdf)
   - American Institutes for Research (AIR), 2015
   - Deciding whether and how to use assessments to evaluate students’ social and emotional knowledge, attitudes, and skills requires the development and critical appraisal of an assessment plan. This tool provides a decision tree, which can be used as a roadmap to guide your thinking about SEL assessment.

2. **Encouraging Social and Emotional Learning in the Context of New Accountability**
   - Learning Policy Institute, 2017
   - This report offers guidance on how states and districts might determine which measures of social and emotional learning, development, and supports they can use in different parts of their accountability and continuous improvement systems, and how they might use the resulting data.

3. **SEL Assessment Guide**
   - Assessment Working Group, 2018
   - This interactive tool helps practitioners to select and effectively use currently available assessments of students’ SEL competencies. The tool includes guidance on how to select an assessment and use student SEL competency data, a catalog from which to select assessments, and real-world accounts of how practitioners are using these data. It also provides guidance to education leaders on how to choose and use SEL competency assessments.

4. **The RAND Education Assessment Finder**
   - RAND, 2018
   - The RAND Education Assessment Finder is a web-based tool that provides information about assessments of K–12 students’ interpersonal, intrapersonal, and higher-order cognitive competencies. Practitioners, researchers,
and policymakers can use it to explore what assessments are available, what they are designed to measure, how they are administered, what demands they place on students and teachers, and what kinds of uses their scores support.

5. Using Data to Support and Communicate Effectively about Social-Emotional Learning


Data Quality Campaign, 2018

This communications brief equips state and local education leaders with the tools needed to talk about SEL, including how data can help improve school investments in social and emotional development, how it can help teachers support student success, and how schools collect, use, and safeguard SEL data.

School Climate and Safety: Selecting and Using Measures and Data

1. National Climate Survey Compendium


AIR, The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)

NCSSLE maintains a compendium of valid and reliable surveys, assessments, and scales of school climate that can assist educators in their efforts to identify and assess their conditions for learning. The intent of this compendium is to gather student, faculty and staff, family, administrator, and community surveys in pre-K/elementary school, middle and high school, and higher education environments.


Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest, 2017

This guide is designed to help educators select and analyze data to determine whether racial/ethnic disproportionality exists in a school or district’s discipline practices. Such information may help educators consider whether they need to reduce disproportionate rates of exclusionary school discipline (suspensions and expulsions) based on race or ethnicity. It provides examples of how to select and analyze data to determine whether racial/ethnic disproportionality exists in a school or district’s discipline practices. The guide also describes how to use data as part of a Plan-Do-Study-Act continuous improvement cycle to improve desired school discipline outcomes.

3. Student Safety and Wellness (Volume 19, Issue 1, of The State Education Standard)


National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), 2019

This issue of NASBE’s State Education Standard explores the web of issues that intersect with student safety and wellness, including students’ physical, mental, social, and emotional health and the quality of their learning environments. Authors point out that policies to support the whole child can have lasting effects on student outcomes.
4. The Role of Technology in Improving K–12 School Safety

https://selcenter.wested.org/resources/the-role-of-technology-in-improving-k12-school-safety/

RAND, 2016

This report focuses on school safety technologies as one approach among many to prevent and respond to school violence. In the report, the authors summarize existing research on school violence, describe categories of school safety technologies, present six case studies of innovative technologies as used in schools, summarize experts’ views of technologies and safety problems, and present experts’ rankings of technology needs to improve school safety.

Developing SEL and/or School Safety Standards or Guidance


Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and AIR, 2017

To provide guidance to states wanting to implement SEL policies and guidelines, this document provides the 14 steps that CASEL and AIR have observed some states and districts taking in these areas.


Transforming Education, 2018

This paper lays out a series of policy recommendations for both state education agencies and local education agencies to support a locally created, systematic, and data-informed approach to SEL. Each recommendation is accompanied by a concrete example of the recommendation in action.

3. Racial Equity Impact Assessment Toolkit


Race Forward, 2009

A racial equity impact assessment is a systematic examination of the likely effects of a proposed action or decision on different racial and ethnic groups. This toolkit offers a set of questions to use to anticipate, assess, and prevent potential adverse consequences of proposed actions on different racial and ethnic groups.