

# 4 SEL PRACTICES

## A RESTORATIVE APPROACH TO SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING FOR CLASSROOMS

DISTRICT STRATEGIC GOAL 2  
Enhance academic and emotional  
support so students can reach  
their full potential

WHY SEL? SEL SKILLS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO BEING SUCCESSFUL IN SCHOOL AND LIFE. INCORPORATING THESE PRACTICES HELPS PROTECT THE INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT.

### 1. Welcoming Rituals

Welcoming rituals encourage students to connect with one another and create a sense of belonging, predictability, and safety. Connecting your welcoming ritual to your teaching can strengthen academic concepts. Here are a few ideas:

- Something I am looking forward to today
- My favorite after school activity is...
- If I had a superpower, it would be...
- Which time period in American History would you travel back to and why?
- Connect to a book character's emotions

### 2. Add a Social Goal to Your Academic Goal

"When planning lessons, we craft two types of goals — academic and social. Having dual goals ensures that both of the things we value — how students are working together and what they are learning — are given equal attention during our teaching."  
~ Peter Brunn, *The Lesson Planning Handbook: Essential Strategies That Inspire Student Thinking & Learning* (p. 49). The three State SEL Standards and the SEL Competencies are great resources for helping to determine social goals.

### 3. Circles / Class Meetings

Opening and/or Closing Circles help students start and end the day (or class period) by building caring relationships with their peers and teachers. Circles can also be used at any time of day, for a variety of purposes, including, but not limited to, academic, socratic, dialogue, restorative practices, conflict resolution, idea sharing, team building, problem solving, and getting to know one another.

### 4. Optimistic Closures

Optimistic closures are intentional and offer students a positive way to reflect on and reinforce learning. They are designed to encourage students to leave class on an optimistic note and look forward to coming back. Students can pair up and share with prompts such as:

- Something I learned today
- Someone I was able to help
- Someone who was helpful to me
- Something I enjoyed about the day
- Someone who was kind to me
- Something I'm looking forward to doing tomorrow

Please visit <http://www.sps186.org/social/> for more information.