



# Shrewsbury Public Schools

May 31, 2019

To: School Committee

From: Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services  
Amy Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment  
Jane Lizotte, Principal, Sherwood Middle School

Re: Social Emotional Learning Update

A community's aspirations are captured well in the hopes it holds for its children. In Shrewsbury, our Five-Year Strategic Priorities and Goals reflect the topics that our community said was most important for our schools. Chief among these priorities was *Enhanced well-being of all*. This memo seeks to update you on the progress we've made to date on the district goals related to this priority, namely:

Create a common understanding of the benefits of the skills, habits, and mindsets of social and emotional learning and develop a shared, systematic approach to explicitly teach, integrate, and assess these competencies

- By October 2018, establish both district- and school-based steering committees for social emotional learning (accomplished)
- By December 2018, determine the social emotional learning definition and framework that will be utilized by the district (accomplished)
- By June 2019, complete an assessment of current status and practices with regard to social emotional learning in the district (partially accomplished; inventory of practices is complete, findings regarding how these practices compare to best practices and across schools is in process)
- By December 2019, create a district-level implementation plan for effective social and emotional learning expectations and practices (on track; work to be completed in fall of 2019)

Improve support systems and resources to enhance the well-being of students and staff

- By June 2019, identify the effectiveness of current systems and resources that

are in place regarding student and staff well-being and identify opportunities for improvements (in process)

Ensure that all staff actively participate in professional development focused on the skills, habits, and mindsets of social and emotional learning that improve students' learning, resilience, and focus

- By June 2020, at least 50% of all staff will have participated in professional development regarding social and emotional learning (on track)

As noted above, we are pleased to report that the milestones we identified as goals for this school year have been largely met, with the remaining tasks being to analyze the inventory and make determinations regarding the effectiveness of current practices as we work to create an implementation plan by this coming December. We're compelled to add that this is largely because of the efforts of our educators, many of whom lent support and enthusiasm to the work. In particular, three staff stakeholder groups played key roles, and we want to begin by acknowledging them.

Early this year, Dr. Lizotte sought and received acceptance into the ExSEL Network, a coalition of districts working together to integrate social emotional learning needs into their schools (see enclosed information). That group included representatives from all levels, all of whom served on the district steering committee as well.

In each school, building based SEL committees informed our first steps. Together with central office administrators, representatives from these committees served their schools and supported district work on the larger SEL Steering Committee. ExSEL members are noted with an asterisk below:

Parker Road PreSchool  
Rebecca Dumphy  
Debra Cushman  
Lisa Robinson

Beal Early Childhood Center  
Chris Girardi  
Lisa Drobinski  
Margaret Aulenback

Coolidge Elementary School  
Erin Kendrick  
\*Jennifer Flemming  
Tiffany Ostrander  
Brittany Johnson

Floral Street Elementary School  
\*Lisa McCubrey

Suzanne Margiano  
Helene Bisceglia  
Sarah Miller

Walter J. Paton Elementary  
Lindsey Borraccino-Morrissey  
Deena Sebell  
\*Angelina Adams

Spring Street Elementary School  
Bryan Mabie  
Donna Rice  
Michelle LeMay  
Allison Sullivan

Sherwood Middle School  
\*Jane Lizotte  
Karen Gutekanst  
\* Aaron Gritter  
\*Bryant Clark  
Kelly O'Connell

Oak Middle School  
Ann Jones  
Karley Newton  
Kristen Clifford  
\*Jenni Lencioni

Shrewsbury High School  
Todd Bazydlo  
Liza Trombley  
Sue Donofrio  
Alicia Harrigan  
\*Beth Morin

In addition, a small group of educators from Shrewsbury High School participated in a program at William James College. Members from this group included:

Todd Bazydlo, Principal  
Liza Trombley, Director of English  
Sue Donofrio, Adjustment Counselor  
Alicia Harrigan, Special Educator

SEL was a major focus of work at the district, school and classroom levels. We'd like to focus first on the work accomplished at the district level.

Our initial task as a committee was to consider various frameworks for social emotional learning and choose one that would unify our approach to SEL in Shrewsbury. After considering different models, we elected to adopt the CASEL "wheel" (see enclosed information). This gives us a common lens for understanding social emotional learning competencies and a common language to use across levels.

Next we began taking inventory of current practices. We took note of building-based efforts to promote safe and supportive school climates and instructional moves that foster social emotional learning in our classrooms. We also began to identify which topics were taught by grade and/or level. As part of the process, we heard about many promising practices. Identifying "bright spots" was important, because it's clear that we will grow from strength. Every school has already begun this work in some way. Now our challenge is to coordinate our efforts, within and across each level. As we go forward, staff leaders will no doubt play a part of professional development.

It's been said that educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all. Collectively we take heart in your support of this important work.