

An Analysis of Character Strong's PurposeFull People Program Components

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Need Statement

- Research suggests positive student outcomes when SEL interventions address five core competencies (also known as the CASEL 5): self-awareness, social-awareness, self-regulation, responsible decision making, and relationship skills (CASELorg)
- The Wallace Foundation (2021) has completed two analyses of 33 different SEL curricula and identified key features of each program through a comprehensive coding system.
- Despite wide district adoption, *Character Strong's PurposeFull People* program did not meet criteria for review by the Wallace Foundation.
- To fill the gap, we analyzed 12 program components of Character Strong's PurposeFull People program using the Wallace Foundation's coding system
- Our analysis offers school districts useful information when identifying SEL intervention programs for adoption in their schools.

Method

- Utilized the program component coding guide from Navigating SEL from the Inside Out (Jones et al, 2021)
- Three student researchers independently recorded narrative information about program features, then conducted consensus building activities to establish agreement of ratings for program components.
- When ratings differed, researchers discussed differences and arrived at consensus.
- Reached out to the chief Development Officer of the curriculum to review our ratings for accuracy and to provide additional information if necessary.
- An initial meeting has been rescheduled for a later date.
- We view our initial ratings as needing support for reliability purposes.
- We found the PurposeFull People curriculum to offer high flexibility and extensive resources.
- We provided recommendations for the program and for users and potential users.

Wallace Foundation Program Components

Component	Features
Purpose & Structure	Purpose
	Grade Range & Developmental Considerations
	Program Structure & Timing
	Lesson Structure/format
	Areas of focus/SEL competencies
Classroom Activities Beyond Core Lessons	Supplementary Lessons/Activities /Strategies (Mandatory)
	Supplementary Lessons/Activities/ Strategies (Optional)
	Recs/Resources
Climate & Culture Supports	Academic Integration
	School-wide Activities and Events
	Adult Practices
	Policies, Procedures, and Norms
	SEL Outside the Classroom
Applications to Out-of-school Time (OST)	School Climate Programming
	A Primary Focus on OST
	OST Lessons/Programs
	Guidance/Best Practices
	OST History/Partnerships
	Vague Mentions of OST

Wallace foundation Program Components, cont.

Component	Features
Program Flexibility and Fit	Mandatory Features
	Flexible Features
	Alignment with existing systems and programs
	Special Requirements
	Other Languages
Professional Development & Training	Training/Workshops
	Coaching
	Learning Resources
	Opportunities to Build Adult SEL Skills
	A Primary Focus on PD
Support for Implementation	Materials/Resources for Planning and Effective Implementation
	General Guidance/Best Practices
	In-lesson Support for Teaching/Modeling Skills
	SEL Point/Committee
Tools to Assess Program Outcomes	Student Assessments
	Adult Assessments
	Climate Assessments
	Guidance/Best Practices
Tools to Assess Implementation	Tools for tracking fidelity of implementation
	Tools for tracking program satisfaction
	Guidance/Best Practices
Family Engagement	Letters/Handouts
	Take-home Activities
	Family Events/Visits
	Family Workshops
	Parent Perspectives
	Guidance/Best Practices
Community Engagement	Integral Community Service Projects
	Supplementary Community Activities/Events/Kits
	Community Perspectives
	Guidance/Best Practices
Equitable and Inclusive Education	Trauma Guidance/Resources
	Social Justice Guidance/Resources
	ELL Guidance/Resources
	Special Education Guidance
	Cultural Guidance
	Other

★	Extensive components available
●	Comprehensive components available
◐	Moderate components available
○	No components available
✓	Includes resources to support this area
--	Does not include resources to support this area

Ratings

Component	Rating	Qualitative Findings
Program & Structure	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole child approach with 10 character traits: courage, respect, perseverance, gratitude, honesty, kindness, empathy, responsibility, cooperation, and creativity • Designed for Pre-K to 5th grade • Adaptable for 5-10 min. or 20-30 min. • Follows Start intentionally, Engage relationally, Respond with empathy, Values practiced consistently, and Exit intentionally (SERVE) model • Implementation Roadmap • Beginning summer 2022, aligning SEL with character traits
Classroom Activities Beyond Core Lessons	★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book lists, songs, Google Slides, posters, and quotes • Implementation at home, playground, and staff challenges • Character Strong offers middle & high school SEL, middle and high school leadership, and gym Support for Academic Integration
Climate & Culture Supports	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement toolkit • Roadmap - implementation stages • Guided on how to start the month, week, day and how to end for each trait • <i>Elementary School Climate Scale</i> (2022)
Application to Out-of-School Time	◐	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for incorporating the character trait at home with a letter sent home to help with explanation and implementation.
Program Flexibility & Fit	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SERVE model, begin by monthly introduction then to daily • Not required to implement all activities • Lessons range from five to thirty minutes • Alignment guides for American School Counselor Association and CASEL standards • Stand alone or addition to other programs • Various online resources for families and teachers • Resources provided in English & Spanish
Professional Development & Training	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff professional development and a toolkit with Google • Conferences, webinars, podcasts, YouTube videos, and one on one conversations with creators • Flexible options, no specific requirements • Adult Social Emotional Competence
Support for Implementation	★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation calendars • Implementation Roadmap videos (guide), resources, and FAQs • Virtual professional development toolkit, on-demand professional development • Builds data literacy and decision making to monitor/track implementation outcomes • Scripted lessons and video examples
Tools to Assess Program Outcomes	◐	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each trait ends with exiting intentionally • Pre and post assessments for students • <i>Social-Emotional Competencies Scales</i> (E-SECS; 2022) • <i>Elementary School Climate Scale</i> • Leadership team assesses adult skills

Rating cont.

Name of Components	Rating	Qualitative Findings
Family Engagement	◐	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome letter- implementation and resources for at home. • Downloadable letter with explanation, conversation starters, take home activities • Implementation team- family or community member
Community Engagement	◐	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service projects and activities • Family letter with resources
Equity & Inclusive Education	◐	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podcasts and Webinars • Trauma-informed practices ✓ Equity ✓ Trauma -- Special Education -- ELL

Recommendations

Recommendations for the Program:

- Providing a user's guide with a table of contents and an index may benefit users who are not comfortable searching the website. This should provide guidance to users explaining how districts, schools, teachers, staff, and families can use the different resources within the program to maximize student outcomes.
- It may help users to have a few examples of how a school and/or an instructor may present one of the character traits using the wide variety of resources that they could use immediately.
 - For example, a detailed implementation map for one trait illustrating how the staff relational activities, staff challenge, weekly/daily announcements, in-class lesson, poster resources, book lists, playground activities, and home resources. Having an example for each trait might be beneficial for individuals trying to implement the program who may feel overwhelmed by the amount of choice the program provides.
- A link to a detailed site map on both the public pages and subscription pages would make it easier for individuals to search for specific topics within the site.
- Providing fidelity checklist forms for the in-class lessons might be a useful for teams to create a system to collect their own fidelity data.
 - Providing an example of a datasheet or database with fidelity data tracked and graphed may be beneficial to help schools and districts understand the larger picture that this data can provide for informing future professional development trainings.

Recommendations for Users

- We recommend using the four step process for selecting a program that best fits district needs and goals.
 - Guidance and forms are available in How to Use the Navigating SEL Guide: *Selecting, Adapting, and Learning from Existing SEL Programs* (Jones et al., 2021).

References

Jones, S. M., Brush, K. E., Ramirez, T., Xinyi Mao, Z., Marenus, M., Wettje, S., Finney, K., Raisch, N., Podoloff, N., Kahn, J., Barnes, S., Stickle, L., Brion-Meisels, G., Cuartas, J., & Bailey, R. (2021). *Navigating social and emotional learning from the inside out. Looking inside & across 33 leading SEL programs: a practical resource for schools and OST providers, Revised & Expanded Second Edition.* <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/navigating-social-and-emotional-learning-from-the-inside-out-2ed.pdf>

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Character Strong (n.d.). PurposeFull People: A preK-5 social & emotional learning and character curriculum. <https://characterstrong.com/purposefull-people/>