

As District 36 embarks on the Social Emotional Learning Initiative, parents are playing an integral role in making this a community-wide effort through participation on the committee and involvement in workshops and meetings. Throughout this year and next, information and resources about SEL and integration in District 36 will continually be updated and made available. One of the ways the SEL message will be communicated and explained to parents is through multiple Winnetka Parent Institute (WPI) events. The first WPI on SEL was held on December 3 at Washburne School and served as a clear and thorough introduction to SEL in District 36. Administrators, teachers, and parents all provided input into the presentation and their own perspectives on the importance of SEL. There will be two additional WPI's on SEL in the second half of the 2019-2020 school year. Please take a moment to review the highlights and summary here of the December WPI on SEL. Information from the WPI can be found here: [Video of December 3 WPI](#) and [Presentation Slides for December 3 WPI](#).

SEL has always been an important component of Winnetka's progressive philosophy of educating the whole child. However, as times change and pressures increase on children, the District is taking a more formalized approach and additional steps to ensure, as a District, everyone is using the same language, has the same tools, and has the resources needed to integrate SEL into the school day. District 36 is working with The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning ([CASEL](#)), a nationally known expert organization based in Chicago, to implement a framework for SEL in our schools. A Super Committee of administrators, teachers, staff and parents are working together to begin the journey of integrating SEL into the schools and our community. The District 36 School Board also recently approved a 3 year plan to focus on SEL and make it a part of the curriculum. Notably, New Trier High School has also adopted as part of their planning, a focus and implementation of SEL in the high school setting.

The importance of SEL is becoming overwhelmingly apparent as schools across the country representing all demographics are reporting higher anxiety levels in children and dysregulated behavior due to a variety of different factors. Large corporations are also observing a deficiency in social and emotional skills as they look to expand their workforce with the younger generation. It is becoming increasingly clear that students in high achieving communities are increasingly at risk as noted in a recent [Washington Post article](#).

CASEL provides a framework of five key competencies for Social Emotional Learning – Self Awareness, Self Management, Responsible Decision Making, Social Awareness, and Relationship Skills. In the first year of the District's SEL work, the focus will be on the adults in the District – administration, teachers, staff, and the community- learning to understand and improve on these competencies. The following year these learnings will shift to the students. The District, in partnership with CASEL, will be working with the teachers and staff all year and each school has designed their school improvement plans to address the adult piece as well as a student component with the goal of implementation with students next year.

The focus of the first WPI was on the SEL competencies of Self-Management and Self-Awareness. The next two WPI's will focus on the remaining three competencies of Responsible Decision-Making, Social Awareness and Relationship Skills. Please watch your principal's newsletters for the upcoming 2020 Winnetka Parent Institute events on SEL. Additionally, The Family Action Network will be presenting many speakers on SEL in the coming months and their events are free and open to the public. Please click on the [FAN website](#) for more information about past and future events.. The Winnetka Public

Schools Foundation will be hosting the [Carlson Event on January 23, 2020](#) and will feature SEL speaker, Dr. Matthew Dewar.

The Social Emotional Learning initiative is an ongoing, evolving process in District 36 and parents will play an integral role in the journey and implementation that will ultimately deepen the commitment to educating the whole child.