An Invitation to apply for the position of

Policy Specialist
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
Chicago, Illinois
Posted: June 2022

Organizational Summary

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), is a nonprofit organization based in Chicago, and a trusted source for knowledge about high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL). CASEL’s mission is to help make evidence-based SEL an integral part of preschool through high school education across the country. We are transforming American education through SEL by collaborating with leading experts and supporting districts, schools, and states nationwide to drive research, guide practice, and inform policy. Together, we are enabling all young people in our diverse society to lead healthier, happier, more productive, and fulfilling lives.

With committed and growing philanthropic funding and a cohesive strategic plan, CASEL is endeavoring to:

- Support the implementation and document the impact of systemic SEL in large school districts and socio-demographically diverse school districts across this nation.
- Capture, refine, and test the learnings to advance the research base for the process of implementing systemic SEL and share that knowledge broadly.
- Identify and evaluate interventions and assessment tools to accelerate high-quality implementation of SEL nationwide.
- Partner with SEL program providers, colleges of education, professional organizations, school districts, and researchers to support scaling of SEL.
- Promote federal and state policies that encourage academic, social, and emotional learning.
- Strategically communicate to foster widespread demand for SEL as an essential part of students’ education at the classroom, school, district, state, and national level.

Position Description

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is seeking a full-time Policy Specialist. This role will work with the champions of the SEL field at CASEL to advance high quality SEL policies federally and in all 50 states, while working to ensure equitable education outcomes for every child.

Reporting to the Director of Policy, the Policy Specialist will join our Policy team to support CASEL in activities related to state level SEL Policy, including identifying, measuring, tracking, and speaking to the reach and impact of all 50 states’
policy, strategy, communication, and practice. The Policy team conducts the CASEL State Scan and collaborates with the Research team to evaluate the CASEL Collaborating States Initiative (CSI) – both activities codify and track high-quality SEL policy across states.

**Key Functions**

- Identify, track, and analyze state and federal SEL Policy
- Evaluate SEL policy for quality, growth, and areas of improvement
- Support CASEL Staff with examples of high-quality state Policy
- Strategically work with the Communications team on SEL Policy messaging and other requests
- Develop and write reports and briefs
- Edit CASEL Policy Team documents and communications
- Under the leadership of the Director of Policy, support [CASEL’s State Scans and Policy Research activities](https://www.casel.org/state-scan) including our collaboration with partner organizations
- Under the leadership of the Director of Policy, support CASEL’s evaluation of state progress related to the [CASEL Collaborating States Initiative](https://www.casel.org/csi), including development and application of a rubric to assess state progress
  - Identify state examples of resources and tools for, and help organize and maintain the [State Resource Center](https://www.casel.org/resource-center)
- Organize and conduct state scan activities
- Assess and summarize findings, and conduct interviews with state personnel
- Review standards, policies, and guidance found on state webpages
- Track and analyze federal policies designed to promote SEL
- Work directly with CASEL’s Research Team in order to advance organizational learning and improvement, based on our findings from analysis of state-level policies and data (e.g., collecting, coding, and analyzing data, etc.).
- Support development of CASEL’s tools and resources for policy makers in all 50 states
- Perform other related duties and participate in special projects as assigned

The ideal candidate for this position will have demonstrated interest and experience in SEL research and policy research. They will have a deep grounding in both social emotional learning and educational policy. They will have strong communication skills, written and speaking. They will be committed to learning in order to be able to write and speak effectively about SEL, positive youth development, and/or related forms of developmentally appropriate educational practices in the service of equity. They will be comfortable working both independently (e.g., conducting scans and reviewing policy documents), and collaboratively as part of a team, and will possess leadership, project management, and strategic thinking skills.

**Qualifications**

CASEL seeks an individual who is highly motivated, strongly oriented towards collaboration, and is committed both to CASEL’s mission and to improving public education. The successful candidate will bring many of the following qualifications and personal attributes:

- Bachelors degree required; masters degree preferred, preferably in psychology, education, or related field
- Minimum two years experience with projects related to SEL and the social behavioral sciences, education, and policy
- Demonstrated interest in the social-emotional development of children and youth, including enjoyment of research and writing, reading and analyzing long documents
• Demonstrated interest in state and federal policy
• Well-developed analytical and conceptual skills
• Excellent oral and written communication skills
• Strong project management, organizational, and technology skills
• Ability to work both independently and as a member of a team
• Capacity and interest in studying and summarizing state documents and webpages independently
• Previous experience working on a research project is preferred, particularly policy research
• Strong familiarity with programs and/or policies to promote student social and emotional learning preferred
• The desire to work in a highly collaborative, entrepreneurial environment where taking initiative, working well in teams of internal and external colleagues, and perseverance in the face of challenges is a must.

Physical Requirements

• Prolonged periods of sitting at a desk and working on a computer.
• Must be able to lift up to 15 pounds at times.

Compensation

This position is funded for one year and six months (18 months), and may be eligible for renewal, depending on grant funding. This is a full-time position and includes the option for the employee to participate in CASEL’s full-time benefits during the employment period.

To Apply

To apply, please submit a cover letter (including interest in the position, relevant experience, and professional goals), CV, references, and a writing sample to careers@casel.org with the subject line: CASEL Policy Specialist Application.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning is an equal opportunity employer. CASEL evaluates applicants for employment on the basis of qualifications, merit and work-related criteria without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, sexual orientation, mental or physical disabilities, pregnancy, medical condition, marital status or any other characteristic protected by law. CASEL employs and values a diverse work environment.