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# **Connecting Theory to SEL Practice: Five Key Insights from Innovative, Community-Driven SEL Initiatives and Programs**

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## Introduction

Social and emotional learning (SEL) skills support academic and lifelong success. SEL refers to the “process through which individuals learn and apply a set of social, emotional, and related skills, attitudes, behaviors, and values that help direct their thoughts, feelings, and actions in ways that enable them to succeed in school, work, and life” (Jones et al, 2017; Ramirez et al., 2021). Since the 1990s, research has identified the need to address both academic performance and social-emotional well-being as key elements in advancing student achievement (Jagers, et al., 2019; New Jersey School Board Association, 2017; Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich, & Gullotta, 2015). Efforts to build these skills were well underway before the pandemic. For example, in a 2019 survey of over 3,000 district leaders, school leaders, and teachers, over 90% reported focusing on SEL skills (Bryant et al; 2020). These skills are even more consequential now as we continue to grapple with the effects of the pandemic on society. Schools are currently facing unprecedented challenges in helping students and teachers cope with increased social, emotional, learning, and mental health challenges exacerbated by the pandemic (Lee, 2020). The [Office of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) in the U.S. Department of Education has made significant investments in novel SEL programs through the [Education Innovation and Research \(EIR\)](#) Program. Between 2017 and 2021, the EIR program made 35 awards to projects focused on SEL innovations.



Drawing on data and guiding frameworks of SEL competencies, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers have championed the development and evaluation of evidence-informed SEL programs across grades PreK-12 in both in-school and out-of-school time learning environments. There is significant interest in harnessing the power of SEL skills to transform educational environments. In this cross-project summary, we share key insights from interviews with five teams of EIR Project Directors and Evaluators (see Appendix A) regarding what they have learned about SEL innovation through designing, implementing, and evaluating such programs.

## Five key insights from the field

Five key insights emerged throughout our conversations with the EIR grantee teams. These insights offer lessons to advance our theoretical understanding of SEL and the practice of developing and evaluating SEL programs in the field. Below we describe each insight, the five featured projects, and offer tips on how to effectively design, implement, and evaluate equitable community-driven SEL programs. Although each project is focused on specific community needs, the insights shared are broadly applicable to other projects and communities aiming to cultivate SEL capacities.

### Five Key Insights from EIR-Funded SEL Innovations

1. Theory can set the stage, but the needs and strengths of the local community drive innovation.
2. Grantees embrace and focus on the adaptability of SEL competencies.
3. Expanding adult SEL skills and changing school culture is essential for effectively building students' SEL capacities.
4. There is a clear need for additional metrics of success to understand the impact of SEL programs and to advance our measurement of SEL.
5. Decision-makers must set tailored and community-driven SEL as a priority.

### Insight 1. Theory can set the stage, but the needs and strengths of the local community drive innovation.



In our conversations with the EIR grantees, they report drawing upon numerous theoretical frameworks to guide their innovations. Grantees describe being guided and inspired by the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#) 5 competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) and recent [Transformative SEL](#) framework (Jagers et al. 2019), as well as relying on broader conceptualizations of how children learn and develop, such as Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1999) when designing their innovations. Our conversations revealed that while these frameworks guided their

ideology, there are often pieces missing in terms of how to translate this work into tailored practices for specific community needs. The grantees have found that the development of approaches and tools to implement high-quality, equity-focused, research-informed SEL practices should be guided by stakeholders from the community in which the service takes place. EIR grantees offer two key recommendations when collaborating with the local community to guide this work:

**Recognize that tailoring can have different meanings.** The [New Teacher Center \(NTC\)'s EIR-funded program](#) leverages SEL-focused instructional coaching to improve school culture and close achievement gaps that span racial and socioeconomic lines. Jeff Homan and the team at the NTC are tailoring their approach to meet the needs of three different educational contexts and student populations: urban New York City, rural Minnesota, and rural Alabama. In designing their coaching approach to build SEL skills and competencies, program developers identified a set of core knowledge and skills on which they wanted to dedicate teacher training. Yet, they recognized the implementation of the set of core knowledge and skills would differ given the diversity of contexts for implementation. Thus, they tailored their model by giving coaches the autonomy to personalize implementation based on context and need. Homan shared, "The content isn't necessarily changing, but the nature of the conversations that are happening around the content is going to be really different," (J. Homan, personal communication, September 30, 2022). Allowing freedom and individuality around the nature of the conversations in these schools is essential to program success because it supports the unique culture of each school.

**Allow community voice and context to guide innovation approach.** EIR-funded [Personalized, Relevant, Engaged for Postsecondary \(PREP\)](#) is a holistic approach to learning for alternative secondary schools. PREP's idea is that when learning is personalized and relevant, students will be engaged and prepared for postsecondary success. "It's not a specific curriculum," describes Dr. Julie Prindle PREP Project Leader. "It's an approach to cultivating a climate honoring the culture of the schools' students. PREP aims to build student agency and relationships, and address what's most meaningful to our students and our families," (J. Prindle, personal communication, October 6, 2022). PREP allows student and community voice to guide all aspects of their program. In PREP schools, students learn by solving challenging, real-world problems that are relevant and meaningful to them. The structure of the program is designed to foster students' SEL development through deep relationship-building between students, advisors, counselors, and onsite social workers. Dr. Nettie Legters, PREP Project Director notes, "Students who are pushed or pulled out of mainstream education need something different. If we serve them with something that is the same thing they experienced in the schools they disengaged from we are not going to be successful. The path to success and equity is building relational trust and actually co-creating learning opportunities with students that they want to participate in and are able to stick with." To ensure that student's needs are central to the iterative design and implementation of their innovation, PREP staff host student check-in sessions throughout the year, providing an opportunity for students to share what is immediately important to them at a specific moment while allowing program staff to assist them where they need help the most. "During these sessions, students share their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives on the program, school, and what they are excited about," (N. Legters, personal communication, October 6, 2022).

[Austin Independent School District](#) (Austin ISD) has a similar holistic ideology that incorporates a broad, multifaceted approach to their SEL innovation's goal to foster positive school climates and address root causes of disparities in exclusionary discipline by implementing school-wide [restorative practices](#). Their conceptualization of SEL focuses on both the student and the whole school community. Austin ISD's approach includes immersing the whole-school community in activities that focus on relationships and creating shared values, through restorative chats and community-building circles, which are formally planned spaces for intentional communication to establish values, share experiences, and build relationships. Restorative circles were selected because, at their

core, these circles are designed to honor and respect the cultural uniqueness of their student population and community. The project engages a dedicated restorative practice team at each school, whose job it is to tailor the programmatic approach to the individual needs of the school and student. This Leadership Response Team (LRT) is focused on the culture of each campus and the implementation of restorative practice innovation. Throughout our conversation with Sarah Johnson, Project Director, it became apparent that her team truly values the local culture of each school. Ms. Johnson shares, “The innovation happened differently at each campus because each campus had a different type of culture, different routines, and procedures,” (S. Johnson, personal communication, October 5, 2022). This flexible and tailored approach, models, for schools, what restorative practices are.

**“Part of being culturally responsive and restorative is that you are not prescriptive and you’re not mandating things; instead, you focus on community strengths and needs.”**

*–S. Johnson, personal communication, October 5, 2022*

### **Expert Tips:**

- Dedicate site staff whose primary responsibility is to tailor programmatic approaches to meet the needs of the students and schools to uniquely maximize growth and development at each program site.
- Before developing your curriculum, product, or program, start with a needs assessment to better understand your target student, their families, and the broader community.

### **Insight 2. Grantees embrace and focus on the adaptability of SEL competencies.**

While much of the SEL literature has focused on distilling SEL skills into a set of personal competencies, such as a set of *three* (cognitive regulation, emotional processes, and interpersonal skills; Jones et al. 2017) or *five competencies* (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making; [CASEL](#)), EIR grantees are developing definitions of sets of competencies unique to their particular community and also thinking much more broadly and defining SEL as school-level interactions, climates, and policies. Their insights suggest a need for flexibility in the adoption of SEL competencies and a willingness to apply competencies in a way that fits the unique need of the target population.

[Individuals Dedicated to Excellence and Achievement \(IDEA\) Public Schools](#) is committed to a vision of college for all children. [IDEA’s C3: Culture, Character, and College EIR](#) project aims to cultivate students’ “college-going identity” through a new curriculum that is focused on developing character traits (e.g., perseverance) that are essential for college success. The concept of a “college-going identity” emerged from conversations with different stakeholders across IDEA districts in Texas. The core competencies of this identity include resiliency, agency, and envisioning (L. Dutkiewicz, personal communication, October 12, 2022), and have parallels to current characterizations of SEL competencies in the CASEL framework of 5 SEL competencies. For example, IDEA’s college-going identity focuses on attitudes and behaviors they classify as self-agency, self-regulation, self-efficacy,

problem-solving, and social engagement. Collectively, the core competencies of IDEA’s college-going identity cut broadly across four of the CASEL 5 SEL competencies (self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills) and include some, but not all aspects of each. Instead of working to align their model with an existing menu of SEL competencies and apply these in their schools, IDEA listened to the community and learned that six SEL competencies were important to help students develop: skills in (1) goal-setting, (2) taking ownership or agency over their own learning, (3) persevering in the face of challenges, (4) being resilience, (5) exploring and asking questions about college, and (6) envisioning one’s future. (L. Dutkiewicz, personal communication, October 12, 2022).

Austin ISD incorporates a broad view of SEL competencies which include student-level SEL characteristics that explore students’ perceptions of their school climate. Their evaluation plan asks whether students in intervention schools feel safer in their school community or report being more likely to have an adult they can confide in than students in the control schools. Yet potential impacts do not end at the student level; equal attention is given to school-wide climate and policies such as disciplinary removals and emergency placements. The Austin ISD approach adapts SEL competencies to develop a positive school climate in a way that shifts the focus from the development of individual competencies to the inclusion of individual perceptions of the environment and institutional-level interactions and policies.

### **Expert Tips:**

- Allow a space in the planning process for parents, students, staff, and the broader community to inform the conceptualization of SEL competencies.
- Recognize students (including alumni) as a critical asset, bringing their voices and experiences to the forefront of planning, defining, and implementing the work.

### **Insight 3: Expanding adult SEL skills and changing school culture is essential for effectively building students’ SEL capacities.**

Students develop SEL skills and practices within a broader community supported by adults, thus facilitating adult SEL competencies and practices is an essential step in facilitating social and emotional growth in children (Hurd, & Deutsch, 2017; Jagers et al., 2019; McClelland et al. 2017). Jagers et al. (2019) note that the benefits of helping adults grow their own SEL skills are numerous. It shifts the power dynamic between adults and students, to create partnerships for mutual growth and identity development. This allows students the benefit of having freedom and autonomy to work on understanding their own abilities and skills facilitated by an adult who has done the same work for themselves. It also provides a foundation for a caring and supportive environment in which students and adults develop trusting, high-quality relationships. In our conversations with grantees, it became clear that there is no standard approach to how adult SEL skills are cultivated. The EIR projects highlighted below, each take a tailored approach, uniquely designed to meet the needs of their community, to developing adult SEL skills.

**“If we can begin to create a strong culture of SEL amongst adults and in the school climate, then that will filter down to our classrooms and individual students.”**

*–J. Prindle, personal communication, October 6, 2022*

**Employ local social workers to build adult SEL capacities.**

Trusting relationships and a caring school culture are core features of [PREP's](#) to counteract trauma that many students in alternative schools carry from adverse life experiences and repeated messages that they are not valued and do not belong in school. To grow these relationships, the project team noted that every adult who interacts with students in the school must be trained in SEL competencies and develop the empathy and self-awareness needed to be effective advisors and mentors. PREP enlists certified school social workers to develop adult SEL skills and practices and help staff understand their personal strengths, build awareness of implicit biases, identify opportunities for growth, and learn practices to support SEL development in their students. Dr. Legters notes, "It was clear that if we were going to have the culture of care and respect that we need in our schools then adult social and emotional learning had to happen," (N. Legters, personal communication, October 6, 2022).



**Building adult SEL skills should include the project team.** Austin ISD's whole community approach begins with an adult-first approach to teaching students SEL skills. The project began with the project team engaging in restorative chats and circles. Once, as a team, they felt comfortable and capable with their own SEL growth and development, they began implementing with adults at various campuses in the district. Sarah Johnson shared, "I cannot teach children social-emotional learning, I cannot teach children cultural proficiency, I cannot be culturally responsive until I build my personal capacity in all of those areas. Additionally, understanding my own identity and the ways that it may enhance or can conflict and possibly cause harm in a situation," (S. Johnson, personal communication, October 5, 2022).

**Leverage dedicated SEL coaches to build adult SEL practices.** The [New Teacher Center \(NTC\)](#) aims to close the achievement gap and increase the effectiveness of teachers through dedicated SEL coaching. The [Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools \(MNPS\)](#)'s [EIR-funded program](#) aims to scale up the Pyramid Model, which helps teachers engage in behaviors that build high-quality supportive environments for young learners. Their model includes a focus on classroom practices and methods of family engagement. Both EIR-funded SEL innovations utilize dedicated SEL-focused coaching to build teacher knowledge and practice.

NTC's approach is predicated upon the idea that adults who serve students need support to identify and implement practices in the classroom to build students' SEL competencies and learning. The project provides high-quality, job-embedded coaching to support teachers in creating challenging, engaging, persevering, and caring classrooms. "Adults cannot cultivate competencies in students that they themselves do not have," reflected Jeff Homan, NTC's Vice President, Program Design & Innovation, and EIR Project Director (personal communication, September 30, 2022). Recognizing that building adult SEL knowledge and skills is integral to student success, NTC's model is focused on teachers' deep professional growth and learning sustained over time. Dedicated SEL coaches work directly with teachers to build both their foundational understanding of SEL and their skills at



implementing SEL-building activities and practices in their classrooms. Homan explains that coaching to support classroom implementation and practices is key; it is not enough for the adults to simply understand the material. “You have to start with adults and the adults have to engage in explicit practice,” (J. Homan, personal communication, September 30, 2022).

[Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools \(MNPS\)](#) recognizes that teachers cannot implement the SEL-focused Pyramid Model and curriculum without dedicated coaching to support their SEL skill development. When asked about the importance of supporting teachers’ effective implementation of the model Dr. Mary Louise Hemmeter, Project Co-Director, shared, “The pyramid model is about your classroom design, your schedule, and your routine. You can’t test it if the teacher can’t do it,” (M. L. Hemmeter, personal communication, October 12, 2022). She added that providing dedicated coaching provides teachers the knowledge and skills they need to implement the model with fidelity while at the same time tailoring their practices and approaches to meet the SEL needs of their individual students.

### **Expert Tips:**

- Consider involving trained, expert community members (e.g., social workers) and transformative SEL leaders to facilitate adult SEL support and training.
- Dedicate time for teachers and other adults to master their own SEL skills and practices to support them in effectively embedding these practices in their classrooms and interactions with students.
- Be transparent with adults and students that these skills can be learned through dedication, effort, and perseverance. This can help create a shared community goal.

### **Insight 4. There is a clear need for additional metrics of success to understand the impact of SEL programs and to advance our measurement of SEL.**

While surveys of student skills are the standard in education research, these measures are often limited, challenging to implement in schools for a variety of reasons, and not directly aligned with the programmatic goals. Grantees described challenges in utilizing valid and reliable measures of SEL competencies as their index of whether their program was effective. For these reasons, they have implemented novel metrics to measure the success of their program using three different approaches to conceptualize program impacts beyond standard measures.

**Use of focus groups to understand impact and reach.** Understanding how to measure the impacts of ground-breaking innovation in restorative practice using circles, has been central to the conversations between program developers and evaluators in the Austin ISD’s project. Orrin Murray notes a promising outcome that emerged from student survey data. Students in schools where restorative circles and practices were used “feel more of a connection to adults in those buildings than their peers” in non-intervention schools (O. Murray, personal communication, October 5, 2022). However, recognizing that there are likely additional impacts that do not show up on a survey, Dr. Murray conducted focus groups and interviews with students and lead teachers at restorative practice schools at the end of an academic year. Dr. Murray recounted a story shared by one student during the focus groups that exemplified the impact the program had on the student’s approach to dealing

with conflict. A young participant who was having trouble with his older brothers at home expressed that he wanted to engage in a circle with his brothers to solve their conflict. “This young man felt safe enough with this thing that Austin ISD was providing him, to take it home and use it in the kind of context in which he has seen it be used,” (O. Murray, personal communication, October 5, 2022). The power of Austin ISD’s innovation is clearly captured through this story and likely would have not been visible from survey data of student competencies and experiences.

**Use of student check-ins to gauge progress.** From the start, [PREP](#) program developers recognized that traditional measures like daily attendance and growth on standardized test scores were not optimal metrics in alternative settings and could actually be counterproductive for their students and school culture. Specific challenges to using traditional measures in alternative schools include fluid enrollment, non-traditional students, and low participation rates. Fluid enrollment creates a problem with standardized measurements because “we couldn’t get the same students responding in the fall and the spring on the MAP tests to actually measure individual growth,” (N. Legters, personal communication, October 6, 2022). Attendance can be an unreliable, and even unfair measure of engagement for students who are teen parents, need to work, have unstable housing, and shoulder other adult concerns that take precedence over school. Low participation rates of students in evaluation activities, Dr. Legters explains, also derive from students’ psychosocial aversion to judgment and failure that they carry from harmful experiences in mainstream education. PREP students need a different approach where they see and experience the value of assessments in their learning journey. One of the most valuable measurement tools PREP created was a student screener or check-in protocol. “A screener or check-in is a way we can collect information from students that is immediately actionable and useful in service of deepening a relationship with that student and providing them with the support that actually addresses something that they are immediately concerned with,” (N. Legters, personal communication, October 6, 2022). The check-in also taps into and builds on the measurable SEL competencies of self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and healthy relationships. Students acknowledge their priorities and are asked to understand their needs to help them show up for school and reach out for support. In these ways, check-ins build students’ agency and voice. Short-term formative feedback and assessments directly related to learning an academic skill or competency that the student values serve a similar purpose.

**Think beyond traditional measures.** As the field of SEL innovation and research advances, we need novel approaches to measuring SEL capabilities in students, teachers, and school-wide. For example, the [PREP](#) program uses strong connections with school staff to keep students engaged in learning. The project gauges the strength of those connections by asking students about the degree to which they feel there is at least one adult in the building with whom the student truly connects. PREP also tracks persistence in schoolwork to understand how the program helps students feel engaged or excited about an activity or class. Persistence is measured by the number of standards a student demonstrates through a project or credits earned through a work-based learning experience for example. Persistence is also demonstrated in instances when students connect and follow through with mental health support or extracurricular activities that enrich their experience and build skills. The program also collects four-year and extended (five and six year) graduation rates and the number of students who were enrolled in the spring and return to school the following fall, a measure called the “stick rate.” While the strength of interpersonal connections and levels of competency and persistence may be variables that don’t fit neatly into any specific SEL framework, they fit perfectly into the student development goals of this project.

### Expert Tips:

- Begin development of novel measures by first identifying existing SEL interventions in schools.
- Use focus groups to excavate findings of experience and competencies that might be missed by survey data.
- Leverage student check-ins to build relationships and gather information from students that can be acted upon immediately.

### **Insight 5. Decision-makers must set tailored and community-driven SEL as a priority.**

Conversations with grantees made it clear that their innovative approaches were feasible, in part, because high-level decision-makers recognized the importance of these programs and championed the development of tailored SEL approaches within their districts. Without SEL set as a district-level priority, such a program would face numerous implementation barriers (see Adam, Gagnier, and Jones-Manson, 2022 for a discussion of the benefits of champions and advocates in education research).

As a Local Education Agency (LEA), Austin ISD's leadership has been instrumental in advancing SEL practices tailored to meet the district's needs. In 2010, their leadership became a part of [CASEL's Collaborating Districts Initiative \(CDI\)](#) with a goal to shape the district's staff culture, family and community partnerships, and student outcomes through community-focused SEL. Austin ISD was one of the first urban districts to support the whole child through the implementation of SEL programs throughout the district. To ensure their approach met the needs of the district's students, leadership chose to leverage their existing Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to provide tiers of support for all students and target interventions to support struggling students. Austin ISD's 10-year focus on the district-wide integration of tailored SEL programs, is documented in [this implementation guide](#), which describes their journey, important lessons learned, and tips for other districts to support implementation. Leadership's strong commitment to a tailored-SEL approach paved the way for programs such as Austin ISD's current EIR-funded work.

Decision-makers in [Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools \(MNPS\)](#), an LEA, have been deeply invested in the development of the Pyramid Model for over 20 years. Inta Sanford, EIR Project Manager, recounts the history of their work, "The initiative started through our Director of Schools at the time, and we've had several Directors of Schools since then, but they have all understood the importance of social-emotional learning. Now, each Director had their own capacity of understanding, but they all valued social-emotional learning." As Ms. Sanford notes, MNPS leadership has been collaborating with researchers for the better part of 20 years. This partnership led to the tailored development, implementation, and subsequent refinement of the pyramid model used in their current EIR grant. To ensure the approach met the needs of MNPS, school leadership curated a plethora of workshops, implementation guides, and coaching models. This extensive building and preparation included numerous professionals in the field bringing various skill sets to the project to develop a model that is both standardized in terms of protocols while at the same time allowing teachers to tailor their

approaches to meet the needs of their classroom (M. L. Hemmeter, personal communication, October 12, 2022). This deep partnership and collaboration has positioned MNPS as a leader in the field. “Since we have been doing the work for so long and it is expanding, we have a lot of districts that do reach out to us trying to get more information about how they can develop and grow their tailored SEL work,” (I. Sanford, personal communication, October 12, 2022).

### Expert Tips:

- Staff turnover is inevitable. Hire key staff who value SEL.
- Develop strong research-practitioner partnerships to support the evaluation and scaling of effective practices tailored to the district’s need.

## Looking Forward

The five insights from the field shared in this cross-project summary align well with a broader movement in the field of SEL research to ensure it is inclusive and implemented to support all students. For example, in 2019, with the aim of fostering more equitable education environments, CASEL developed [Transformative SEL](#), a form of SEL intended to promote equity and excellence among children, young people, and adults (Jagers et al, 2019). The heart of this approach is a recognition that approaches to SEL must help all students and adults cultivate the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to critically examine the root causes of inequities and develop collaborative solutions to these inequities. The transformative framework shares many parallels with the insights offered in this paper. For example, it elevates the critical role that adults and the broader community play in developing students’ capacities and skills. Additionally, the Transformative SEL framework illustrates that one-size approaches to SEL are unlikely to build strong, respectful, lasting relationships

that disrupt inequities and support equitable learning opportunities for all students. Finally, it articulates the need for broad definitions and metrics of what SEL skills entail and how they are measured. The emergence of Transformative SEL and the insights shared in this paper highlight the need for continued efforts to deepen our collective knowledge of what works for whom, why, and in what context as it relates to SEL in education. Our aim is that the insights articulated by EIR grantees spur conversations and action within the broader SEL community to continue to advance our understanding of SEL and its effective implementation.



## Want to Know More?

[Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Through an Equity Lens](#)

The Education Trust

[Navigating SEL From the Inside Out](#)

The EASEL Lab at The Harvard Graduate School of Education

[How Does SEL Support Educational Equity and Excellence?](#)

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

[Transformative SEL](#)

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

## Appendix A: Interview participants

Grantee Interviewee(s)	Project	Geo-location Type	Program Focus	Program Description
<p><i>New Teacher Center</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeff Homan</li> <li>• Katrina Laguarda</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Advancing Social and Emotional Learning Integrated with Rigorous Content through a Whole-School Professional Learning Model</a></p>	<p>Alabama, Minnesota, New York</p> <p><i>Rural/Non-rural</i></p>	<p>SEL competencies for underserved students</p>	<p>SEL-trained coaches work with teachers to identify feasible and culturally relevant practices to build student SEL competencies.</p>
<p><i>School District 1J Multnomah County</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Nettie Legters</li> <li>• Dr. Julie Prindle</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">PREP: Personalized, Relevant, Engaged for Postsecondary</a></p>	<p>Portland, OR</p> <p><i>Non-rural</i></p>	<p>Student engagement</p>	<p>A holistic approach to learning for alternative high school</p>
<p><i>IPS Enterprises, LLC</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lauren Dutkiewicz</li> <li>• Rachel Howell</li> <li>• Dr. Christina Steiner</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">IDEA C3: Culture, Character, and College</a></p>	<p>Rio Grande Valley, Austin, San Antonio, TX</p> <p><i>Non-rural</i></p>	<p>College-going identity</p>	<p>A new curriculum focused on developing character traits essential for college success</p>
<p><i>Austin Independent School District</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sarah Johnson</li> <li>• Dr. Orrin Murray</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Supporting Behavior and Improving School Climate through the Elementary to Middle School Transition: Whole School Restorative Practices in Austin Independent School District (AISD)</a></p>	<p>Austin, TX</p> <p><i>Non-rural</i></p>	<p>Restorative practices</p>	<p>School-wide <a href="#">restorative practices</a> focused on relationships and creating shared values, through restorative chats circles</p>
<p><i>Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inta Sanford</li> <li>• Dr. Mary Louise Hemmeter</li> <li>• Dr. Erika Gaylor</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Metro Nashville Public Schools Scaling Up Pyramid Model (PM) Implementation in Preschool and Kindergarten Classrooms</a></p>	<p>Nashville, TN</p> <p><i>Non-rural</i></p>	<p>Social-behavioral competencies for high needs Pre-K and K students</p>	<p>The model helps teachers engage in behaviors that build high-quality supportive environments</p>

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