What are the Key Features of High-Quality Standards for SEL?*

1. **Free-standing, comprehensive** standards for SEL are important because they establish social and emotional development as a clear priority in education. Comprehensive SEL standards include developmental benchmarks across five SEL domains (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making skills). High-quality, free-standing SEL standards and benchmarks provide simple, concise, consistent statements about what students should know and be able to do that are grounded in research.
   - See Illinois example of how preschool standards for SEL are organized beginning on page 93: http://www.isbe.state.il.us/earlychi/pdf/early_learning_standards.pdf
   - See Illinois example of K-12 standards and performance indicators for SEL: http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm
   - See Kansas Example of K-12 standards for SEL (and character development) at http://www.ksde.org/Agency/DivisionofLearningServices/CareerStandardsandAssessmentServices/ContentAreaM-Z/SchoolCounseling/Social,Emotional,andCharacterDevelopment.aspx
   - See Pennsylvania example for preschool through high school standards for SEL: http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/Student_Interpersonal_Skills_Standards.pdf
2. Ideally SEL standards should also be **integrated** and reflected in standards from other subject areas.
   - See example of how SEL is reflected in Common Core State Standards: http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/6/1
   - See example of how SEL is also reflected in National Health Education Standards: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sher/standards/4.htm
3. Standards are more likely to influence educational outcomes when **they also provide guidance on how adults can support students through teaching practices**.
   - See Idaho example of "Caregiver Strategies" under Social and Emotional Development Goals: http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Children/IELeGuidelines/Idaho_Early_Learning_eGuidelines.htm
   - See Washington State example of "Ideas to Try with Children" on page 72: http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/development/docs/Guidelines.pdf
   - See Kansas examples of "Instructional Examples" at http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/CSAS/Content%20Area%20(M-Z)/School%20Counseling/Soc_Emot_Char_Dev/PersonalDev_InstrExamples.pdf and http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/CSAS/Content%20Area%20(M-Z)/School%20Counseling/Soc_Emot_Char_Dev/Social%20Dev_InstrExamples.pdf

4. Standards are strengthened when **they also provide guidance on how to create a positive learning environment and school climate** essential to social and emotional development.
    • See California discussion of well-designed environment (preschool) beginning on page 4: http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/preschoollf.pdf
    • See Indiana discussion of positive environment (preschool) on page 11: http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/curriculum/indianafoundations-february-2012.pdf
    • See Illinois example for creating positive learning environment (k-12): http://www.isbe.state.il.us/learningsupports/pdfs/learning-indicators/CL7.pdf
5. Standards are enhanced when they also provide guidance on how to make instruction **culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate**.
    • See Alaska discussion of "Supporting Individual Differences" on page 54: http://www.eed.state.ak.us/publications/EarlyLearningGuidelines.pdf
    • See Idaho discussion of "Cultural Context" in Essential Practices: http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Children/IELeGuidelines/Idaho_Early_Learning_eGuidelines.htm
    • See Washington State discussion of "Children Can Learn More Than One Language" on page 8: http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/development/docs/Guidelines.pdf
6. Finally, standards are more likely to successfully impact educational practice when they provide tools that **support high-quality implementation**, including evidence-based programs, assessment, and professional development
    • **Evidence-Based Programs.** See CASEL example of evidence-based preschool and elementary programs: http://www.casel.org/guide.
    • **Assessment.** See Indiana discussion of assessment on pages 7 and 8: http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/curriculum/indianafoundations-february-2012.pdf
        • For preschool and elementary school measures of SEL, see the CASEL Compendium of assessment measures at http://www.casel.org/library/2013/11/4/compendium-of-preschool-through-elementary-school-socialemotional-learning-and-associated-assessment-measures
        • For middle school measures, see the Raikes Foundation Report on Social-Emotional Learning Assessment Measures at http://raikesfoundation.org/Documents/SELTools.pdf
    • **Professional Development.** See New Jersey discussion of Professional Development (and assessment) on pages 30-34: http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/guide/impguidelines.pdf .

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*These features are based on CASEL's review of the research literatures on learning standards and SEL. Examples from states and other sources were identified as part of CASEL's State Scan of Learning Standards for SEL. This handout was prepared for CASEL by Linda Dusenbury, 1/8/2014.