Social and emotional learning isn’t just a piece of the plate, it is the plate.

- Trish Shafer
  MTSS/SEL Coordinator

**Why Washoe Selected Evo Social & Emotional**

**Evo SEL is an Assessment and Intervention System that is well-suited to large-scale, universal screening of students for social and emotional competencies.**

“We got a lot of criticism when we first launched our SEL program because we didn’t base it around a specific SEL curriculum,” Shafer explains. “Yes, the direct instructional piece is important, but we wanted to be very careful to not fall into the ‘initiative fatigue’ trap where a new program is introduced, becomes the biggest rage but then quickly falls by the wayside.” She goes on to explain that the district wanted to take a step back and create a program that could be systematically integrated into every area within the district. The major components include:
Components of Washoe's Specialized SEL Integration

4 STEPS TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL SEL PROGRAM

STEP 1 STRONG DISTRICT LEADERSHIP
Washoe has created a strong SEL culture that extends from top district leadership to each and every teacher and counselor. “Our district is unique in that every school – grades preK to 12 – is involved in the SEL initiative,” Shafer comments. “We’ve achieved such widespread buy-in at every level in part because the district has made it part of their strategic plan. We’ve worked very hard to create a common language around SEL, and educators are made to realize that social and emotional learning isn’t just a piece of the plate, it is the plate.”

STEP 2 SYSTEMATIC INTEGRATION
Integrating SEL into standards is a critical component of Washoe’s SEL initiative and is a lynchpin to the program’s success. District leadership has also worked hard to define how SEL partners with general instruction in core content areas; establish concrete ways to foster SEL and classroom management; make sure all staff members understand what SEL truly is and how teachers can incorporate social and emotional competencies into all areas of instruction; and build effective systems of accountability.

STEP 3 COMPREHENSIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Washoe uses a train-the-trainer model to minimize costs and maximize impact. An SEL expert is designated at each school and participates in an initial 3-day training session. Support is provided by the MTSS/SEL Department. Training continues throughout the school year and includes quarterly supplemental sessions, on-site coaching sessions, classroom observations, after-school sessions, and also book clubs and parent courses. SEL Leadership Teams are responsible for implementation and are comprised of 5-40 school staff.

STEP 4 QUALITY ASSESSMENTS
SEL assessments are crucial to the success of Washoe’s SEL program. “We’ve created an incredibly data-friendly culture at Washoe,” Shaffer explains. “We are very careful to make sure our staff understands the data and how it can be used as a flashlight to drive decisions, provide insight, guide instruction, and so much more.” For instance, the district uses a risk index system to determine whether students are on-track for graduation and to guide decisions around policy and practice. Washoe has also partnered with CASEL to develop a social and emotional competence assessment tool for grades 5-11. Additionally, schools can also choose to use the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) for K-8 and SEL web for K-3 to gain valuable insight into students’ social and emotional competency levels.

Ready To Take SEL Further?

Districts looking to create a new SEL program or strengthen an existing one can learn valuable lessons from Washoe’s model.

Any successful and sustainable SEL program should include strong district leadership and integration of SEL into the strategic plan, careful and systemic integration, comprehensive professional development, and quality assessments.

Contact Aperture Education to learn how the DESSA can support your district’s SEL initiative and provide essential data and reporting on your students’ social and emotional competencies.