



Aligning Social Emotional Learning Curriculum and Assessment at Distinctive Schools

We will innovate, trailblaze, and collaboratively lead a public education transformation that positively impacts the greater education community.

Distinctive Schools uses insights from SEL competency assessment to guide SEL instruction through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL NETWORK

Distinctive Schools is a 501(c)(3) non-profit network of public charter schools serving children from historically marginalized communities in Chicago, Illinois, and Detroit, Michigan. Its mission is to support each child in becoming an engaged and curious learner, a confident self-advocate, and a creative problem-solver by setting high expectations and nurturing a positive culture that honors diversity, collaboration, and optimism.

THE CHALLENGE

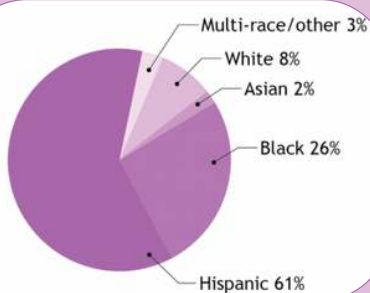
Leading up to the 2020-2021 school year, Distinctive Schools planned to introduce an SEL curriculum and began assessing students' SEL strengths and needs across all campuses. They entered into an intentional process that engaged multiple stakeholders to advise the selection of an SEL curriculum and assessment that aligned with each other and the CASEL framework. In addition, they identified ease of administration and strong partner support as essential criteria.

THE SOLUTION

Distinctive Schools' SEL Design Team selected Move This World, an SEL curriculum centered on interactive videos, movement, creative expression, and SELweb, a web-based measure of key social-emotional skills associated with success in school and life. The team was immediately drawn to SELweb because it measures students' SEL competency directly instead of through a survey of student or teacher perceptions. In addition, SELweb and Move This World address similar SEL skills, are easy to implement and offer strong support for teachers and administrators.

During the 2020-2021 school year, Distinctive Schools implemented Move This World and administered SELweb in the fall and spring at all nine campuses. SELweb data was reviewed by their Network Director of Data and in dedicated data dashboard meetings at each campus.

The Distinctive Schools team applies SELweb data to identify campus, grade-level, and classroom trends. They also apply SELweb data to create a whole-child picture of each student, which they use to select specific strategies to support student achievement. In other words, SELweb plays a central role in the Distinctive Schools' MTSS (multi-tiered systems of support) framework. Additionally, teachers leverage what they learn about their classrooms from SELweb to decide how to use Move This World resources to build on students' strengths and address students' needs.



13% Special Education

19% English Language Learners

85% Free/Reduced Lunch



"SELweb provides quantitative data to guide teams in designing supports for students. It allows teachers at a classroom and small group level to layer additional SEL aligned lessons to strengthen specific SEL competencies."

Sarah Schielke Payne,
Regional MTSS Manager

THE RESULTS

Distinctive Schools' campuses transitioned back and forth between in-person and remote learning during the 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff worked to ensure frequent touchpoints with all students and consistent SEL instruction as much as possible. Despite the pandemic's challenges to their students and families, assessment data showed that students maintained their SEL skills. Although they had hoped to see gains, maintaining SEL skills through these challenges validated that their SEL curriculum supported students in the way they intended.

SELweb data has enabled Distinctive Schools teachers to broaden the conversation regarding students' strengths and needs to include a whole-child view. SELweb data has been particularly helpful in discussions with students and families. When teachers share individual social-emotional competency data in conversations with students and their families, they can celebrate their strengths and support their growth in areas of need.

SELweb has also helped Distinctive Schools strengthen their SEL programming. They adhere to the Move This World scope and sequence, and they use SELweb data to guide the selection of supplemental lessons and activities based on identified student needs. In addition, SELweb has provided Distinctive Schools staff with a common language for SEL, helped them grow in their knowledge of SEL, and enhanced their comfort in discussing SEL competency data and supporting students appropriately.

NEXT STEPS

In its second year of implementation, Distinctive Schools is still facing challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic and has yet to have a "normal" school year. Still, they continue implementing Move This World and guiding SEL instruction with SELweb data collected in the fall and the spring. The key goals of this work are to see decreases in discipline incidents, increases in family engagement, higher attendance rates, higher high school graduation rates, and strong culture and relationships in the coming years. Additionally, they expect this work to lead to retention gains in both students and staff.

"By analyzing the results of these SELWeb Assessments, correlating the SEL needs with behavior and discipline trends, and collaborating with job-alike peers on how to help students develop those skills, we're in a much better position to hold ourselves accountable for helping students grow in more ways than just academically."

Anthony Claypool, Director of Assessment & Data



INFORM INSTRUCTION WITH HIGH-QUALITY SEL ASSESSMENT DATA

Contact us at info@xsel-labs.com for a free consultation to explore your SEL assessment options today! Learn more at xsel-labs.com.

ABOUT US

xSEL Labs supports teacher success and student social-emotional development by providing reliable, easy-to-use SEL assessments. Our core assessment, SELweb, is a web-based system designed to directly assess key social-emotional skills that are associated with success in school and life and that are the targets of evidence-based social-emotional learning programs.