

SEL Challenge FAQ's

WHAT IS THE SEL CHALLENGE?

The Social and Emotional Learning Challenge was designed to:

1. identify promising practices for building SEL skills with vulnerable adolescents and
2. develop a method for taking these practices to scale in thousands of out-of-school time (OST) settings.

The promising practices are called standards for SEL practice and the method is called the SEL Strengths Builder.

The Challenge was a partnership between expert practitioners (youth workers, social workers, teachers) delivering exemplary programs in eight unique communities, a team of researchers, and a national funder.

The findings are published in a Field Guide and website (SELpractices.org) launching in January 2016. A Technical Report describing the SEL Challenge method and additional findings will be available in March 2016.

WHICH SEL PRACTICES WERE STUDIED?

The SEL practices that were the focus of the Challenge were organized around adolescent skill growth in six areas: Emotion management, empathy, teamwork, responsibility, initiative, and problem solving.

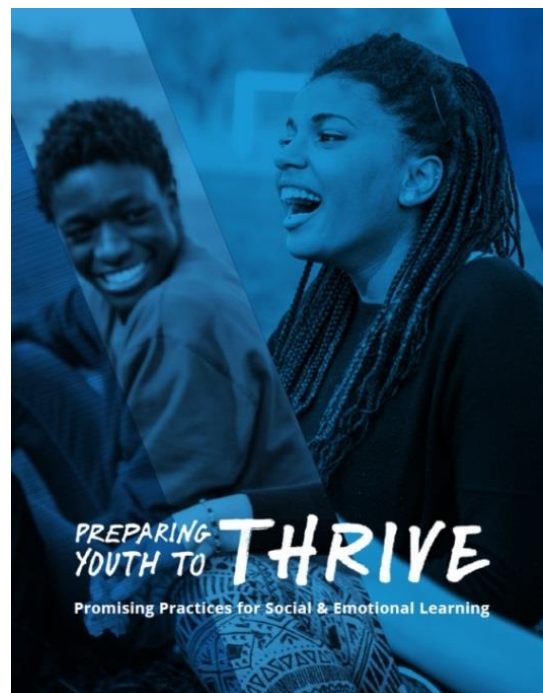
WHAT DOES THE FIELD GUIDE SHOW?

The Field Guide presents 32 standards and 76 practice indicators in the six areas of SEL practice and four additional curriculum features. Each practice indicator is accompanied by multiple real-world examples. Case studies are also presented for each of the eight exemplary programs.

HOW DO I LEARN MORE?

There are several points of entry for learning more about the SEL Challenge and the standards for SEL practice:

- [Visit SELpractices.org](http://SELpractices.org)
- [Join the mailing list](#)
- [Attend a webinar or video chat](#)
- Follow #SELchallenge on social media
- Email us at SEL@cypq.org



WHAT IS AVAILABLE NOW?

We view the growing focus on social and emotional skills in out-of-school time settings as a long-term process. Right now, there are three explicit pathways into the SEL Challenge content—Open Access (free), Individual Designs (low cost, self-paced), System Designs (for SEL work at scale).

WHAT COMES NEXT?

In spring 2016 the technical report and supports for a range of SEL measures will be available from the Weikart Center.

By 2017, three in-depth trainings on SEL Practices will be added to the Weikart Center's Youth Work Methods training content, as well as automated performance reporting capacity on the Online Scores Reporter.

The SEL Strengths Builder Method

The SEL Strengths Builder Method is an extension of the evidence-based *Assess-Plan-Improve* continuous improvement sequence ([YPQI](#)).

The Strengths Builder includes three new areas of assessment designed to focus OST staff on a program's SEL strengths:

- 1. *Assessing SEL Curriculum Design*:** Build a better understanding of your curriculum sequence in two parts – the youth-driven learning project at the heart of the offering (e.g., build a boat), and the parallel SEL content sequence that fosters SEL skill growth.
- 2. *Assessing SEL Practices*:** Reflect on the intensity and quality of the responsive practices you implement to support youth in building their social and emotional skills.
- 3. *Assessing Youth SEL Skills*:** Create a baseline profile of the social and emotional skills of the youth you serve and what it looks like when these youth are demonstrating SEL in your program.

The range of services offered by the Weikart Center are designed to support OST programs through this method. There are three explicit pathways to approach the Strengths Builder Method and these are described below—Open Access (free and online), Individual Designs (single or small network of OST programs), and System Designs (scaled implementation in OST networks).

Open Access

Independent Exploration

The Open Access pathway is designed to provide users with a light supports to start working on the SEL strengths of their program.

TARGET USER	Anyone interested in SEL practices for adolescents; Youth workers and teachers; Curriculum designers in education and human services; Leaders of individual OST programs; Consultants and evaluators.
COST	Free
RESOURCES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the guidebook: Preparing Youth to Thrive: Promising Practice for Social and Emotional Learning is available for free download at SELpractices.org and print copies are available for purchase at Store.cypq.org. 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Visit SELpractices.org to interact with a learning community of program staff and managers who are engaged in SEL. Stay connected about updates by joining the mailing list here and following #SELchallenge on social media. 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Use the SEL Strengths Builder Assessments and Videos, a collection of free online materials to reflect on and assess how well your program supports the growth and development of youth’s social and emotional skills. The three Strengths Builder Assessments are available at SELpractices.org and are accompanied by a series of five short videos. 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Read the SEL Challenge Technical Report and guidance on the use of SEL Measures. Both are available for download at SELpractices.org. Technical Report available March 1. 	

PREPARING YOUTH TO THRIVE
Promising Practices for Social & Emotional Learning

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Assessing
SEL Curriculum Design

Assessing
SEL PRACTICES

Assessing
YOUTH SEL SKILLS

Part of the **SEL Strengths Builder**
www.SELpractices.org
January 2016

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Individual Designs

Light Training and Technical Assistance

The Individual Designs pathway includes light training and technical assistance focused on bringing teams at one or more program sites through a professional learning experience focused on SEL curriculum design and implementation.

TARGET USER	Leaders of individual OST programs or small OST systems (<5 sites); Consultants and evaluators supporting these leaders
COST	\$150-\$5000
RESOURCES	
<p>1. The SEL Challenge Box Set is for program leaders, staff, and other expert consultants or trainers who wish to improve or strengthen their focus on social and emotional learning (SEL). It includes both print materials sent to the user and a set of phone and online supports.</p> <p>Print Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 copies of the SEL Field Guide – Preparing Youth to Thrive: Promising Practices for Social and Emotional Learning. This guidebook identifies promising practices for building SEL skills with vulnerable adolescents in six skill areas: emotion management, empathy, teamwork, initiative, responsibility, and problem solving in informal learning environments.• 5 copies of the Strengths Builder Assessments– This trio of assessments will support your team in conversations about how to improve the SEL focus in your program. Includes 5 print copies of the assessments available at SELpractices.org. Live webinars offered monthly support the use of these resources.• 5 copies of Planning with Data Handbook –This handbook provides guidance on leading a continuous improvement process using performance information. <p>Phone and online supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical Assistance Call – Talk with a Weikart Center staff member about focusing on SEL in your program and how best to utilize the box set resources.• Webinars – Access a series of five live webinars monthly, with recordings available for viewing on demand. The webinars will walk an individual or team through a continuous improvement sequence to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Map your SEL curriculum design and plan for a continuous improvement cycle;○ Assess your SEL practice strengths;○ Collect a baseline SEL skill profile using staff ratings of youth behavior;○ Develop an improvement plan using information from the SEL curriculum design, self-assessment of SEL practices, and staff ratings of youth SEL skills;○ Follow up on the improvement plan at the end of the program year. <p>Individual Box Sets can be purchased directly at Store.cypq.org. Box Sets can also be purchased in bulk by a network for a discount – contact SEL@cypq.org for more information.</p>	

2. The **Push SEL Practice Workshop** is ideal as an introduction to Social and Emotional Learning for program staff and leaders. It can be a first step to launching an SEL initiative, and is designed to have participants:
- Familiarize themselves with the content of the Field Guide with an intensive focus on up to two of the six domains that resonate most with their program goals;
 - Assess their current or planned curriculum design(s) by comparing their SEL curriculum against the standards and case studies;
 - Assess their implementation of SEL practice standards;
 - Reflect on how to integrate SEL into their continuous improvement approach.

Workshops can be customized to ¼, ½ and full day events, and will be tailored to fit your target audience. Let us know you're interested by filling out the form [here](#).

SAMPLE IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

The **SEL Challenge Box Set** and the **Push SEL Practice Workshop** can be used on their own, but we recommend a blended approach of live and online supports for a continuous improvement cycle focused on SEL. Below we provide guidance for implementation of a blended sequence designed for programs that are either new to SEL concepts or more experienced.

1. Optimal Sequence for programs new to SEL concepts:

- *Step 1.* Purchase an **SEL Challenge Box Set** for one or more programs.
- *Step 2.* Host a consultant-led six-hour **Push SEL Practice Workshop** to build awareness and start to digging into *Assessing SEL Curriculum Design* and *Assessing SEL Practices* with program staff.
- *Step 3.* Conduct a one-hour design call with your consultant to review progress made during the training and plan for further use of the box set materials, minimally:
 - *Step 4.* *Assessing Youth SEL Skills* or continue working on *Assessing SEL Curriculum Design* and *Assessing SEL Practices*.
 - *Step 5.* Bring all program staff together to view the planning with data webinar and create an improvement plan.
 - *Step 6.* Bring all program staff together at the end of the year to view the year end webinar and make plans for next year.

2. Optimal Sequence for programs with some SEL capacity and expertise:

- *Step 1.* Order one box set per program.
- *Step 2.* Conduct a one-hour design call with your consultant to design a training sequence for the Strengths Builder Method. Then:
 - *Step 3.* Use three hours of staff meeting time to complete *Assessing SEL Curriculum Design*, *Assessing SEL Practices*, and *Assessing Youth SEL Skills*.
- *Step 4.* Bring all program staff together for the Push SEL Practice training to finalize *Assessing SEL Curriculum Design*, *Assessing SEL Practices*, and *Assessing Youth SEL Skills* and develop an improvement plan.
- *Step 5.* Bring all program staff together at the end of the year to view the year end webinar and make plans for next year.

For either recommended sequence, estimated minimum staff training and planning time is 12 hours for the program leader and 7 hours for each participating staff over an annual cycle.

System Designs

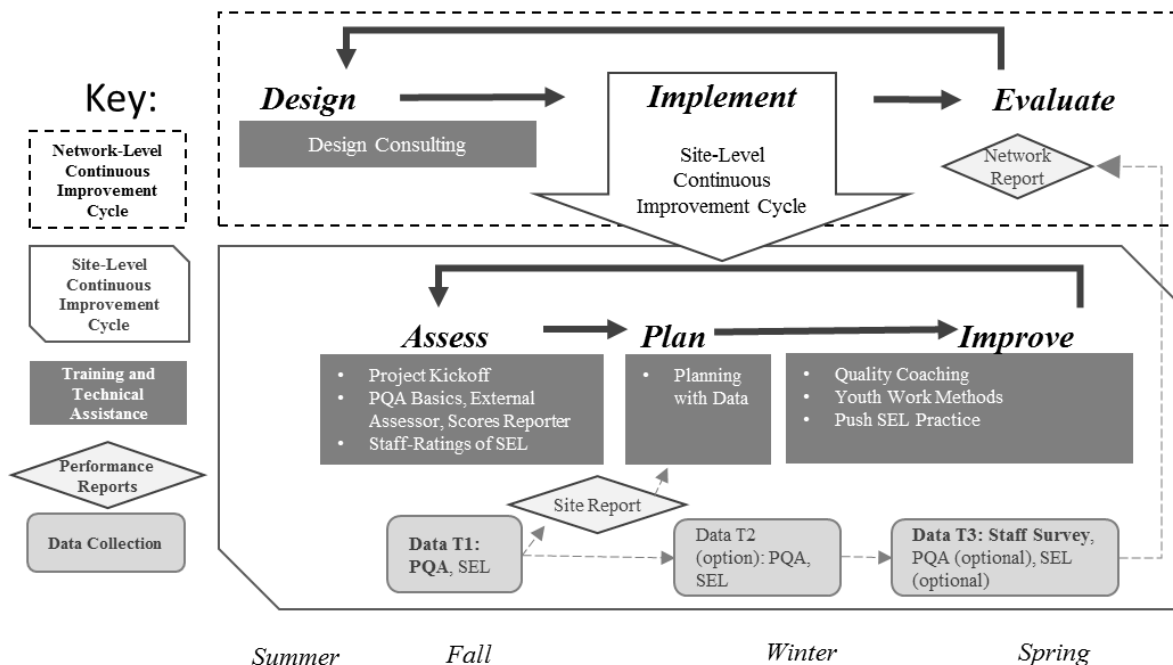
Training and Technical Assistance for a System/Network-wide focus on SEL Practice

The Weikart Center specializes in building quality improvement systems at scale and these systems can include a focus on SEL practices and skills. The logic model on the next page represents a template for a quality improvement system focused on SEL. The QIS is anchored by the evidence based *Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPOI)* as the program/site level intervention. To learn more about system designs, reach out to us [here](#).

TARGET USER	Leaders of multi-site OST programs and larger state and regional OST systems and networks; Consultants and evaluators supporting these leaders.
COST	\$5000+
RESOURCES	<ol style="list-style-type: none">For current Weikart Center clients, ask your Weikart Center Project Manager about:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Extending/updating your QIS with the Strengths Builder, SEL measures and/or Push SEL Practice workshops;Piloting an SEL Challenge with a group of sites using the SEL Challenge Box Set to guide a learning community.In winter 2016, three new Youth Work Methods Guidebooks will be available, with an SEL update certification for the Youth Work Methods Training of Trainers. The methods are:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Stronger Together</i> – Empathy and Teamwork<i>Individual Goals and Roles</i> – Initiative and Responsibility<i>Engaging Executive Function</i> – Emotion Management and Problem Solving



Logic Model: QIS/MPQI Network-Level and Site-Level Continuous Improvement Cycles



- 1. Design – Implement – Evaluate Cycle.** This system-level continuous improvement cycle is typically the responsibility of agency or system leaders and includes the design of the quality improvement system, implementation of the assess-plan-improve sequence at each program site, and evaluation of aggregate performance information during each annual cycle, and over multiple cycles.
- 2. Assess – Plan – Improve Cycle.** This site-level continuous improvement cycle is typically the responsibility of the site manager and includes assessment of site performance, review of performance data, and implementation of an improvement plan for the site. For Weikart Center clients, this cycle is the *Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI)*.
- 3. Training and Technical Assistance.** These supports include a wide range of design consulting and evaluation services for the system-level cycle and the YPQI package of supports for program self-assessment of performance, planning with performance data, and implementation of the performance improvement plan.
- 4. Performance Data Collection.** Performance data can include a wide range of measures and indicators, including observational ratings of teacher practices as well as measures of youth SEL skills. These data are the core of the planning element of the assess-plan-improve cycle.
- 5. Performance Reports.** These data products are designed to support decision making at the site and system levels. Site level performance reports are typically produced for each program site early in the annual cycle so that improvement planning can occur. The aggregate report carrying information about all program sites is typically produced after the end of an annual cycle so that design adjustments can occur in the system and site level cycles.