

The Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn

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Commitment to Community

Equity and Excellence

Respect and Dignity

Climate of Care

October 26th, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The social-emotional well-being and safety of our students has always been a high priority and continues to be as we navigate this school year. Beginning in November, we plan to use the *SSIS SEL Brief + Mental Health Scales* self-assessment tool to collect information. Similar to how we use universal screening tools and assessments to measure students' academic growth over time, we seek to do the same for social emotional skill areas. The information we gather will help to inform curriculum and instruction across all domains of learning and development.

What and How Are You Screening?

The SSIS Brief + Mental Health Scales are short rating scales that are completed by a student, their teacher, and their parent or guardian. Each 30 question assessment is delivered virtually and takes between approximately 10 minutes to complete. They can be administered to students (self-assessment grades 3 to 12), teachers (answering items about each student) and parents (answering items about their student(s)). We will be administering to students and parents beginning the week of November 9th, 2020 and teachers later in the school year. Due to the fact that social emotional functioning can change over time, periodic re-screening will be used to continue to monitor students' progress.

The focus of the scales is a student's social emotional learning (SEL) (including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making) and emotional behavioral concern (internalizing and externalizing). The purpose of these online assessments is as a universal screener given to all students that will identify areas of strength and emotional behavioral concerns. The social emotional learning (SEL) skills and emotional behavior concerns (EBC) measured by the *SSIS SEL Brief + Mental Health Scales* are described below:

Social Emotional Learning Competencies

Self-Awareness – Recognizes one's emotions and their influence on behavior.

Self-Management - Regulates one's emotions and behavior in social situations.

Social Awareness – Takes perspective of others and can empathize with them.

Relationship Skills – Makes and maintains healthy and respectful relationships with others.

Responsible Decision Making – Makes good choices and respects rules and others.

Emotional Behavior Concerns

Internalizing Concerns - Negative emotions and behaviors directed inwardly involving feeling anxious, sad, or lonely; exhibiting poor self-esteem; lack of interest or engagement with others.

Externalizing Concerns - Negative emotions and behavior directed primarily toward others involving verbal or physical aggression; poor control of temper; arguing; actively excluding others.

How will the information be used?

This measure of students' social and emotional functioning is aligned with state Social Emotional Learning standards and provides results used to guide strength-focused instruction for all students and potentially preventive support for any students experiencing emotional behavior concerns. We would not use this information to diagnose your child or find them eligible for any specific programming. This brief rating scale is not a comprehensive diagnostic measure for classification of difficulties or disorders. Rather, it is meant to efficiently “check-in” to help us better understand how our students are functioning, how effective our programming is, and how we can better meet the needs of all students.

What Are The Next Steps?

Please review the information shared and reach out to staff with any questions. You and your student will be able to ‘opt out’ of the assessment and program if you wish by using the attached form. More information will be shared that includes when your student will take a self-assessment and how results will be shared with you. If you have questions, please contact your building administrators or Kate McCarthy (mccarthyk@doversherborn.org).

For more details and the research behind the *SSIS SEL Brief + Mental Health Scales*, visit www.ssiscolab.com.

THANK YOU!