

# BELIEVE IN YOU

## Teacher Program Guide

Welcome to the ***Believe in You*** Social and Emotional Empowerment Program (featuring ***Go Be Great***). This program is designed as a social and emotional learning solution for your entire school community.

At the elementary and middle school levels, this program includes ***Go Be Great*** empowerment journals and online program materials. At the high school level, it includes the ***Believe in You*** empowerment journals and online program materials.

All grade levels can benefit from the ***Believe in You*** video series featuring our brand ambassador, Kevin Atlas.

This program guide outlines the basic structure of the program and provides resource descriptions and implementation tips.

### Program Structure

#### Program Design

The ***Believe in You*** SEL program is built on the base of social and emotional learning research that has been established over the past 20 years. This work defines the fundamental goals of the program to (1) promote a positive learning environment that emphasizes safe participation, student engagement and empowerment, and healing; and (2) target educational outcomes focused on five core social and emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Elias et al., 1997).

Further, the ***Believe in You*** system-wide approach is supported by research that encourages structured SEL instruction and the integration of SEL principles into the daily fabric of every student's holistic school experience (Dusenbury et al., 2015; CASEL, 2020).

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**Empowerment** /noun/ The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights.

Across all grade levels, this program is designed to empower students with five specific rights. Each of these five rights is aligned directly to one of the five SEL competencies.

### Students have the right to...

- live optimistically. [SELF-AWARENESS]
- act on positive motivation. [SELF-MANAGEMENT]
- live with respect for self and others. [SOCIAL AWARENESS]
- communicate with a unique voice. [RELATIONSHIP SKILLS]
- make choices about how to share their greatness. [RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING]

### K–12 Social and Emotional Learning Scope and Sequence

K–2	3–5	Middle School	High School
Identify and use.	Recall, organize, and use.	Recall, organize, apply, explain, and draw conclusions.	Connect, think creatively, & apply in various contexts.

- ⇒ **[Grades K–2]** Students can recall SEL academic language definitions and apply basic concepts to personal decision-making and behaviors.
- ⇒ **[Grades 3–5]** Students can recall and process concept definitions in order to apply learning to their planning, decision-making, and behaviors. Strategic thinking is introduced at this level.
- ⇒ **[Middle School]** Students explore and process concepts within the context of their personal lives. There is an emphasis on strategic thinking and planning. Extended thinking around concepts prompt exploration of how individual decisions and behaviors can shape the world.
- ⇒ **[High School]** Increasing expectations for complex student reasoning. Students relate SEL concepts to personal experiences and make connections between social and emotional health, overall well-being, and achievement for self and others.

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### Program Components

#### Everyday Social and Emotional Learning

When implemented in full, teachers and students will engage in social and emotional learning activities and thinking each day. Each component can be applied by itself, or as a part of a larger SEL program implementation.

#### Weekly Morning Announcements

40 weeks of morning announcements (1 per week) are provided to help schools and classes set a positive social and emotional learning tone for the week. This focuses the entire community's attention on a common concept and helps to facilitate small and large group discussions for peers, staff, classes, and families.

#### Class Discussion Question Stems

A full page of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) question stems are provided to guide teachers and students through meaningful group dialogues that gradually increase in cognitive complexity.

#### Academic Language Tools

Vocabulary words will be introduced on a weekly basis and reinforced every day in class discussion, the promotion of positive class dynamics, and behavior management. Hang *Believe in You* and *Go Be Great* academic language tools in the classroom and around the school. Encourage and reward students for using SEL vocabulary.

#### Faculty and Staff Emotional Health Guide

Teachers and staff members are the emotional first responders for their students. For that reason, teachers and staff members are encouraged to use the same empowerment journal that their students are using. This allows adults to process personal experiences and emotions in order to care for their own emotional health. An additional emotional health guide is provided to help adults frame each week's focus concept from an educator's unique point of view.

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### Empowerment Journals

*Go Be Great* and *Believe in You* empowerment journals are designed to be used every day, and each day's entry will take most students 5–15 minutes to complete. This can be done first thing in the morning, during class transitions, or at the end of the day.

Teachers can also use the journal prompts as daily discussion starters or during weekly advisory periods. Each week's SEL theme runs throughout all grade levels (K–12). Schools with mentoring programs can work with high school students to help facilitate SEL discussions with younger students.

Because empowerment journals are physical pen-and-paper journals, students can easily complete them in distance-learning, in-school, and hybrid instructional environments. Digital versions are now available as Google Slides.

The authors of this program emphasize the importance of making students feel safe that their journals are confidential. If you require students to submit journal writing exercises on a weekly basis, we recommend allowing students to submit their work from a single day of their choosing. This empowers students with the control over which personal entries that they share.

### Implementation Tips

- **Be prepared.** Students may use journals to ask for help and support. Be prepared to refer student to your school councilors or to the appropriate professional based on your local and state requirements.
- **Start using social and emotional academic language as early in the school year as you can.** Use it to discuss class routines and expectations, and then continue to use it every day in all content areas and contexts.
- **Remember to listen with your ears, eyes, and heart.** Do students' behaviors match the words they're using? Do you have a "gut feeling" about how a student is or isn't responding? The world has been a very complicated place for you and your students. Listen closely to what they're telling you.

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- **Be patient with yourself.** Social norms have changed drastically, and social and emotional stressors have intensified for everyone. Remember to breathe and focus on the things that you *can* control (content, preparation, attitude). If you have a bad moment, hour, day, week — forgive yourself. Wake up, find something to be grateful for, and give your kids the best attitude and effort that you can.

### ***A note on equity of access...***

Over the past decade, the companies of Varsity Brands have shown a commitment to elevating the academic experience of all students, in every school, in every zip code. Through the public service efforts of OPEN (OPENPhysEd.org) and the *Believe in You* video series, Varsity Brands has provided free outcomes-based instructional tools to enhance the educational experience of more than 50 million students worldwide.

***We Believe in You. Go Be Great!***

### *References*

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning — CASEL (2020). Reunite, Renew, and Thrive: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Roadmap for Reopening School. Chicago, IL: CASEL.

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