Strategies Educators Can Use to Promote Social and Emotional Learning

1. **Teach by example.** Model social and emotional competence in your interactions with others. Focus upon problem solving rather than blame. When conflicts arise, handle them quickly and discreetly. Treat students, colleagues, and parents with respect, caring, and fairness.

2. **Engage students as active partners in creating a classroom atmosphere where caring, responsibility, trust, and commitment to learning thrive.** Many teachers use class meetings as a tool for building a sense of community and for establishing shared agreements, rules, and expectations. Students are given an opportunity to share their personal experiences and opinions. As a result of sharing, students learn about one another. The opportunity for sharing builds respect, empathy, and a sense of community.

3. **Weave unifying themes such as social awareness, ethical decision-making, and conflict management across lessons and classrooms.** Instead of teaching isolated and fragmented Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons, identify broad themes and integrate them into lessons across subjects and teachers. Use consistent language and strategies to address topics and cue students across all school settings (e.g., classrooms, lunchroom, sports, bus, after-school programs, etc.).

4. **Utilize a variety of methods to instruct and model social and emotional competencies.** Methods and approaches may vary depending on students’ developmental levels, the needs and interests of students, lesson goals, and teacher style. Actively engage students through a variety of methods such as: storytelling and biography; group discussion; rehearsal and practice; self-reflection and goal setting; artistic expression; play; and cooperative and small group learning. Provide students opportunities to rehearse and practice new patterns of thoughts and behaviors.

5. **Integrate social, emotional, and academic competencies.** Draw upon literature to address universal themes such as friendship, honesty, loyalty, and tolerance. Utilize lessons to illustrate perspective-taking, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.

6. **Develop social decision-making and problem solving strategies.** Help students to understand signs of ones’ own and others’ feelings by accurately labeling and expressing feelings. Use cues from faces, postures, and vocalizations. This strategy can occur following social interactions in the classroom and on the playground, through literature discussions, and in historical contexts.

7. **Promote self-control skills to accurately process information in social situations.** Use role-playing and discussions to teach students to approach others in difficult situations without provoking anger or annoyance. By recognizing others’ perspectives, giving and receiving help and criticism, and recognizing and eliciting trust and praise from others, students can learn to navigate the landmines of difficult social interactions.