



## Benchmark of Quality FAQ

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## Mindsets Essential Skills & Habits (MESH) Research Project

Eastside Pathways Partnership (EPP) was awarded a grant in 2019 through Unite:ED, an alliance between the University of Washington School of Education and non-profit community and education partners. Eastside Pathways used this UW Unite: ED Research & Practice Seed Grant to focus on the following research question:

***How do in- and out-of-school programs for 9th-12th graders support their social emotional learning (SEL) and academic outcomes as they progress to and through their post-secondary opportunities?***

Over a period of 18 months, Eastside Pathways convened stakeholders (Bellevue School District, Lake Washington School District, in- and out-of-school providers, youth and families) on an ongoing basis to collaboratively build a framework establishing best practices for in- and out-of-school providers to support the social emotional wellbeing of the youth they serve.

This collaborative process involved gathering data (i.e., demographics, SEL outcome measures, statewide post-secondary education, and employment data, etc.) and surveying program staff, youth, and families regarding the impact of current programs. Bringing diverse stakeholders together allowed organizations to collaborate on best practices, lean in on the wisdom and lived experience of the community- family and youth, and use the research and data gathered to build a **Benchmark of Quality**. This framework aims to support in- and out-of-school providers in **self-evaluating** their current programming while working closely with youth who are impacted. The information learned will support organizations in improving their community partnerships and their commitment to provide high quality programs impacting children and youth positively in their community.

### ***Why is this work relevant?***

Many Eastside Pathways partners serving as educators and youth service providers state that students' desired educational outcomes will not be achieved without a strong system of support for social emotional learning. Post-secondary partner institutions have reported that youth and young adults dropping out of their post-secondary degree or training institutions have cited challenges related to mental health and social emotional well-being. We see this as a significant barrier and want to understand more in order to take the collective responsibility to build supports for our youth entering these spaces.

### ***Key Outcomes of this work***

**Outcomes for youth:** Eastside Pathways aims to create supports for improved mindsets, essential skills, and habits to reduce stress and increase resilience in high school youth in East King County. Eastside Pathways also wants to increase the access and utilization of equitable and effective services and resources. Ultimately, the goal is an understanding of how these supports effect a students' persistence through a post-secondary path (certification, degree, or training).

**Outcomes for a better system of support for youth:** The project will explore how Eastside Pathways partner organizations address internal policy or practice changes impacting their programs offered to students and youth, allowing these policies and practices to further reflect their values. Eastside

Pathways will also center the participation of youth and parents as we look to implement system changes and improve programming and provide necessary supports for youth and families.

## Benchmark of Quality (BoQ) Overview – FAQ

### What is the BoQ?

The Benchmark of Quality (BoQ) is a framework used to measure and index the quality and efficacy of program supports against research-backed and collaboratively sourced quality baselines. The BoQ is an **internal organizational-level** framework that is organized into **five (5) broad domains** critical for the construction and execution of a quality in- and out-of-school program:

- **Supportive Environment**
- **Program Quality**
- **Professional Development**
- **Community Partnership**
- **Continuous Improvement**

Within each of these domains lie a group of research-backed indicators. The indicators are **specific and actionable measures** of progress along the pathways to achieving quality in the larger domain. Increased quality is often a product of systemic change and the BoQ provides specific endpoints to frame the results of systemic change for providers looking to support the SEL development of their students and youth. A program may have or find many specific practices to satisfy a particular indicator.

Benchmark of Quality Domain	Indicators	Not in Place	Partially in Place	In Place
Supportive Environment				
Program Quality				
Professional Development				
Community Partnership				
Continuous Improvement				

\*As programs may prioritize different indicators, the BoQ is designed for flexibility. While each domain is critical, we recognize Providers may have different sets of indicators to measure their progress/success in a particular domain.

SELF-EVALUATION SCALE			
What does it mean to have an indicator...	The program has an action or practice that fulfills the indicator	This practice is known throughout the organization	The practice is a part of the program or organization's policy
In Place	✓	✓	✓
Partially in Place	✓	✓	✗
Partially in Place	✓	✗	✓
Not in Place	✗	✗	✗

### How has the BoQ been created?

The BoQ was collaboratively developed by the members of the [Eastside Pathways Partnership](#) working with high school aged students and youth, the [University of Washington School of Education](#), and family and youth groups. In addition to these stakeholders, existing literature helped validate the best practices regarding SEL supports and program quality. After initial presentation of the BoQ to a large group of student support providers, Eastside Pathways convened a **small workgroup of eight Partners\*** to provide collaborative input on the BoQ over a 7-month period.

Eastside Pathways' work incorporates adaptive processes to engage more stakeholders and ensure the impacted audience remains at the center of the work. This project has incorporated [adaptive leadership](#) frameworks such as the [systems mapping iceberg model](#), the [person, role system](#) framework, and [targeted universalism](#) among other adaptive tools. Each of these strengthened the BoQ by broadening its lens of equity and inclusion by adding lived experience and local contexts to the existing national literature on SEL support for in- and out-of-school programs.

\*The small group consisted of representatives from: Bellevue LifeWire, Bellevue School District, Bellevue Youthlink, Boys and Girls Club Bellevue, Indian American Community Services, Rainier Athletes, Seattle Children's Hospital, and Youth Eastside Services

### Why should I use the BoQ in my program?

The BoQ provides in- and out-of-school providers with a blueprint for continuous improvement in all areas of their program that support students. The BoQ framework is an ongoing collaborative construction giving multiple stakeholder groups (researchers, in- and out-of-school providers, students and families, and school districts) the opportunity to vet the content and provide their unique perspective on what program quality should look like. The creation of this framework invites the voice and lived experience of the impacted audience (students, youth, and families) ensuring a faithful representation of their ideal program qualities.

There are many tools measuring the social-emotional readiness of students in grades K-8, and this framework supplements that work for in- and out-of-school programs in supporting further social emotional development of high school aged youth. The presence of multiple stakeholders allows for collaboration among providers and a breadth of inputs from stakeholders impacting students and youth from high school to and through their post-secondary journey.

The BoQ allows programs to examine their successes and challenges in supporting their students' SEL needs. The tool also provides a path along which programs can perform internal evaluation and grow to best serve these needs in their students and youth.

### *How reliable and valid is the BoQ?*

Many of the indicators nested in the domains of the BoQ are validated and reliable as they are supported by research around youth development, after-school program quality and social emotional development. The research on supporting and measuring SEL in high school aged students continues to emerge and expand and this project's collaborative effort of multiple stakeholder input will allow for the validation of indicators across contexts and programs.

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## Resource List

1. Building Partnerships in Support of Where, When & How Learning Happens: The Aspen Institute: <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/building-partnerships-in-support-of-where-when-how-learning-happens/>
2. Insight Center (Boston After School & Beyond): <http://insight.bostonbeyond.org/case-studies/>
3. Hamilton, L., Wrabel, S., *Investing in Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning*: RAND Corporation, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2739>
4. Yeager, David S., "Social-Emotional Learning Programs for Adolescents," *The Future of Children*, Vol. 27, No. 1, Spring 2017, pp. 31–52. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1145078>
5. Jones, S., Bailey, R., Bruch, K., Kahn J., *Preparing for Effective SEL Implementation*: Harvard Graduate School of Education | Easel Lab, March 26, 2018. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Preparing-for-Effective-SEL-Implementation.pdf>
6. Jones, S., Bailey, R., Bruch, K., et. al., *Navigating SEL from the Inside Out - Looking Inside and across 25 Leading SEL Programs: A practical resource for schools and OST providers (Elementary School Focus)*: Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2017 <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Navigating-Social-and-Emotional-Learning-from-the-Inside-Out.pdf>
7. *Quality Standards for Afterschool and Youth Development Programs*, <https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0515/3189/files/Quality-Standards-PDF-2-14-14-Final-web.pdf?6388612972077965549>
8. *School-Community Partnership Toolkit Full Version*, Youth Development Executives of King County (YDEKC) <https://ydekc.org/resource-center/school-community-partnership-toolkit/>
9. Skills and Dispositions that Support Youth Success in School, Youth Development Executives of King County (YDEKC) <https://ydekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Skills-and-Dispositions-Executive-Summary-May-20141.pdf>
10. Washington State Social Emotional Learning Implementation Guide, 2019, 2019: <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/studentssupport/sel/pubdocs/Appendix%20C%20Washington%20SEL%20Implementation%20Guide%20final.pdf>
11. Student Success Network Research Brief (June 2019), [https://sites.google.com/ssn-nyc.org/ssnresourcelibrary/explore-network-research-findings?authuser=0#h.p\\_MFExeBIXFpiW](https://sites.google.com/ssn-nyc.org/ssnresourcelibrary/explore-network-research-findings?authuser=0#h.p_MFExeBIXFpiW)
12. School Community Partnerships - ASPEN SEAD Case Study (April 2018), <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/school-community-partnerships/>
13. The In School and After School Social Emotional Learning Connection Toolkit: Beyond the Bell; American Institutes for Research (December 2015), <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/In-School-Out-of-School-SEL-Connection-rev.pdf>
14. Supporting Social and Emotional Development Through Quality Afterschool Programs (July 2015), <https://www.air.org/resource/supporting-social-and-emotional-development-through-quality-afterschool-programs>
15. Every Hour Counts: Measurement Framework (2014): <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b199ed585ede1153ef29e8a/t/5b19a09e2b6a28c655798a25/1528406174521/Every+Hour+Counts+Measurement+Framework.pdf>
16. Professional Development Resources on SEL for Expanded Learning Opportunities; Cultivate Learning, University of Washington, <https://cultivatelearning.webdamdb.com/bp/#/brandguidelines/4662/section/41302>
17. Expanded Learning Opportunities Guide (OSPI): <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/workgroups/elocmeeting/elocguide.pdf>
18. The Science of Learning and Development in Afterschool Systems and Settings; American Institutes of Research (Sept. 2019) <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Science-of-learning-and-development-afterschool-settings-2019-rev.pdf>
19. Domitrovich C., Weissberg R., Gullotta T., *The Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning, Research and Practice*. The Guilford Press, 2015
20. Linking Schools and Afterschool Through Social and Emotional Learning; Beyond the Bell at the American Institutes for Research (2015): <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Linking-Schools-and-Afterschool-Through-SEL-rev.pdf>
21. San Francisco Unified School District Quality Action Plan: <https://www.sfusd.edu/services/family-supports-services/before-after-school-programs/quality-action-plan-bus>
22. Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Social and Emotional Learning: <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/mental-social-behavioral-health/social-and-emotional-learning-sel>
23. CASEL SEL Implementation Rubric: [https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/2019/03/10703\\_CASEL\\_SchoolGuide\\_OST\\_BlankRubric.pdf](https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/2019/03/10703_CASEL_SchoolGuide_OST_BlankRubric.pdf)
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25. Durlak, J.A. & Weissberg, R.P. (2013). Afterschool programs that follow evidence-based practices to promote social and emotional development are effective. Big Views Forward: A Compendium on Expanded Learning. [http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/Durlak&Weissberg\\_Final.pdf](http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/Durlak&Weissberg_Final.pdf)
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27. Hurd, N., & Deutsch, N. (2017). SEL-focused after-school programs. *The Future of Children*, 95-115.: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1145092.pdf>
28. Bouffard, S., & Little, P. (2004). Promoting Quality through Professional Development: A Framework for Evaluation. Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation. Number 8. *Harvard University Harvard Family Research Project*.: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED484816.pdf>

29. California Healthy Kids Survey: <https://calschls.org/about/the-surveys/#chks>
30. DESSA-mini: <http://store.apperson.com/Specialty-Products/DESSA-paper-forms/DESSA-Mini-Assessment-2.html>
31. Self-Compassion Survey (Kristen Neff): <https://self-compassion.org/self-compassion-test/>

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