

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Everyone  
FROM: AOE Secretary French  
DMH Commissioner Hawes  
SUBJECT: Social, Emotional, Behavioral Screening  
DATE: July 27, 2021

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## Purpose

This memo provides guidance for Supervisory Unions, Districts, and school leadership teams around the systemic considerations that need to be addressed prior to selecting and using a universal screening tool for student social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) needs and strengths.

The process and implications are different from those of academic screeners. According to the School Mental Health Collaborative, leadership teams must consider ethical, practical, and technical issues beyond simply selecting a universal SEB screening measure. “As districts and schools commit to implementing a system for universal SEB screening, they are faced with a myriad of logistical considerations such as privacy, the frequency of screening, how best to use data to improve intervention selection, and need for parental consent.” Additionally, there are system considerations for building a tiered response to appropriately address concerning results.

This memo is designed to provide information, resources, and professional learning opportunities to support creating the systems necessary for planning to use a social, emotional, behavioral screener.

## Resources and Support

The following sections contain different types of resources and support that are designed to provide leadership teams with the prerequisite information to ensure collaboration with the local designated mental health agency; addressing the ethical and legal obligations around consent, risk, and informing families; as well as the logistical considerations around timing, personnel, consent, training requirements, and protocol for responding to positive screen results.

## Systems-Level Considerations

The University of Vermont [BEST Project website](#) links to resources on social, emotional, behavioral learning and well-being, including Social/Emotional/Behavioral Screening Resources. (Note: most resources are relevant for schools whether or not they implement PBIS).

## Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information, please contact:

Specifically, an assessment to address systems considerations is linked below. The BEST Project TAs and coaches can provide technical assistance to support the process of identifying and addressing the systems-level considerations for district and school teams.

### **Guidance Documents and Websites**

- The [Best Practices in Universal Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Screening: An Implementation Guide](#) is intended to “provide technical assistance to school districts who are considering, preparing for, or are in the early stages of implementing SEB [Social, Emotional and Behavioral] screening” (Version 2.0. Current and future versions available at [smhcollaborative.org/universalscreening](http://smhcollaborative.org/universalscreening)).
- [BEST Project Website](#) contains links to professional development opportunities and resources on social, emotional, and behavioral well-being. Particular areas to note:
  - What is Social, Emotional, Behavioral (SEB) Screening?
  - Why Screen?
  - Systematic Screeners for Social, Emotional, Behavioral Risks and Strengths
  - Other Screeners and Surveys
  - Systems Considerations

### **Interactive Tools**

- The [Social Emotional Behavioral \(SEB\) Screening Systems Considerations Assessment](#) supports Union, District, and School leadership in determining whether that the systemic needs and strengths have been addressed prior to using a screener.

### **Live-Information Q&A**

- The AOE’s Coffee & Conversation are designed to address Recovery Planning efforts and use of ESSER funds. During the [7/28/2021](#) Coffee and Conversation meeting, we will answer questions related to Universal SEB Screening.

### **Coaching & Technical Assistance**

- Coaching and support offered through BEST Project staff. Please contact [Sherry Schoenberg](#).
- The [Education Quality Assurance Team](#) will continue to offer technical assistance to support ongoing needs assessment and refinement of your plans, as requested. The Agency is currently determining trends in recovery efforts to address through more focused technical assistance and/or Network Improvement Communities.
- August 10, 2021, 9:00 am, [VT BEST/VTPBIS](#) webinar: Understanding Universal Screening for Social, Emotional and Behavioral Risks and Strengths and Key Considerations for Returning to School Webinar (free of cost, open to all) – [Details and registration](#).

### **Funding Options**

The coaching or technical assistance costs may be covered by [BEST/Act 230](#) grant funds, [Title funds](#), and potentially [ESSER](#) funds. For assistance, contact [Josh Souliere](#).