



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: June 12, 2024
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To: Principals, Directors of School Counseling, Directors of Student Services, SEL Coordinators, Supervisors of Health and Physical Education
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services
Deadline: June 23, 2024

Opportunity for School Leaders and Aspiring School Leaders Interested in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to Take Part in a Focus Group

Social-emotional and character development is increasingly viewed as an essential part of preparation of our students for future roles as citizens, family members, workers, and community participants. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) also has been strongly linked to students' academic accomplishments and mental health and wellbeing. Schools play a key role in the development of these essential life competencies and school and district leaders – superintendents, central office administrators, principals and assistant principals, SEL Coordinators, anti-bullying specialists and coordinators, SEL master teachers, SEL-related committee members – ultimately have a strong influence on the potency of social-emotional and character development in schools.

It is for this reason that the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), in collaboration with the Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab at Rutgers University, is in the process of developing a statewide training series for school leaders on implementing systemic SEL in schools. This asynchronous SEL Leadership course will include five modules, each 1.5 hours in length. Once finalized, the course will be available for all current and aspiring school leaders via a virtual platform.

As this project is meant to serve those possessing or aspiring to leadership roles with regard to social-emotional and character development in the schools, it is of great importance to garner feedback from a diverse group of educational leaders with various levels of familiarity and involvement in fostering social and emotional learning within the school environment for both staff and students.

Objective

To recruit up to 30 New Jersey school leaders and aspiring school leaders within public, charter, or renaissance schools interested in providing feedback on both the pedagogy and content of the SEL Leadership modules that will be incorporated into the finalized course.

Participant Expectations

Participants must:

- Be employed in a K-12 public, charter, or Renaissance school in NJ.
- Be a school leader or aspiring school leader with interest in the application of SEL within schools.
- Have capacity to spend up to **4.5 hours** outside of contracted school hours to review materials from three learning modules in preparation for the focus group session.
- Attend a one-hour virtual focus group to be held after contracted hours the **week of July 29, 2024**.
- Following attendance at the focus group, submit final feedback through a brief online survey.

Next Steps

If interested in providing feedback on the SEL Leadership course by participating in an Educator Focus Group, please complete the following [Microsoft Teams Form](#).

Deadline

All submissions must be received by **June 23, 2024**.

Contact Information

For any questions or technical assistance needs, please contact the Office of Student Support Services via email at SafeSupportiveSchools@doe.nj.gov or by phone at (609) 396-9109.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group