

Student Well-Being: Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Music Education (Return to Music Resources)

By Dr. James Weaver and Team on May 10, 2021

Thank you for clicking to learn more about student well-being and social emotional learning (SEL) when it comes to Return to Music Resources. We hope that you are finding all of the information helpful.

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Student Well-Being: Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Music Education

In order for SEL education and tools to be effectively used in music education the use must be intentional, embedded into the musical process and product, and sustained. Musical social emotional learning must be a collaborative effort with students, never something done to students. To capitalize on the transformative potential of the music classroom, focus must be put on helping students in these key areas:

Better understand their **identity** and how that informs their beliefs, mindsets, and decisions.

Facilitate a sense of **belonging** in the music classroom where students and educators feel safe taking risks and being vulnerable.

Amplifying student voices so they are experiencing **agency** and affecting meaningful change in their classrooms, schools, and community.

Why is SEL important now – and its connection to music education? ([Video Below](#))

While SEL has been around for more than 2 decades, it has recently been an emerging educational priority as our school leaders have confronted the ever-increasing signs of stress and trauma our students are experiencing. The alarming rise in child and teen mental health challenges (appearing as early as Kindergarten), have contributed to what is clearly a mental health crisis in our schools and society. All of this was occurring prior to COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges due to missed milestones (graduations, concerts, proms, trips, athletics, student activities, travel), trauma, loss, loneliness, and even questions

regarding career aspirations and finding a successful pathway to one's own passion in life.

The confluence of student mental health and well-being and the COVID-19 pandemic has placed the need for SEL front and center as our students return to their schools. Long after the fiscal and public health crisis recedes from our view... the mental health crisis will remain for years to come.

Over the past few years there has been increasing recognition about the unique connection between music and arts education and social and emotional learning. In fact, noted SEL pioneer Dr. Maurice Elias from the Rutgers Social Emotional and Character Development Lab stated:

"I believe everyone will soon come to realize that our arts educators are the secret weapon to implementation of social-emotional learning in our schools."

The number one priority of our schools as we emerge from the pandemic is the social emotional well-being of our students, faculty, and staff and music education and educators will play a critical role

As we return to school it is critical to remember that our students will not learn:

until they feel safe

until they feel valued

until they have a sense of belonging, and

until they are heard

That is why the intersection between music and arts education and social emotional learning will be so important as our students return to schools.

Why is SEL a strong argument for music education?

Purposeful integration of SEL into music education will enrich the students' personal connection to music.

The relationship built between teachers and students over multiple years of instruction fosters the caring environment necessary to help build school connectedness and foster empathy.

The perseverance needed to dedicate oneself to musical excellence fosters resilience both in and out of the music classroom.

Musical creation fosters self-awareness and allows for students to develop a greater sense of autonomy and emotional vocabulary.

The collaborative community developed in the music classroom around music-making welcomes discussions and an awareness of acceptance and embracing diversity.

Musicians learn the necessity of personal goal-setting, self-assessment, and accountability as they develop high standards for musicianship and themselves.

Music is a cultural necessity and is fundamental to being human. Music education and SEL exposes and deepens this for a cross-section of the student body.

Music Educators often address different aspects of SEL in their everyday practice either through individual or across multiple competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making). In some cases, these competencies are being addressed in a tacit way, without making explicit connections to the visual and performing arts standards.

Tools and Resources

Here are some tools and resources for embedding SEL into your classroom:

For information and resources on the intersection of social emotional learning and music education visit the Center for Arts Education and Social Emotional Learning at: <https://artsedSEL.org>

For information and tools to help embed SEL into your curriculum and lesson plans learn more at the Arts Education and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework at: www.selarts.org

[Music Education and SEL Brochure](#)

[Congressional Briefing Panel 3/21](#)

[Link Advocating for Music Education through SEL](#)

Video

The Benefits of Music with Marching Illini Director, Barry L. Houser

Music is important and can provide many benefits to those who participate including but not limited to the areas of: emotional, educational, and economic. Watch the video to learn more!

The Benefits of Music

