



Practice Brief

Kansas: A Social and Emotional Learning-Career Readiness Integration Case Study

Shoss, L., Jaques, E, and Kroyer-Kubicek, R. (2022)

How can districts, schools, and community organizations prepare students for “future” readiness - with the knowledge, skills, and drive to navigate their careers and lives in a rapidly shifting reality? The Coalition for Career Development Center examined Delaware, Kansas, and Wisconsin to learn more.

The Kansas State Department of Education has adopted a comprehensive strategy—entitled Kansas Can—that integrates social and emotional learning (SEL) with a number of state priorities including academics, college and career readiness and 21st-century skills, school climate and culture, and character education and development. In so doing, the state has introduced statewide outcomes for social-emotional growth, kindergarten readiness, personalized career and academic career plans (PCAPs), graduation attainment, and postsecondary success, balancing the emphasis between academic test scores and the development of student-centered characteristics that Kansans identified as ensuring student success.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Kansas schools and districts place significant emphasis on balancing academic achievement (e.g., grades and test scores) with character development both in and out of the classroom to optimize student success.

- Integrated classroom activities empower students to continually develop social, emotional and academic skills from preschool to high school.
- The social-emotional growth (SEG) framework connects character development standards with SEL practices delivered in a healthy climate with a goal of integrated delivery in day-to-day learning environments skills alongside academics.
- The Kansas Education System Accreditation program (KESA) provides schools with strategies for integrating SEL into numerous aspects of the students' school experience; including academics, college and career readiness, 21st-century skill development, school culture, character development, and positive behavioral intervention supports.
- Work-based learning (WBL) documentation within the PCAP provides a holistic view of the student's experiential development of skill building, knowledge and learning, self-reflection, career exploration, planning, and SEG.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Kansas State Department of Education offers professional development and training opportunities for districts, schools and individual educators who are interested in adopting and integrating SEG programs.

- Professional development is provided by a range of specialists including the Kansas Department of Education personnel, regional service center and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) trainers, Kansas Technical Assistance System Network (TASN), and regional PCAP trainers.
- Professional development includes in-person and virtual webinars, conferences, workshops.
- The Kansas Can Star Recognition Program provides an incentive for schools and districts to work towards integrating SEG into learning environments by showcasing high-performing institutions as well as those making significant improvement efforts.
 - Schools provide an annual report of SEG outcomes including improvements in academic performance, high school completion, and postsecondary engagement and success.
 - Districts can receive additional recognition for high quality design and implementation that focus on social-emotional growth (SEG), kindergarten readiness, PCAPs, and/or civic engagement.
- Technical assistance and support is available to schools to improve educator competence with the online PCAP platform, which allows students to develop a postsecondary plan and explore postsecondary interests and goals via career pathways, school courses in career and technical education, and WBL opportunities.

COHERENCE

Under the Kansas State Board outcomes, SEL is integrated with a number of district priorities including academics, college and career readiness and 21st-century skills, school climate and culture, character education and development, and positive behavioral intervention supports (PBIS).

- A number of state resources and training opportunities provide schools with support to integrate, not isolate, SEL competencies and practices.
- Kansas uses outcome data to continuously improve the state's SEL and career and workforce implementation and integration, which includes employability skills as part of the Measuring SEG Toolkit.
- WBL efforts include an opportunity for students to reflect on their SEG goals.
- PCAP programs are led by school counselors, but must be supported by other educators and administrators, the family, and the community.
- Use of online platforms for PCAP ensure consistency and transferability across schools districts

1. Atwell, M., Bridgeland, J., Dermody, C. M., Godek, D., Dusenbury, L., Greenberg, M., Solberg, S.H., and Kroyer-Kubicek, R. (2022). Educating Future-Ready Students. Chicago: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. Available at <https://casel.org/educating-future-ready-students-2022/>.
2. Schreiber, K., Solberg, V.S., Kroyer-Kubicek, R., Dermody, C., Godek, D., Dusenbury, L., Greenberg, M., Cross, R., Clark, N., Reed, K., & Smith, S. (2022). Kansas: A Vision for Integrating SEL with Career and Workforce Development for Students. Coalition for Career Development (CCD) Center. Available at <https://casel.org/kansas-sel-workforce/>