Objectives

1. Describe social and emotional learning (SEL) and current research demonstrating its importance to student success
2. Discuss how screening and assessment can support school’s SEL efforts
3. Introduce the DESSA Comprehensive System, one approach to SEL screening, assessment, progress monitoring, and evaluating outcomes

Reflection

Take 2 minutes and consider what it means to be:

• College ready
• Career ready
SEL Core Competencies

SEL Defined
Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/

SEL Skills Can Be Taught
- SEL curricula and free standing lessons to explicitly teach these skills
- Teacher instructional practices (e.g., cooperative learning) which promote SEL
- Integration with academic curriculum areas
- Organizational strategies that encourage positive school climate and culture

http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/approaches/
Why Teach SEL Skills?
A growing body of research evidence has shown that social and emotional skills are essential for school and life success.

SEL Meta-Analysis
(213 studies; 270,000 K-12 students)
- 9% improvement in attitudes about self, school, and others
- 23% improvement in social and emotional skills
- 9% improvement in classroom behavior
- 11% improvement in achievement test scores
- 9% decrease in conduct problems such as classroom misbehavior and aggression
- 10% decrease in emotional distress such as anxiety and depression


Same Skills Needed in the Workplace
- Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Report (1999)
- Employers asked to list skills needed of their employees
- Half of the skills (8 of 16) identified were social and emotional skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision-making</th>
<th>Sociability</th>
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<td>Problem-solving</td>
<td>Self-management</td>
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<td>Personal responsibility</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
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Increasing Emphasis on SEL in Schools

States with SEL standards:
- Illinois
- Kansas
- Maine
- West Virginia
- Connecticut
- Idaho
- Ohio
- Massachusetts
- Pennsylvania
- Vermont
- Washington

http://www.casel.org/state-scan-scorecard-project/

NASP’s Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services

- Preventive and Responsive Services
  - “School psychologists have knowledge of principles and research related to resilience and risk factors in learning and mental health…”
  - “Use assessment and data-collection methods…” that support socialization, learning and mental health”
  - “School psychologists promote wellness and resilience”

Increasing Emphasis on SEL in Schools

- A number of evidence-based SEL programs are available to address these state standards.
- As schools increasingly adopt, implement, and work to sustain SEL programs, an infrastructure is needed to support their delivery (Fagan et al., 2015).
- Schools are developing internal infrastructures that use multi-tiered approaches that are designed to help all children become college and career ready.
  - Account for constrained resources and classroom time
  - Provide each student the type of support needed
- Requires practical and sound assessment tools to facilitate these decisions
Goal of Social Emotional Assessment – Improve Outcomes for Students

- Universal screening
  - To quickly and accurately identify which students need additional support
- Detailed assessment data
  - To guide instruction (SEL curricula or strategies)
  - To see if students are acquiring the skills being taught
- Evaluate outcomes
  - Individual student level
  - Classroom, Grade, School, District levels
- Improve practice over time (CQI)
  - Identify opportunities for improvement in SEL instruction

Introduction to the DESSA Comprehensive System

The DESSA Comprehensive System – Needs and Components

- Universal Screening
- Detailed Assessment
- SEL Instruction
- Progress Monitoring
- Outcome Evaluation & Quality Improvement
- DESSA-mini
- DESSA
- DESSA Strategies
- Ongoing Progress Monitoring Form (OPM)
- Advanced Interpretation Techniques
Universal Screening with the DESSA-mini

The DESSA-mini

- Provides a snapshot of students’ social and emotional competence
- Four equivalent 8-item forms
  - Completed in 1 minute by teachers, parents, and OST providers
  - Yields one score – Social-Emotional Total Score (SET)
- The DESSA-mini allows for:
  - Universal screening
  - Repeated “probes” of social and emotional growth
  - Needs assessment for SEL at the school or district level
- Online via Evo SEL & paper and pencil
- English, Spanish, Dutch, and Italian
DESSA-mini Scores

- One score – Social Emotional Total (SET)
- T-Scores
  - Mean of 50, SD of 10
- Percentiles
- Descriptive terms for score ranges
  - > 60 = Strength (≈ 16%)
  - 41-59 = Typical (≈ 68%)
  - ≤ 40 = Need for Instruction (≈ 16%)

Assessment of Social and Emotional Strengths and Needs with the DESSA
Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)

- One, 72-item form
  - Completed thoughtfully by parents, teachers, and OST staff in about 5-8 minutes
  - Yields 9 scores – 8 specific scales and a Social Emotional Composite (SEC)
- The DESSA allows for:
  - Comprehensive assessment of key S/E skills
  - Guiding instruction
  - Outcome evaluation and CQI

DESSA Scales and CASEL Alignment

- Purposes of the DESSA
  - Identify SE strengths and needs of elementary and middle school students (high school coming 2017-18 school year)
  - Tier I – (if used at universal level) Guide classroom-wide prevention strategies
  - Tier II – Assess at-risk students so that targeted small group or individual interventions can occur
  - Tier III – For special education students, identify important strengths that can be incorporated into IEPs and leveraged in practice
Additional Purposes of the DESSA

- Foster collaboration between parents and teachers
- Document outcomes for individual students, classrooms, grade levels, schools, districts, and communities

DESSA Results

- T-Scores
  - Mean of 50, SD of 10
- Percentiles
  - Descriptive terms for score ranges
    - ≥ 60 = Strength (≈ 16%)
    - 41-59 = Typical (≈ 68%)
    - < 40 = Need for Instruction (≈ 16%)
- Individual Student Profile
- Classroom Profile

Individual Student Profile
How many ways can this be used?
• Prioritize areas for instruction
• Form pull-out groups
• Create peer dyads
• TA/Coaching tool
• Program evaluation
• Others?

DESSA Strategies
• Provided as part of the Evo SEL web-based platform
• 5 different levels of strategies for each of the eight DESSA scales
  • Teacher Reflection and Action
  • Universal
  • Group
  • Individual Student
  • Home

DESSA Strategies
• Strand 1 - Evidence-based and field-tested strategies
• Strand 2 – Select strategies from SEL curricula
  • Second Step, 4 R’s, Caring Classroom Community, Open Circle
• Strand 3 – Foundational SEL Practices
  • Learning agreements
  • Greeting rituals
  • Peer coaching
  • Gratitude
  • Movement
  • Student Voice
  • Trauma-informed practices
Monitoring Progress with the DESSA-mini OPM

Response to Intervention

• Core components of RTI
  • Universal screening
  • Classroom-based interventions
  • Frequent monitoring of progress
• Has been very successful in preventing academic failures
• Why wouldn’t we take the same approach with social and emotional competence?
Evaluation and CQI

Pretest-Posttest Comparisons

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<th>Pretest-Posttest Comparison</th>
<th>Time 1 T-Score</th>
<th>Pretest Confidence Range</th>
<th>Time 2 T-Score</th>
<th>Posttest Confidence Range</th>
<th>Outcome – Check One</th>
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Rater 1 Name: Mary Smith  
Rater 2 Name: Mary Smith  
Date of Rating: 10/10/14  
Date of Rating: 2/28/15

Putting It All Together
The DESSA Comprehensive System

- Universal screening with an 8-item, strength-based behavior rating scale, the DESSA-mini
  - Provides a snapshot of the overall social-emotional competence of students
  - Support universal strategies
- Follow-up assessment with at-risk students with the DESSA
  - Support targeted strategies
- Research- and practice-informed strategies to promote social and emotional competence
- Periodic progress monitoring with the DESSA-mini and Ongoing Progress Monitoring Form
  - Evaluation and Continuous Quality Improvement

Social and Emotional Assessment

- Presented one assessment approach today, but there are a number of high quality social and emotional assessments available
- Resources exist to help you select assessment tools to best fit your school’s needs
  - American Institutes for Research (AIR): “Are You Ready to Assess Social and Emotional Development?” Tools Index
    (http://www.air.org/resource/are-you-ready-to-assess-social-and-emotional-development)
- Important to consider the “3 R’s of High Quality Assessment”:
  - Rigor
  - Reasonableness
  - Relevance

Summary – Ways Social and Emotional Assessment Can Improve Practice

- High-quality assessment can:
  - Allow us to identify students needing additional support
  - Enhance awareness of each student’s unique social emotional strengths and needs
  - Guide instruction to address the needs that actually exist
  - Enable teachers and school staff to honor, maintain, and leverage student strengths
  - Assist in developing rapport with parents and students
  - Identify meaningful strengths for IEPs
  - Document outcomes
  - Inform program quality improvement
  - Essential for prevention
Thank you!

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