

# SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND ACADEMIC LEARNING

## DENVER'S INITIATIVE FOR YOUTH SUCCESS

Together, the Denver Afterschool Alliance and Denver Public Schools are making Social, Emotional and Academic Learning (SEAL) a priority—and consequently, cultivating positive learning environments. Denver was one of six cities selected in 2017 to participate in The Wallace Foundation's *Partnerships for Social and Emotional Learning Initiative*. Currently, six elementary Phase 1 sites are working to ensure that all day school and afterschool learners (including youth and all adults who interact with them) work in partnership to create culturally empowering spaces for everyone to **learn, grow and thrive—socially, emotionally and academically—in school, out of school and in life.**

**EVERY CHILD SUCCEEDS.** The SEAL Initiative is one strategy to support achieving Denver's *Whole Child* vision, a DPS commitment to providing equitable and inclusive environments where students are challenged, engaged, supported, safe, healthy, and socially and emotionally intelligent. SEAL will eventually reach schools throughout the district, and strategies are carefully being crafted to meet the unique needs of each community.

*Social, emotional and academic learning is the process through which youth and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.*



**COMPETENCIES.** SEAL work centers around three competencies that are observed and intentionally practiced in support of both youth and adult development.

**Self Awareness and Self Management:** The self-discipline to reflect on and regulate our own emotions, thoughts and values to better develop cultural identity, a healthy self-concept, set goals for ourselves and take responsibility for our behavior.

**Social Awareness and Relationship Skills:** The ability to identify and recognize diverse emotions, perspectives, cultural backgrounds and societal norms and access strategies and interpersonal skills to build productive relationships.

**Decision Making:** The ability to use a critical thinking process to analyze information, situations, norms and context to make decisions based on the identified impact to self and others.



**Social-emotional skills increase academic learning and improve long-term success in life.**

**THE PLAN.** Every day, youth interact with countless adults who help shape their success—bus drivers, teachers, afterschool providers, paraprofessionals, family and more. These adults play a unique role in supporting the development of young people's social-emotional skills. The SEAL Initiative builds and reinforces systems to support **all adults** in:

MODELING AND EXPLICITLY TEACHING SEAL SKILLS · CREATING A SEAL-RICH CULTURE AND CLIMATE  
FULLY INTEGRATING SEAL INTO DAY SCHOOL AND AFTERSCHOOL COMMUNITIES



Long term, the goal is to **infuse evidence-based SEAL throughout all grade levels in DPS schools and afterschool and summer programs citywide.** To achieve that, the initiative is utilizing a smaller-scale systems approach with comprehensive data collection, analysis and process-building.

Whether it's in or out of school, **learning happens 365 days a year.**

**HOW WE'LL DO IT.** To support this work over the implementation period, the SEAL Initiative will provide Phase 1 site teams with:

- Necessary **funding** and **technical assistance**
- Ongoing **training, meeting** and **planning** opportunities
- On-site **SEAL Coaches** dedicated to supporting professional learning, leadership teams and **continuous quality improvement efforts**
- Tools and resources for **professional development, SEAL curriculum** options and **competencies**
- Parent and youth **engagement support**
- Opportunities for **collaboration** and dialogue



*Denver's schools and afterschool and summer programs exist to support the success of youth. **Integrating social-emotional skill building into these environments is fundamental** to achieving that success!*