

## Considerations for Mental Health and Wellness

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Social emotional learning (SEL) offers a powerful mechanism for exploring and expressing emotions, building and maintaining relationships, and supporting others, especially during stressful and anxious circumstances.

Educators should continue teaching students the five social and emotional competencies identified by [CASEL](#), which include self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness. Educators, students and families also will need support to ensure mental health and wellness.

The Kentucky Department of Education encourages local schools and districts to find ways to promote (1) the sharing and processing of emotions, (2) empathy for others, (3) consistent routines to help reduce stress and facilitate learning and (4) avenues for consistent communication and connectivity.

**Prior to making any decision, thoughtful consideration should be given to each social emotional component in order to best meet the needs of educators and individual students.** Each district will have to make decisions that are unique to their student population, faculty, staff and available resources.

In general, when making local decisions, determine:

- What's working and what's not;
- The needs;
- The challenges; and
- Resources or next steps for overcoming those challenges.

### **Local District Considerations**

- How can schools and districts find innovative ways to check in on faculty, staff, students and families to ensure mental health and wellness? How might district-vetted, FERPA compliant virtual platforms be used?
- How can schools and districts help faculty, staff, students and families cope with anxiety and/or depression as a result of the social and emotional consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How can schools and districts promote connectivity?
- How can educators support students who are out of their routines and need mental health services during this time?
- What kinds of stressors or potential trauma will families and caregivers be facing during this time that educators should be aware of? How can educators help?
- What supports do schools and districts have/need for a crisis response?

## Communication Plan/Audience

- How will this information be communicated to faculty, staff, students and families?

