

FAQs about the Leading with Kindness Initiative

What is the Leading with Kindness Student Summit?

- Leading with Kindness is a one-day student leadership summit at the Capitol where high-school youth leaders, school administrators, and staff from around the state, will participate in an interactive day of workshops and exercises focusing on social and emotional skill-building, improving school climate, and leading with kindness.
- The event is being presented by the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors, in partnership with Facebook inspirED, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), and Stand Up and Speak Out.

What will students and educators bring back to their districts?

- Educators will learn the importance of SEL and the five core competencies which are 1) self-awareness, 2) self-management, 3) social awareness, 4) relationship skills, and 5) responsible decision-making. These core competencies can be enhanced through self-curriculum and instruction, schoolwide practices and policies, and family and community partnerships.
- Youth will have the opportunity to connect with their peers and discuss ideas and collaborate with students from other districts on how to be changemakers, create positive school climates, and how to lead with kindness.

Is this a one-time event or ongoing?

- Facebook's inspirED was born out of a partnership with Yale and the Born this Way Foundation. In the first year, they launched a national survey which collected data from over 22,000 students. The research showed that students feel: tired, stressed, and bored. They want to feel: happy, motivated, valued, respected, connected and supported.
- InspirED was created to empower students to raise their voices and address issues regarding school climate. Teams of student leaders have been working to improve school climate in a variety of ways.
- Given recent tragic events and the ongoing struggle in our country around diversity and inclusion, now more than ever it is imperative that student leaders rise up and be the voice in their schools and communities.

- The Commission, the legislature and our partners, are committed to helping youth leaders recognize their potential to create positive change within their schools, communities, and state. Together we will continue to work with youth and school administrators to increase the emotional well-being of all of Connecticut's youth. It is our goal to have Connecticut become the first social emotional state in the country.

Why is social emotional learning and skill-building important?

- Social and emotional learning (SEL) teaches children to recognize and understand their emotions, feel empathy, make decisions, and build and maintain relationships. A widely cited meta-analysis previously showed that SEL programs immediately improve mental health, social skills, and academic achievement. The current study shows that school-based SEL interventions continue to benefit students for months and even years to come.
- SEL is an evidence-based strategy that shows 1) students exposed to SEL programs score an average of 13% higher in all of the eight studies included when measuring academic performance, and 2) drug use, conduct problems and emotional distress are significantly lower in schools that teach SEL, while positive attitudes toward self and others greatly improved.

Why civics?

- Having youth understand what it truly means to be informed and involved in democracy is crucial to student achievement.
- Teaching civics helps students learn about and be a part of government, while also teaching critical skills including how to interact in groups, how to be more collaborative, and how to work in culturally diverse teams.
- Students need a sense of citizenship, and understanding of their history and government and a commitment to democratic values. They need to know their rights – and their responsibilities. At the same time, civics instruction needs to be engaging and interactive, both inside and outside of the classroom. (U.S. Dept. of Ed.)