

Health Education: Back to School - Fall, 2021



The Health Education Department is starting the school year strong! We have a couple changes and a lot of great work established already. Some key changes include receiving additional funding from our [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) grantor](#). Seattle is one of 27 school districts across the country to receive CDC funding, which supports efforts related to sexual health education and services, as well as safe and supportive environments.

In July, we received additional CDC funds which are primarily being used to purchase Social Emotional Learning (SEL) instructional materials for all preK-12 schools. We will soon welcome a secretarial support staff person to our team.

One more staff change: Kai Kunkel is now our Social Emotional Learning Project-Program Manager. Kai will still be the point person for elementary SEL efforts and will be our lead in connecting SEL initiatives inter-departmentally and with community partners. Congrats, Kai!



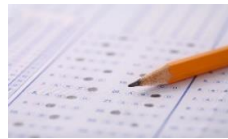
Social Emotional Learning:

As we return to school during this challenging time, the social and emotional needs of students, staff, and families weigh heavily on our minds. We are still experiencing the impacts of the pandemic, impacts of police brutality and systemic racism, which students, staff, and families carry with them. As [Dr. Dena Simmons](#) points out, "Social Emotional Learning cannot cure racism." What it can do is begin to create systems, structures and skills to help young people and adults recognize and regulate feelings, recognize individual and cultural difference, and build empathy to understand various perspectives. SEL instruction can help model a loving, joyous approach to learning while welcoming in all learners. For more about SEL click [here](#).



Support for LGBTQ+ Students

Every year, as school starts back up, we see an increase in requests for name and gender marker changes. Our transgender and non-binary students often anxiously approach a new year hoping to be welcomed into their classrooms as their full and authentic selves. Of course, kids also transition throughout the school year and there are frequently requests for support in helping make the transition smooth, seamless, and safe. Here is some guidance on [how to support LGBTQ+ students](#). For more, [click here](#).



Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Mandy LeBlanc, Healthy Schools Coordinator, is preparing to launch the [CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#). This survey will be given in-person in coordination with the WA State Healthy Youth Survey, which will be administered online this October. The YRBS is administered every other year and asks a wide range of health-related questions. Some of the [2018 data results](#) were summarized and disaggregated by race and sexual orientation. We will analyze 2021 YRBS data with the SPS research and evaluation team.



SCTG Grant

The Federal Department of Education's School Climate Transformation grant is entering its 3rd year of implementation. Maggie Cain-Starbird was hired in April to oversee all efforts of this 5-year grant. Maggie came to us after teaching at Mercer MS and working at Broadview Thomson K-8 alongside the City of Seattle's Department of Early Learning. The SCTG grant helps identified schools implement tiered supports, using a multi-systems approach. Maggie is working with behavioral health teams, community mental health partners, and school staff to improve student mental and social emotional health. Maggie spent her summer developing the year-long plans for schools and preparing for the addition of four more schools to receive grant supports. The 2021-22 school year is already rolling!