

Vetting Process for SEL & School Safety Online Resources

★ Starred materials in the SEL Center’s online resource center are those determined to meet the highest standards of relevance, research basis, and utility to the field. This determination was made through an intensive vetting process conducted by RAND. Below is a summary of the criteria used in the vetting process.

If you have additional SEL and school safety resources to recommend for inclusion in the online resource center, please contact rcapara@wested.org.

The SEL Center will generally review materials in the categories of *Knowledge*, *Product or Tool*, *Guidance*, or *Services* described as follows:

Knowledge usually refers to research related resources as found in a journal, research report, or similar document approved through a peer review process. Because of the potential widespread use or recognition of knowledge resources, they should be among the resources providing the strongest evidence base.

Product or tool resources include software, training materials, or publications that prescribe a specific process to follow or method to employ. Ideally, most resources in this category will have been reviewed externally and have evidence that the product or tool has improved outcomes or achieved its goals.

Guidance resources are generally a written document that provides expert advice to improve social and emotional learning or school safety. Guidance should be based on appropriate theory or research, generally accepted state of the art knowledge, or a substantial evidence base. Some examples of *guidance* might include congressional testimony, policy or issue briefs, field guides, or fact sheets.

Services include resources such as workshops, conferences, or expert technical assistance that are not practical for a peer review, but that are likely to be useful in helping agencies improve student social and emotional competencies and/or school safety. Services should include evidence of high quality such as established reputation of the source or use of materials based on rigorous evidence.

General Criteria:

1. **Relevant** to either an existing area of focus the Center or an emerging topic within social and emotional learning and school safety. The five areas of focus for the Center are:
 - Equity
 - Integration
 - Alignment & Coherence
 - Sustainable Implementation
 - Data-Driven Cycles of Improvement
2. **Support the objectives of the Center**, as outlined by the US Department of Education (US Ed), Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Supportive Schools. This means that the resource must be:
 - Relevant to state or local education agency audience
 - Evidence-based or evidence-informed
 - Connected to success in college, career, and civic life, broadly defined
 - Available at no cost to interested parties

Content Quality:

1. **Purpose:** Does the resource align with both SEL Center priority areas and US Ed objectives?
2. **Scientific Basis:** Was the resource developed using appropriate literature, standards, research, or theory in the field?
3. **Methods:** Is the resource based on appropriate methods and are those methods well-designed and well-implemented?
4. **Accuracy:** Does the resource provide dependable information and are claims appropriately supported? Are recommended readings or suggested supplemental resources appropriate?
5. **Plausibility:** Are recommended steps, processes, or conclusions generally supported by the research findings (for *Knowledge* resources) or other work or products in the field (for *Products/Tools, Guidance, and Services*)?

Utility:

1. **Audience Relevance:** To what extent is the resource well-suited for state and local education agency personnel?
2. **Timeliness:** Is the content of the resource timely for and applicable to current policy and practice?
3. **Completeness:** Does the resource provide all of the information needed for educators to understand the information being provided? What information, if any, is missing that makes the resource more difficult to understand or utilize?
4. **Value:** Does the resource add value to the field?

Communication Quality:

1. **Organization:** Is the information well organized and presented in a logical sequence?
2. **Language:** How appropriate is the level of technical language given the resource type?
3. **Visuals:** Does the resource utilize appropriate visuals and are those visuals in support of critical or important information?