

Dear Members of the Metuchen Board of Education,

Metuchen schools have always proudly supported the implementation and development of Social Emotional Learning skills within the school district and community as a whole. Your guidance and leadership was an essential part in the implementation of Social Emotional Learning as a key component in our current educational approach and inclusion in curriculum. Metuchen students have gained invaluable skills from SEL lessons and district wide programs allowing them to navigate these challenging and uncertain times, but we recognize these skills go beyond just students. As a committee we have worked closely with staff across all grade levels and buildings. Further, we have facilitated a family engagement night and involved the larger community by creating an SEL-based podcast and website. We would like your assistance to continue our prioritization of SEL in our schools. To further establish a focus on SEL for our young people and educators, we respectfully submit the attached resolution.

Educators and students are being called on to demonstrate empathy and resilience and utilize their collective resolve to strengthen our schools and communities. These social and emotional skills offer a powerful means to support and educate each other. It's more important than ever for our local leaders to prioritize SEL opportunities for students and educators alike.

Research overwhelmingly demonstrates that in classrooms and out-of-school settings, SEL bolsters young people's resiliency and sense of belonging, reduces behavioral issues, and increases school attendance and academic achievement. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as "the process through which children and adults identify, understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions."

SEL promotes skills needed to more fully engage in academic learning—whether in-person or at a distance. For educators, SEL helps them practice self-care, resilience and empathy while fostering safe, equitable and welcoming school communities. These communities might now be situated online, but they should continue to focus on students' strengths, necessary tiered supports, and positive relationship development.

To further demonstrate a prioritization and broaden the impact of SEL within the Metuchen community during this critical time, we offer the following resolutions for the Metuchen Board of Education to adopt in order to better foster the development of SEL in all Metuchen residents.

WHEREAS young people with strong social emotional skills are better able to cope with challenges, build protective factors for mental wellness challenges and resiliency from

trauma, engage academically, and experience long-term social, professional, and academic benefits;

WHEREAS, schools, families and the wider community must be engaged to enhance the strength, depth, and pace of acquisition of SEL competencies;

WHEREAS social emotional learning is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions;

WHEREAS, SEL competencies develop throughout our lives and are essential to success in our schools, workplaces, homes, and communities and allow individuals to contribute meaningfully to society;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Metuchen Board of Education encourages schools to implement SEL and to conduct ongoing training of staff to ensure SEL implementation is culturally responsive and equitably meets the needs of all students. In addition, the district will recognize the second Friday of March as International SEL Day, beginning this March 11th, 2022, and encourage participation in SEL-related activities.

The members of Metuchen School District's Social Emotional Character Development committee promise to aid and support these resolutions alongside you through events and activities that will reach all members of the Metuchen staff and student body. If you have any questions about this request or the sample resolutions, please call me at 732-321-8777. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

On behalf of the Social Emotional Character Development Committee, MSD:

Sincerely,

Scott Delaney, Brooke Kirschner, and Lisa Levin