

Transformative Social and Emotional Learning **Systemic and Schoolwide Implementation Guide**



About This Guide

In Oregon, leaders envision Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as extending beyond a specific curriculum or standalone program, moving from a focus on each individual's development to an approach that fully integrates other aspects of teaching and learning and supports all members of a school community in learning and thriving. Since the state's schools and districts are at different stages of implementation, school-based and district leaders can refer to this guide to identify and build on existing site assets to support a systemic approach to Transformative SEL.

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS GUIDE	2
TRANSFORMATIVE SEL ECOSYSTEM	4
CONTINUUM OF TRANSFORMATION	5
THE ROLE OF LEADERS IN THE TRANSFORMATIVE SEL ECOSYSTEM	6
System-level Leaders	6
School-based Professionals	7
GETTING STARTED	8
STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION 1–4	9
STAGE 1: AWARENESS	10
Focus Area: Building Systemic Awareness and Readiness	10
STAGE 2: ORGANIZE	14
Focus Area: Capacity-building for Systemic Implementation	14
Focus Area: Needs-sensing for Systemic Integration	18
STAGE 3: IMPLEMENT	22
Focus Area: Creating a Transformative SEL Action Plan	22
STAGE 4: REFLECT & IMPROVE	27
Focus Area: Continuously Engaging in Inquiry Cycles	27
CONCLUSION	31
REFERENCES	32

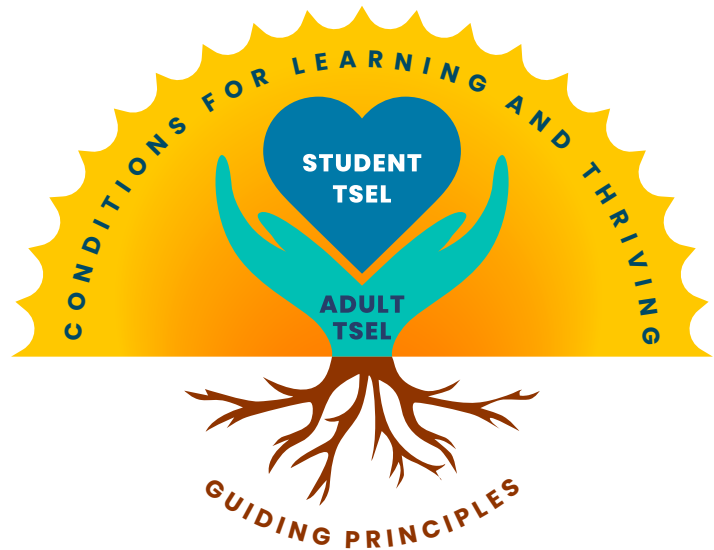
Transformative SEL Ecosystem

Oregon's Transformative SEL Framework (see Figure 1) depicts an ecosystem of four interrelated components that offer a holistic approach to supporting human growth, development and well-being: Guiding Principles, Conditions for Learning and Thriving, Adult Transformative SEL and Student Transformative SEL. Each of these interrelated components are explored in the Transformative SEL Online Learning Modules.

Transformative SEL Standards should be implemented throughout the learning ecosystem, from professional learning for staff to integration across all curricular contexts and content areas. Just as an environmental ecosystem requires a balance of sunshine, water, nutrients and a healthy atmosphere for plants to flower and bear fruit, learning ecosystems need individuals, relationships and the environment to work in interdependence so everyone can flourish and thrive.

School and district leaders serve as stewards of the learning ecosystem, managing resource distribution, developing policies and guiding professional growth to maintain the health and well-being of all school or district community members. Site leaders who reflect as learners on their own social, emotional and cultural competencies are more capable of identifying the systemic structures, policies and procedures that promote or inhibit healthy ecosystems. Teachers integrate Transformative SEL through academic instruction that represents the soil of the learning ecosystem, while site leaders attend to and improve the implementation of the Transformative SEL Framework—the water that sustains students, families, educators and other site community members.

Figure 1. Oregon's Transformative SEL Framework



This guide seeks to support school and district leaders in

- Creating an action plan for a cohesive, systemic approach to Transformative SEL to support student and adult well-being,
- Considering example activities and key questions to reflect on individual and collective strengths and needs relating to systemic implementation of Transformative SEL, and
- Applying Oregon's Transformative SEL resources to support conditions for learning and thriving in their site community.

Continuum of Transformation

A transformative approach to SEL is not confined to a single person, lesson or specific time of day and is not a one-size-fits-all program or curriculum. Instead, it is an ongoing process and practice of how adults and students show up for one another throughout the school day. SEL practices exist on a continuum, moving from personally responsible and participatory SEL to a Transformative SEL approach (Figure 2). Transformative SEL was developed to shift the focus of educators away from behavior management and toward creating the conditions that support respectful, dignifying and affirming interactions among all students and adults along the continuum of transformation. Once conditions for learning and thriving are in place, students can learn to set goals, manage their behaviors, and ultimately participate, improve and change institutions and systems to promote equitable outcomes (Jagers et al., 2019).

Figure 2. Continuum of Transformation



THE ROLE OF LEADERS IN THE TRANSFORMATIVE SEL ECOSYSTEM

System-level Leaders

(District Administrators and Policymakers)

System leaders have a critical role in establishing the structures and conditions that enable school-level practices to thrive along the continuum of transformation. Their focus is on creating alignment, providing resources, and addressing systemic barriers to ensure Transformative SEL becomes an integrated and sustainable part of the learning ecosystem.



Key Focus Areas

- **Humanizing the work and learning environment:** Model Transformative SEL by fostering trust, demonstrating cultural humility, and building meaningful relationships with staff, students, and families.
- **Shifting from behavior management to systems change:** Develop policies and frameworks that prioritize trauma-informed and restorative practices and equity-focused initiatives.
- **Scaling through alignment:** Ensure Transformative SEL integration aligns with other districtwide efforts such as equity frameworks, multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), and state accountability goals.
- **Building capacity:** Provide professional learning and technical support for educators to advance along the continuum of transformation.
- **Addressing systemic inequities:** Use equity audits and data to uncover and address disparities in how Transformative SEL is implemented across schools.

THE ROLE OF LEADERS IN THE TRANSFORMATIVE SEL ECOSYSTEM

School-based Professionals

At the school level, embedding Transformative SEL throughout the day is a collaborative effort that requires intentional practices and interactions among staff, students, and families. School-based professionals focus on integrating Transformative SEL into:

- Daily classroom instruction that builds on students' unique identities, experiences and strengths
- Collaborative activities that promote shared accountability and participation
- Inclusive practices that prioritize relationships and a sense of belonging



Key Focus Areas

- **Humanizing the learning environment:** Foster interactions that affirm, respect, and dignify students' identities.
- **Implementing responsive classroom practices:** Shift from compliance-based approaches to relationship-building and collaboration.
- **Encouraging teacher leadership:** Encourage educators to model Transformative SEL competencies and facilitate classroom discussions about identity, equity, and inclusion.

Getting Started

The Schoolwide and Systemic Implementation Guide supports school and district leaders in adapting, strengthening and monitoring Transformative SEL in their school or system. This guide offers resources for suggested strategies, reflection protocols and action steps for teams to implement Oregon's Transformative SEL Framework & Standards, including

- Transformative SEL online learning modules
- Integrated K–12 curricular resources
- Community learning resources

This guide describes the focus areas necessary for effectively implementing and sustaining Transformative SEL in schools and districts. The action steps associated with each focus area support sites in building on existing work and resources as they move through the implementation phases identified in Oregon's Transformative SEL Framework & Standards Implementation Guide.

Stages of Implementation 1–4

STAGE 1: Awareness

Become familiar with the background and context of Oregon’s Transformative SEL Framework & Standards, what a transformative approach to SEL looks like, and how Oregon’s Transformative SEL Framework & Standards aligns with other Oregon initiatives.

- **Focus Area:** Building Systemic Awareness and Readiness

STAGE 2: Organize

Develop a strong foundation for Transformative SEL to ensure its long-term sustainability. Engage the entire school and district community to collaborate on an implementation plan.

- **Focus Area:** Capacity-building for Systemic Implementation
- **Focus Area:** Needs-sensing for Systemic Integration

STAGE 3: Implement

Cultivate adults’ and students’ social and emotional competencies. Schools and districts can use a variety of approaches to ensure successful implementation based on their unique strengths and needs.

- **Focus Area:** Creating a Transformative SEL Action Plan

STAGE 4: Reflect & Improve

Engage in continuous improvement to drive high-quality implementation. Support schools and districts in making data-informed decisions and reaching goals.

- **Focus Area:** Continuously Engaging in Inquiry Cycles

STAGE 1: Awareness

Focus Area: Building Systemic Awareness and Readiness

Purpose

When schoolwide professionals and system-level leaders align their efforts, Transformative SEL can take root in schools or districts. While school-based teams focus on site-level implementation, system leaders are responsible for creating the policies, structures, and conditions that sustain and scale Transformative SEL across the district. This section provides tailored guidance to build readiness at both levels.

System-level Leaders (District Administrators and Policymakers)

System-level leaders (e.g., district administrators, policymakers, and state education officials) are responsible for creating the systemic structures and policies that enable Transformative SEL to thrive at scale. They focus on building districtwide readiness, ensuring alignment across initiatives, and fostering sustainability.

ACTION STEP:

Form a District or Education Service District (ESD) Team

Develop a district- or ESD-level implementation team to oversee and coordinate systemic efforts. This team should include cross-departmental representatives (e.g., curriculum and instruction, equity, mental health, accountability, and family engagement). Before launching implementation efforts, this team can conduct a policy and resource audit to identify areas of alignment or misalignment with Transformative SEL principles. For example

- Are disciplinary policies trauma-informed, restorative, and inclusive?
- Do professional development plans include opportunities to build Transformative SEL competencies?
- Are resource allocations equitably distributed across schools to support Transformative SEL implementation?

Team activities may include

- Lead awareness-building efforts by hosting districtwide professional learning sessions, sharing resources such as Oregon's Transformative SEL Framework, and aligning SEL with other systemic initiatives (e.g., MTSS, equity plans, and state accountability frameworks). Use a variety of data to communicate the why of systemic Transformative SEL to community members.
- Use data to analyze trends in staff retention, particularly for underrepresented groups, and recommend strategies to address disparities such as establishing recruitment efforts that focus on hiring staff that reflect the lived experiences of site communities.
- Train leaders and hiring committees on equitable and inclusive hiring practices, such as reducing bias in interview processes.
- Explore recruitment pipelines with partnerships (e.g., local universities, community organizations) to attract diverse candidates into teaching and leadership roles.

Reflection Questions

- How do our existing policies and initiatives align with Transformative SEL principles?
- What systemic conditions are needed to support equitable access to Transformative SEL across schools?
- How can district leaders model Transformative SEL competencies and readiness to build momentum?
- How do our current recruitment and hiring practices reflect the diversity and lived experiences of the communities we serve? What systemic barriers might exist in our hiring processes that prevent us from attracting and retaining diverse candidates?

School-based Professionals

School-based leaders and teams play a critical role in building awareness of Transformative SEL principles and integrating them into everyday practices and school culture. They can focus on fostering engagement, collaboration, and readiness at the school level.

ACTION STEP:

Form a Transformative SEL School Team

Form a team representative of different roles, power levels, cultures, and other experiences, as diverse perspectives are key to successfully implementing Transformative SEL. The team's composition will vary based on the size of the school, as well as the scope of the implementation effort. For example, school leaders who launch their implementation efforts by adapting site policies and practices to prioritize student and adult well-being should ensure that their team involves data and accountability experts as well as mental and behavioral health staff. Clarify roles, responsibilities, and processes early in the implementation cycle to support persistence and effective, equitable decision-making. Consult [ODE's Equity Decision Tools for School Leaders](#) to adapt decision-making protocols that ensure alignment with site values and the Transformative SEL guiding principles.

Identify who to recruit for a committed, representative Transformative SEL team. Below is a suggested list of team members to draw on

- **School leaders:** Depending on the scope of the implementation effort, leaders could include principals, administrators, program directors, and others.
- **Classroom teachers:** Recruit teachers across grade levels, content areas, and career stages to ensure that the team understands teachers' strengths and needs.
- **Support staff:** Staff such as instructional coaches, counselors, and specialists have unique insights into the needs of staff and students across departments.
- **Tribal partners, student leaders, families, caregivers, and other community members:** These adults can ensure that Transformative SEL supports extend to out-of-school settings (home, recreational centers, community learning centers, etc.).

Reflection Questions

Leaders can consider the following questions while forming their Transformative SEL team:

- Who has the influence to spread Transformative SEL throughout the learning ecosystem?
- How can we include identities, experiences, knowledge, roles and skills that represent the school community?
- Whose perspectives do we frequently center in decision-making? Whose perspectives might be missing?

Altogether, by tailoring readiness efforts to both school-based professionals and system-level leaders, this approach ensures alignment across roles and levels of influence. While schoolwide teams focus on immediate implementation and site-level culture shifts, system leaders set the broader conditions for success by addressing policies, resources, and districtwide alignment. Collaboration and clear communication between these groups are essential to creating a cohesive ecosystem that supports Transformative SEL at all levels of the learning ecosystem.

Awareness Resources

- Oregon's [Equity Decision Tools for School Leaders](#)
- [CASEL District Resource Center for Needs-Sensing and Alignment](#)
- [WestEd's Alignment and Coherence Guide for Local Education Agencies](#)
- [Equitable & Inclusive Hiring Practices: A Reference Guide of Strategies to Grow & Diversify the Educator Workforce](#)
- [Transformative SEL Online Module: Framework Overview](#)

STAGE 2: Organize

Focus Area: Capacity-building for Systemic Implementation

Purpose

The sustainability of systemic Transformative SEL implementation relies on the shared understanding and capacity of both schoolwide professionals and system-level leaders. While school-based teams focus on integrating Transformative SEL principles into daily practices, system leaders create the policies, structures, and resources that enable site-level implementation to flourish and remain sustainable.

System-level Leaders (District Administrators and Policymakers)

System-level leaders create the conditions, alignment, and resources necessary to support capacity-building efforts across schools. Their role involves modeling Transformative SEL, scaling Transformative SEL practices, aligning initiatives, and ensuring equitable access to training and supports.

ACTION STEP:

Conduct a Systemwide Transformative SEL Audit

1. Conduct a systemwide audit of capacity-building opportunities, including professional learning, centralized resources, and frameworks and collaborative learning structures to assess alignment with Transformative SEL principles. Key areas to evaluate include
 - District or state professional development plans
 - Resources for staff at different career stages (e.g., new teachers, experienced administrators)
 - Cross-departmental coordination of and alignment with SEL-related initiatives
2. Develop centralized resources and frameworks to support schools in integrating Transformative SEL into their ongoing initiatives (e.g., MTSS, chronic absenteeism, equity)
3. Build regional communities of practice to support collaboration and shared learning across schools and districts, ensuring consistent capacity-building efforts

ACTION STEP:

Facilitate opportunities for vertical alignment by

- Modeling Transformative SEL in their everyday interactions with site leaders and school-based professionals and embed Transformative SEL practices in their communication and meetings
- Establishing clear expectations for professional learning focused on Transformative SEL at all levels
- Providing centralized resources that schools can adapt to their unique needs (e.g., culturally responsive Transformative SEL practices, coaching guides for administrators)
- Supporting districtwide reflection and learning sessions to identify systemic barriers and shared successes

Reflection Questions

- What systemic capacity-building efforts are already in place, and how can they be aligned with Transformative SEL goals?
- How can professional learning opportunities be made equitable and accessible across all schools in the district?
- How can system leaders model Transformative SEL standards to support sustainable implementation?
- What professional development or mentorship opportunities are in place to support retention and career advancement for underrepresented staff?

School-based Professionals

School-based staff are responsible for embedding Transformative SEL into daily interactions, classroom practices, and broader school culture. Capacity-building efforts should enable all staff to adopt and model Transformative SEL competencies while aligning with broader systemic goals. The fidelity and sustainability of systemic implementation of any effort requires all site community members to understand how Transformative SEL manifests in their context.

Each school learning ecosystem has many community members, including families, caregivers, cafeteria staff, mental health providers and other adults who are a consistent presence in students’ lives. Every adult in this learning ecosystem should be informed about and well-equipped for their role in building and maintaining environments where learning can flourish.

ACTION STEP:
Initiative Crosswalk

As stewards of the learning ecosystem, site leaders can lead their teams in a collective reflection on assets, needs and opportunities for growth regarding the Transformative SEL Guiding Principles. Consider how this team’s implementation efforts might align with other site initiatives to strengthen the system’s strategies, resources, offerings and more. The Transformative SEL Framework extends from the work of [Oregon’s Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines](#) and the state’s [Integrated Model for Mental Health](#), to ensure practices and approaches that improve students’ social and emotional learning across K–12 settings. Collaboratively identify ongoing efforts related to these connected initiatives:

ECOSYSTEM	INITIATIVE OR PROGRAM	TRANSFORMATIVE SEL RELATED EFFORTS
Community	Career Connected Learning	
Schoolwide	Every Day Matters (Chronic Absenteeism)	
Schoolwide	Comprehensive School Counseling Programs	

After completing the initiative crosswalk, use the [Strengths-Based Notetaker Tool](#) to assess and build upon existing site-level assets and practices, focusing on areas such as

- Collaborative teacher teams (e.g., grade-level or content-area PLCs)
- Alignment of Transformative SEL with school improvement plans, behavior frameworks, and classroom routines
- Strategies for inclusive family engagement to strengthen SEL partnerships

Analyze the existing initiative ecosystem for alignment with the Transformative SEL Framework, collecting data to identify strengths and opportunities for growth in key mindsets, skills and competencies.

1. Engage all adults in the school community (teachers, counselors, support staff, and administrators) in professional learning focused on Transformative SEL principles, particularly how Transformative SEL integrates with academic instruction, equity, and wellbeing initiatives.
2. Facilitate ongoing collaborative reflection within staff teams to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for growth in Transformative SEL competencies and practices.
3. Provide role-specific training tailored to the unique contributions of different staff members (e.g., teachers, counselors, support staff).

Reflection Questions

Consider the following questions to improve understanding of a site's current expertise and aligned initiatives:

- ⦿ How do Transformative SEL principles currently show up in our school's classrooms, culture, and routines?
- ⦿ How can systemic implementation efforts harness the collective wisdom in our community?
- ⦿ What existing staff strengths and resources can we leverage to build Transformative SEL capacity? How can site leaders develop routines for continually identifying and addressing assets for implementation and implementation barriers?
- ⦿ How can professional learning experiences be designed to meet the needs of all staff?

Altogether, capacity-building efforts must happen at both the site and system levels, with strong alignment between the two. While school-based professionals focus on embedding Transformative SEL in classrooms and school culture, system leaders provide the foundational structures, policies, and supports to scale and sustain these practices. This dual approach ensures that Transformative SEL becomes a systemic, dynamic force across schools and districts, fostering a cohesive and thriving learning ecosystem.

Capacity-building Resources

- ⦿ [Transformative SEL Online Modules on ODE Framework and Standards](#)

STAGE 2: Organize

Focus Area: Needs-sensing for Systemic Integration

Purpose

To shift SEL practices towards transformation, schools and districts must move beyond following a curriculum or implementing a stand-alone program and toward the creation of humanizing learning environments that support collective well-being. This process depends on identifying strengths, gaps, and barriers within existing systems and structures. For schoolwide professionals, this means reflecting on and adapting classroom and site-level practices. For system-level leaders, it involves uncovering systemic barriers and opportunities for alignment, coherence, and scaling. Efforts to uncover and adapt to these barriers are important to ensuring that a strengths-based approach is reflected in everyday interactions from classrooms to parent-teacher conferences in addition to the decision-making that influences policies, procedures and practices throughout educational institutions

System-level Leaders (District Administrators and Policymakers)

System-level leaders must examine districtwide structures, policies, and practices that impact Transformative SEL integration. Needs-sensing at this level involves engaging community members to uncover systemic barriers and opportunities for strategic alignment.

ACTION STEP:

Organizational Review and Listening Sessions

1. Conduct an organizational review to identify strengths and barriers to systemic integration. Focus areas include
 - Gaps in policy coherence or resource distribution across schools
 - Barriers related to staff capacity, burnout, or competing priorities
2. Engage in listening sessions with educators, families, and community partners to gain diverse perspectives on Transformative SEL needs and challenges.

3. Use tools like the [Strengths-based Notetaker](#) to map systemic assets, including existing initiatives, professional development frameworks, and resource allocations.

ACTION STEP:

Develop a systemic needs-sensing report that synthesizes findings from audits, surveys, and community input.

- ⦿ Prioritize systemic barriers for immediate attention (e.g., updating policies, reallocating resources).
- ⦿ Analyze recruitment and retention challenges. Include recruitment, hiring, and retention data as part of systemic needs-sensing efforts to uncover inequities in staffing.
- ⦿ Engage the community in recruitment and retention planning. Involve educators, students, and community members in discussions about what an inclusive and supportive workplace looks like.
- ⦿ Create districtwide strategies for addressing common challenges such as burnout, resistance, or inequitable access.

Reflection Questions

- ⦿ What systemic structures currently support or hinder Transformative SEL integration across schools?
- ⦿ How do districtwide policies and practices reflect equity, inclusion, and Transformative SEL alignment?
- ⦿ How can district leaders use community input to adapt and improve policies, professional learning, and resource distribution?
- ⦿ What do our data reveal about recruitment and retention patterns across schools or departments, particularly for underrepresented groups?
- ⦿ How can we use feedback from educators, students, families, and other community members to refine our recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies?

School-based Professionals

School-based professionals examine how Transformative SEL principles and practices are embedded into everyday interactions, school culture, and classroom instruction. Needs-sensing efforts at this level focus on identifying site-specific strengths and areas for growth.

ACTION STEP:

Collective Sense-making and Analysis

1. Facilitate collective sense-making among staff to analyze their experiences with previous frameworks or initiatives that required shifts in beliefs, mindsets, and behaviors.
 - For example, explore how existing practices (e.g., discipline, relationship-building, family engagement) align with Transformative SEL principles.
 - Identify staff perceptions of barriers such as burnout, trust issues, or lack of clarity.
2. Conduct an analysis of current SEL-related practices and policies. Use tools like equity audits or climate surveys to surface patterns and systemic barriers.

ACTION STEP:

Identify Integration Opportunities

Based on what surfaced while making sense of previous systemic implementation efforts and existing support structures, teams can make collaborative decisions on how to proceed with Transformative SEL integration. Sample activities include

- ◉ Identifying pilot school or district sites
- ◉ Mapping out integration opportunities across curricula
- ◉ Surfacing professional learning needs of particular departments or teams
- ◉ Revisiting and adapting site policies, practices and procedures to ensure Transformative SEL alignment

Reflection Questions

Consider the following questions to determine assets and barriers to systemic implementation:

- ◉ How do educators in this community currently reflect on and develop Transformative SEL competencies?

- ◉ What systemic barriers (e.g., trust, capacity, clarity) inhibit Transformative SEL integration at the school level?
- ◉ How can self-reflection and continuous improvement be embedded into learning and measurement routines?
- ◉ How can the team intentionally humanize systems, policies, procedures, and practices to support Transformative SEL?

Altogether, needs-sensing for systemic integration requires a coordinated effort between school-based professionals and system leaders. While school-level teams focus on site-specific practices and immediate barriers, system leaders address broader structural challenges and opportunities for alignment. Together, these efforts ensure that Transformative SEL is integrated into the fabric of schools and districts, fostering collective well-being and equitable outcomes.

Needs-sensing Resources

- ◉ [Reframing and Understanding Staff Resistance to Advance Positive School Climates](#)
- ◉ [Listen Up! Youth Listening Session Toolkit](#)
- ◉ [Oregon Teacher Guides for Curricular Integration](#)
- ◉ [Collaborative Learning Facilitator Guides](#)

STAGE 3: Implement

Focus Area: Creating a Transformative SEL Action Plan

Purpose

A Transformative SEL Action Plan serves as a roadmap to integrate Transformative SEL principles and practices into the fabric of schools and districts. For schoolwide professionals, this involves identifying entry points and short- and long-term goals for implementing Transformative SEL practices that meet the needs of their specific site. For system-level leaders, it means creating structures, policies, and alignment across initiatives to support and sustain site-level action plans, ensuring coherence and equity.

Once a foundational understanding of systemic implementation has been reached, engage the site community in collectively generating an implementation plan. This process will inspire teams to draw on the abundance of knowledge and expertise that all school community members have for Transformative SEL integration, rather than mandating a compliance-driven approach. The implementation team's work is to sustain momentum within the site community by determining goals while creating conditions that support respectful, dignifying, and affirming interactions among all students and adults.

System-level Leaders (District Administrators and Policymakers)

System leaders are responsible for ensuring that school-based action plans are supported by districtwide structures, resources, and policies. Their role is to align Transformative SEL efforts across schools and initiatives, enabling scalable and sustainable practices. Create a districtwide implementation oversight team to lead systemic support planning, monitor progress, provide ongoing support, and adapt strategies as needed. This team can

- Review school-based action plans to identify patterns, gaps, and opportunities for scaling
- Communicate progress to community members, ensuring transparency and trust
- Offer targeted supports to schools in earlier stages of implementation

ACTION STEP

Create a Systemic Support Plan

1. Develop district- or statewide alignment frameworks to guide school-based action plans. This could include
 - A centralized template or framework for Transformative SEL action planning
 - Clear guidelines for how Transformative SEL integrates with other initiatives (e.g., MTSS, equity frameworks, or academic priorities)
 - Protocols for measuring and monitoring progress across schools
2. Provide resources and supports to enable successful implementation, such as
 - Professional learning opportunities tailored to diverse staff roles and contexts
 - Funding for Transformative SEL initiatives and materials
 - Technical assistance for schools during the planning and implementation phases
3. Facilitate vertical and horizontal alignment across the system to ensure coherence. For example
 - Encourage collaboration between schools to share best practices and learn from each other's successes
 - Align school-level action plans with district strategic goals and state policy frameworks
 - Include specific strategies and accountability measures in the action plan to recruit and retain diverse staff who embody Transformative SEL principles
 - Develop job descriptions, interview protocols, and evaluation criteria that emphasize candidates' Transformative SEL competencies and cultural responsiveness
 - Include a short- and long-term goal in the action plan to increase the diversity of staff at all levels, with measurable benchmarks and timelines

Reflection Questions

- ⦿ How can district-level policies and structures support the success of school-based action plans?
- ⦿ What additional resources or supports are needed to ensure coherence and equity across schools?
- ⦿ How can system leaders build trust and collaboration across schools and departments?

- How are we embedding goals related to equity, inclusivity, and diversity into our recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies?
- What accountability measures are included in our action plan to track and assess the progress of these strategies over time? measurement routines?
- How can the team intentionally humanize systems, policies, procedures, and practices to support Transformative SEL?

School-based Professionals

School-based teams focus on developing a site-specific action plan that aligns with Transformative SEL principles, prioritizing culturally responsive practices and inclusive engagement of all community members. Discuss how Transformative SEL aligns with the site's commitment to equity, student well-being and academic success, while recording opportunities to deepen alignment or expand current practices.

ACTION STEP

Create a Transformative SEL Action Plan

1. Identify systemic entry points for Transformative SEL integration. Teams can map existing structures and practices that can be leveraged to support Transformative SEL implementation, such as
 - Mission and vision statements
 - Portrait of a graduate
 - School improvement plans or initiatives
 - Core values and culture-building practices
 - Systemic initiative plans (literacy, mental health, chronic absenteeism, etc.)
2. Facilitate collaborative goal-setting with input from educators, families, and students to co-create short-term (3–6 months) and long-term (1–2 years) goals for Transformative SEL integration.
3. Create a living action plan that is flexible and evolves based on ongoing feedback and reflection. Include

- Clear objectives aligned with Transformative SEL guiding principles
 - Specific, measurable action steps
 - Roles and responsibilities for team members
4. Launch the action plan.
- Lead classroom integration efforts
 - Invite and respond to input from the school community
 - Communicate the plan's alignment with identified systemic entry points

Reflection Questions

Consider the following questions to ensure the sustainability of the action plan throughout the implementation cycle:

- ⦿ What existing site assets align with Transformative SEL goals? How do existing site assets align with Transformative SEL guiding principles?
- ⦿ How can we co-create the action plan to ensure it reflects the needs and voices of all community members?
- ⦿ What accountability measures will help monitor and sustain progress? Are they in the action plan? How frequently will the team assess progress?
- ⦿ Are team leaders equipped to champion and model this work across the system? What systemic supports are needed to implement this action plan?

The success of Transformative SEL depends on action planning that aligns school-level goals with district- or statewide structures and priorities. School-based teams focus on creating flexible, inclusive plans tailored to their unique contexts, while system leaders establish the frameworks, resources, and alignment needed to support and scale these efforts.

Action Planning Resources

1. [CASEL District Resource Center for Action Planning](#)
2. [Transformative SEL Online Module: Implementing Schoolwide TSEL](#)
3. [CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL: Create a Plan](#)

STAGE 4: Reflect & Improve

Focus Area: Continuously Engaging in Inquiry Cycles

Purpose

Continuous improvement is essential to ensuring Transformative SEL implementation evolves to meet the needs of students, staff, and communities. Inquiry cycles allow schoolwide professionals to reflect on and refine their practices, while system-level leaders focus on creating processes and structures to monitor, support, and sustain progress across the learning ecosystem. Oregon's Transformative SEL Standards describe what students and adults need to know, understand and be able to do. Each Transformative SEL standard also includes practices demonstrating progression toward meeting the standards with more focused knowledge and skill. Growth indicators accompany each standard to guide adults in their decision-making processes. Teachers can apply these indicators as they determine what classroom supports their students need, while administrators can employ the indicators to review systemic policies and plan professional learning experiences for school or district staff.

In keeping with the Transformative SEL Framework's emphasis on neuroscience, which exhibits the brain's continuing process of adaptation, growth and reorganization during learning, this guidance is rooted in a continuous improvement approach in which implementation planning and activities evolve as leadership teams learn about systemic assets, barriers and growth. As SEL practices exist on a continuum, this work is not designed to be linear or sequentially progressive. The focus areas and action steps described in this guidance can be revisited at any point in the implementation cycle. Establish mechanisms for receiving and responding to school or district staff input to adapt to implementation barriers and successes (Kennedy & Ryan Jackson, 2022).

System-level Leaders (District Administrators and Policymakers)

System leaders create the structure that guides and supports school site teams in collecting and analyzing data while ensuring districtwide alignment. Transformative SEL teams can provide the tools needed to understand, respond to, and communicate data findings to community members.

ACTION STEP

Establish Systemic Inquiry Structures

1. Develop district- or statewide monitoring systems.
 - Use a shared dashboard or reporting system to track progress on Transformative SEL implementation.
 - Align Transformative SEL monitoring with existing data collection efforts, such as school climate surveys or equity audits.
2. Facilitate cross-school collaboration.
 - Host communities of practice where schools share findings and lessons learned.
 - Highlight and replicate successful strategies across schools or regions.
3. Embed inquiry cycles into leadership routines.
 - Schedule quarterly reflection sessions with district leaders and school-based teams to review progress and identify systemic barriers.
 - Use findings to update policies, resource allocations, and professional learning plans.

Reflection Questions

- How do we monitor Transformative SEL implementation across schools in a consistent and equitable way?
- What structures ensure that feedback loops between schools and district leaders are active and transparent?
- How can system leaders model a culture of learning and adaptation to sustain Transformative SEL initiatives?

School-based Professionals

School-based teams are responsible for engaging in regular cycles of reflection, data collection, and adjustment to strengthen Transformative SEL implementation. This ensures practices remain relevant, inclusive, and effective.

ACTION STEP

Launch Inquiry Cycles

1. Establish routines for reflection and data collection.
 - Schedule regular team meetings to review implementation progress.
 - Collect qualitative and quantitative data, including:
 - Classroom observations and feedback from educators.
 - Student surveys about school climate and Transformative SEL experiences.
 - Family and caregiver input on Transformative SEL initiatives.
2. Analyze data to identify patterns and opportunities for growth.
 - Look for inequities in access or outcomes.
 - Surface areas where additional professional learning or resources are needed.
3. Test and adapt strategies through small-scale pilots.
 - Pilot new Transformative SEL practices or policies within specific grades or teams.
 - Gather feedback and refine strategies before scaling.
4. Develop feedback loops that include:
 - Regular staff check-ins to discuss successes, challenges, and needed supports.
 - Student voice forums to incorporate youth perspectives into SEL implementation.
 - Family engagement sessions to ensure alignment with community needs.

Reflection Questions

Consider the following questions to establish norms for monitoring, strengthening and communicating progress throughout the implementation cycle:

- How will implementation be monitored and by whom?
- What does successful implementation look, sound and feel like? How will the team measure success?
- Who is responsible for communicating updates to the team and the site community? How will the community receive progress updates and how frequently?
- What does our qualitative and quantitative data communicate about implementation? How does this data inform the way our systems, processes, and approaches are humanized?

- What data do we currently collect to inform Transformative SEL practices, and how can we improve it?
- How do we ensure reflection and data analysis lead to actionable improvements?
- How can we build trust and collaboration to foster honest feedback from community members?

Continuous inquiry cycles ensure that Transformative SEL remains dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs of students, staff, and communities. School-based professionals focus on reflecting, collecting data, and testing strategies at the site level, while system-level leaders create the structures and alignment necessary to scale and sustain these efforts. Together, these layers of inquiry build a culture of ongoing learning and improvement that supports equitable and transformative outcomes.

Inquiry Cycle Resources

1. [CASEL's Indicators of Districtwide SEL](#)
2. [Reviewing Education Policies to Advance Equity](#)
3. [SLG Goals for Social Emotional Learning & Engagement](#)
4. [Recommended Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool for Review and Adoption of Instructional Materials & Practices for K-12 Oregon's Transformative Social and Emotional Learning](#)

Conclusion

As stewards of the learning ecosystem, school and district leaders can ensure that Transformative SEL is implemented in partnership with the students, educators and community members to co-create environments in which learning can flourish. The reflection protocols, action steps and resources included in this guide can be employed to build systemic readiness and capacity to support Transformative SEL leadership teams in identifying implementation barriers, creating action plans and continuously improving systemic efforts. Leadership teams that ground implementation efforts in these five actions can build the individual and collective capacity needed to integrate and sustain this framework and, ultimately, support the well-being of students and adults throughout the learning ecosystem.

References

Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019). Transformative social and emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and excellence. *Educational Psychologist*, 54(3), 162–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032>

Kennedy, S., & Jackson, K. (2022). *PDSA cycles: Improvement and implementation*. Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. University of North Carolina. <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/practicing-implementation/pdsa-cycles-improvement-and-implementation>

Nguyen, L., Magby, N., & Ojetunde, T. (2023). *Reframing and understanding staff resistance to advance positive school climates*. California Center for School Climate at WestEd.

Oregon Department of Education. (2023). *Oregon's transformative social and emotional learning framework and standards*. [https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/SEL/Documents/ODE_Oregon%27s%20Transformative%20SEL%20Framework%20%20Standards_FINAL%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/SEL/Documents/ODE_Oregon%27s%20Transformative%20SEL%20Framework%20%20Standards_FINAL%20(2).pdf)

Oregon Department of Education. (2024). *Oregon's transformative social and emotional learning framework and standards implementation guide*. [https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/SEL/Documents/ODE_Oregon%27s%20Transformative%20SEL%20Framework%20%20Standards_FINAL%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/SEL/Documents/ODE_Oregon%27s%20Transformative%20SEL%20Framework%20%20Standards_FINAL%20(2).pdf)

Rhode Island Department of Education and Region 2 Comprehensive Center. *Equitable & Inclusive Hiring Practices: A Reference Guide of Strategies to Grow & Diversify the Educator Workforce*. <https://wested2024.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/11174142/Recruitment-and-Hiring-Guidance.pdf>

Walrond, N. (2021). *Serving the whole person: An alignment and coherence guide for local education agencies*. WestEd. <https://www.wested.org/resources/whole-person-alignment-andcoherence-guide-for-local-education-agencies>

Cover Photos courtesy of Beth Conyers, Portland Public Schools, 2017. Accessed via <https://www.flickr.com/photos/portlandpublicschools/albums/>