

## Case Study: Selecting an SEL Curriculum

### Selecting a Social Emotional Learning Curriculum

*This example is based on a real school in the Midwest U.S. that used the cost-utility decision-making framework to inform a decision about selecting a social-emotional learning curriculum. Most of the details in this example come from this case but some details have been changed to protect the privacy of the school.*

#### I. **Decision Problem:**

**Short title for this decision:** Selecting a Social Emotional Learning curriculum

#### **Describe the problem that needs to be addressed:**

Sunnyvale High School is a medium-sized high school in the Midwest U.S. serving mostly minority and economically disadvantaged students. The school has been experiencing high suspension and expulsion rates and low performance on standardized test scores. Specifically, the principal has been concerned that suspension rates are particularly high for African American students and for students with less academic success. To better understand these issues, the principal began examining non-academic aspects of the school that may be hindering students' progression and learning.

#### **In one sentence, what is the decision you need to make?**

Should Sunnyvale High School implement an SEL curriculum during the 2018-19 School Year and, if so, which one?

#### **What is the name of the institution/department/person who needs to make this decision?**

- Sunnyvale High School

#### **What evidence do you have that this issue needs to be addressed?**

In the 2016-17 school year, Sunnyvale High School adopted the [Educator's Handbook](#) to better document the frequency and nature of behavior incidents at the school. Data from the Educator's Handbook showed there were 78 documented incidents resulting in out-of-school suspensions during that year. The principal wanted to understand why so many incidents were occurring, and decided to implement the [Panorama survey](#) to assess students' and teachers' social and emotional competencies, and to evaluate school climate.

#### **Who will be served by the program/strategy you choose?**

- Students
- Teachers
- Parents

#### **What is your goal for this decision?**

- To improve students' and teachers' self-management.
- To improve students' and teachers' social awareness.
- To reduce incidents of conflict at the school.
- To reduce suspension rates.
- To improve students' academic performance.

#### **Who are the stakeholders in this decision (i.e., people who will be affected by the decision)?**

- Principal
- Assistant Principal

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- Department Heads
- Instructional Leadership team
- Climate and culture team at the school
- Department of Prevention and Intervention (DPI) at the central office
- Teachers
- Students
- Parents

### Which of these stakeholders will you invite to participate in making this decision?

The principal decided to invite representatives of the school's administrators, teachers, instructional leadership team, and climate and culture team to be part of the decision-making process, in addition to a representative of the central office's DPI. The principal also planned to collect input from students when evaluating possible Solution Options. She decided to collect inputs in person from school administrators, the instructional leadership team, the climate and culture team and the DPI. She invited Sunnyvale's lead History Teacher, Lucy Liu, to provide inputs for the teachers through this online tool, *DecisionMaker*.

### What are some potential sources of solutions to address this decision problem?

- [\*Jones et al. \(2017\) report "Navigating SEL from the Inside Out"\*](#)
- [\*CASEL\*](#)
- [\*The Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education\*](#)

### By when do you need to make this decision?

- 6/15/2018

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**II. Identify Stakeholders**

The principal of Sunnyvale High School invited the following stakeholder to participate in the decision-making process via *DecisionMaker*, and asked her to contribute by providing Evaluation Criteria to help assess each of the SEL curricula being considered and to input Importance Scores to indicate the relative importance of each of these Evaluation Criteria (see Table 1 below).

**Name:** Lucy Liu

**Title:** Lead History Teacher

*Table 1. Tasks assigned to invited stakeholders*

Stakeholders	Suggest Solution Options	Provide Screening Criteria	Provide Evaluation Criteria	Contribute Importance Scores
Principal (PA)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lucy Liu (Lead History Teacher and representative for teachers)			✓	✓

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### III. Solution Options

*To identify Solution Options, the principal consulted a variety of documents, including the Jones et al. (2017) report “Navigating SEL from the Inside Out,” as well as documents from CASEL, and the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education. She identified several SEL curricula as possible Solution Options and also left open the possibility of not adopting any SEL curriculum at this time, i.e., maintaining the status quo.*

**Option 1: The RULER program** (Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating emotions) consists of a three-phase curriculum that aims to increase emotional intelligence of students by giving them practical strategies to enhance their ability to understand and regulate their own emotions and to consider and empathize with how others are feeling.

**Grades targeted:** PreK-12

**Skills addressed:** Social-emotional competencies, including emotional intelligence, which refers to the capacity to recognize one’s own emotions and those of others, to discern between different types of feelings, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior.

**Key staff required for implementation:** Teachers to conduct 45-minute weekly lessons.

**How curriculum is implemented:** At the high school level, grade-specific curriculum is implemented for each of grades 9 - 12 (80 units over 4 years, i.e., 20 units per year). Lessons are typically delivered as 45-minute sessions once a week during school hours, with flexibility to make sessions longer, or reduce length by cutting out the creative activity in the middle of each session.

**Technology hardware required:** N/A

**Internet required:** No

**PD/training required and availability:** RULER recommends sending a small team, comprised of an administrator, 2 teachers, and a school psychologist to attend a two-day training session in New Haven, CT, led by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. These staff members would constitute the school’s “core implementation team.”

RULER schools also participate in 4 ongoing coaching/mentoring calls from a RULER coach after the initial training session, plus additional calls as needed. All other school staff should complete a 2-hour online training session. The RULER core implementation team is encouraged to hold an initial 20-30 minute training session for staff at the school. The core implementation team can also hold regular meetings with staff to provide support and facilitate implementation, e.g., as part of monthly staff or departmental meetings.

Schools are encouraged to make a school charter when first adopting RULER to establish supportive and productive learning environments. The charter outlines how members of the school community aspire to treat each other.

**Additional materials:**

Posters for the classroom: Schools receive 4 sets of posters as part of the start-up materials, but can purchase additional posters;

Mood Meter app: designed to help students develop self-awareness about their emotions by identifying how emotions are changing throughout the day, and how emotions affect actions;

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New online platform to be launched in Fall 2019: likely that current RULER schools will get grandfathered in, but new RULER schools may need to pay to access the platform at an additional cost.

### Summary of evidence of effectiveness and citations:

**Brackett et al. (2010):** A pre-post study conducted on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders in fifteen classrooms across three schools found that students in classrooms integrating RULER had higher end-of-year grades and higher teacher ratings of social emotional competence compared to students in the comparison group.

**Hagelskamp, Brackett, Rivers & Salovey (2013):** A 2-year, cluster randomized controlled trial conducted in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms in 62 urban schools. Treatment schools integrated RULER into fifth- and sixth-grade English language arts (ELA) classrooms while comparison schools continued with their regular ELA curriculum only. Results support RULER's theory of change: RULER classrooms exhibited greater emotional support, better classroom organization, and more instructional support at the end of the second year of program delivery relative to comparison schools.

**Rivers et al. (2013):** A corollary study to Hagelskamp et al. (2013), this study evaluated the impact of RULER after 6 months of implementation. Similar to Hagelskamp et al. (2013), the outcomes are mainly on classroom, rather than individual behaviors.

**Reyes et al. (2013):** Another sub-study of Hagelskamp et al. (2013), the authors investigated how training, dosage, and implementation quality of RULER affected the outcomes. There were no main effects for any of the variables on student outcomes, but students had more positive outcomes when their teachers (a) attended more training sessions and taught more lessons, and (b) were classified as either moderate- or high-quality program implementers. Student outcomes were more negative when their teachers were classified as low-quality implementers who also attended more training sessions and taught more lessons.

**Known costs:** \$6,000 + flight and accommodations to send core implementation team to 2-day training at Yale Emotional Center for Intelligence, New Haven, CT.

**Other resource requirements to consider:** Curriculum in the form of PowerPoint slides and lesson plans are shared electronically once a school's staff have been trained.

URL: <http://ei.yale.edu/ruler/>

### Attached studies or reports:

- Program information documents
- List of references of SEL studies

### Links to studies:

- <http://ei.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/RULER%E2%80%99s-Feeling-Words-Curriculum-Improves-Student-Achievement.pdf>
- <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.385.3424&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- [http://ei.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/pub318\\_Reyesetal2012\\_SPR.pdf](http://ei.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/pub318_Reyesetal2012_SPR.pdf)

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**Option 2: Character First** is a K-12 character education curriculum designed to build positive social values and character by helping students develop a vocabulary of character traits and apply them to life. It is sold by Strata Leadership.

**Grades targeted:** PreK-12

**Skills addressed:** Builds leadership potential and character traits such as tolerance, sensitivity, respect.

**Key staff required for implementation:** Teachers to conduct the 30-60 minute weekly lessons.

**How curriculum is implemented:** The curriculum is designed to present one character trait per month (18 units over 2 years), and can be implemented in 30-60 minute sessions each week, with the first session of the month introducing the concept/trait, and follow-up sessions presenting related activities. For additional material, the school may be able to use the Intermediate curriculum.

**Technology hardware required:** N/A

**Internet required:** No

**PD/training required and availability:** Character First staff conduct a 2-hour on-site orientation with school staff and administration. Additional training on specific topics is also available. Dr. Virginia Smith is the researcher/author of the curriculum, and she answers emails from schools who have purchased the curriculum. She typically conducts 30-minute conference calls with schools for ongoing support on an as-needed basis for no additional cost.

**Summary of evidence of effectiveness and citations:** None

**Known costs:** \$299 for binder with full set of curriculum and references, and \$495 + travel costs for on-site training delivered by Character First trainer.

**Other resource requirements to consider:** Additional curriculum can be purchased for \$99.00 and online library licenses can be purchased at \$29.95 per user per year.

URL: <http://www.characterfirsteducation.com/c/>

**Attached studies or reports:**

- Program details document
- No evidence of effectiveness found

**Option 3: Social Decision-making/Problem Solving** is a K-8 program designed to help students develop the social-awareness, self-control and decision-making skills they need to make sound decisions and healthy life choices. The high school curriculum involves extracurricular outreach activities in the community to develop and practice these skills.

The principal ascertained that this curriculum would not meet her needs because, to fit with the school's schedule, she was looking for a curriculum that would span at least 20 weeks and could be taught in 45-60 minute sessions. She therefore did not evaluate this option beyond the initial "screening" process.

**Option 4: Adopt no SEL curriculum at this time.** In this case, the school would continue with the current advisory system, which does not have a specific SEL focus.

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### IV. Screening Criteria

*The principal used the following Screening Criteria to check whether each Solution Option met her non-negotiable requirements before considering them further:*

- Fit with school schedule: Does the program contain at least 20 weeks of curriculum or lessons that can be taught in the classroom in 45-60 minute sessions?
- Is the program stand-alone (i.e., can it be implemented without any additional curriculum or activities)?

Note that the principal initially set out to identify Solution Options for which research evidence exists to suggest that the SEL curriculum could have a positive impact on reducing behavior incidents for students similar to those at her school. She was disappointed to find that most SEL programs do not have rigorous evidence of effectiveness. Moreover, for those SEL curricula that have been studied, she did not feel the context or student population were similar enough to her own school context and student body. As a result, she could not use evidence of effectiveness at reducing behavior incidents as a way to differentiate between potential Solution Options.

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### V. Map Solution Options Against Screening Criteria

*The Principal used the Jones et al. (2017) report "[Navigating SEL from the Inside Out](#)" to check details about each of the 3 programs in the list of Solution Options and determine whether each program met both of her Screening Criteria (see Table 2 below). Option 4 is already in place at the school, so the principal could judge that Solution Option from real life experience.*

Table 2. Mapping table to screen solution options

Screening Criteria	RULER	Character First	Social-Decision Making/Problem Solving	No SEL/Advisory classes
Fit with school schedule: Does the program contain at least 20 weeks of curriculum or lessons that can be taught in the classroom in 45-60 minute sessions?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Is the program stand-alone (i.e., can it be implemented without any additional curriculum or activities)?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*One program, Social Decision-making/Problem Solving, did not meet one Screening Criterion, and was therefore eliminated, leaving the principal with three Solution Options: RULER, Character First, or adopt no SEL curriculum at this time.*

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### VI. Evaluation Criteria

*Once the principal had narrowed down the list of Solution Options, she wanted to involve stakeholders in helping to select which option to adopt. She developed an initial list of Evaluation Criteria to share with the stakeholders, but she also wanted to allow stakeholders to contribute other ideas for Evaluation Criteria and to provide Importance Scores.*

*To gather input from the various stakeholders, the principal convened sessions with a group containing a representative from each of the stakeholder groups: administrators, teachers, the school Climate and Culture team and the DPI. The principal entered their suggestions for Evaluation Criteria and Importance Scores into DecisionMaker. Lucy Liu, the Lead History Teacher, communicated with the teachers during PD sessions to collect their inputs and entered these inputs into DecisionMaker on their behalf.*

The initial list of Evaluation Criteria developed by the principal was:

1. **Availability of training/PD to support implementer:** Availability of professional development opportunities and support.
2. **Fit with school calendar/schedule:** Feasibility of integration into the current schedule.
3. Student preference/buy in.
4. Feasibility of planning requirements for SEL activities.
5. Inclusion of parents and community.

During one of the PD sessions, a teacher suggested that Lucy Liu add the following Evaluation Criterion to the list:

6. Grade level differentiation/rigor.

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**VII. Importance Scores**

*In this step, the decision-maker or facilitator can assign different weights to each stakeholder or stakeholder representative by giving them different numbers of votes. By default, DecisionMaker assigns 10 votes to each stakeholder, with the Project Administrator (PA) counting as one stakeholder. In this case, the principal and Lucy Liu are each initially assigned 10 of the total 20 votes available. However, because Lucy Liu is representing teachers and the principal is representing all other stakeholder groups, the principal decided to assign 8 votes to Lucy Liu and 12 votes to herself. The principal input Importance Scores on behalf of the stakeholders she was representing and Lucy Liu input Importance Scores on behalf of the teachers as shown in Table 3 below.*

Table 3. Importance scores assigned to each evaluation criterion

Evaluation Criteria	Average Importance Score	Importance Scores entered by Principal	Importance Scores entered by Lucy Liu	Importance Weight
<b>Votes assigned</b>		12 (For Principal and other stakeholders)	8 (For all teachers)	
Feasibility of planning requirements for SEL activities	88	80	100	<b>0.17</b>
Inclusion of parents and community	78	85	68	<b>0.15</b>
Grade level differentiation/rigor	86	87	85	<b>0.17</b>
Availability of professional development opportunities and support	99	98	100	<b>0.20</b>
Feasibility of integration into the current schedule	87	85	90	<b>0.17</b>
Student preference/buy-in	68	60	80	<b>0.13</b>

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**VIII. Evidence Gathering to Evaluate Options**

*To evaluate each Solution Option against the Evaluation Criteria, the principal and Lucy Liu contacted each of the SEL curriculum providers (for RULER and Character First) to collect information on:*

- implementation of the curriculum*
- approximate amount of time needed for teachers to prepare lessons*
- availability of PD and training, and*
- inclusion of parents.*

*Based on this information, the principal invited a smaller group of the stakeholders (three teachers including Lucy Liu, one Master Teacher, one representative from the Climate and Culture team, one from the instructional leadership team and one from DPI) to help her evaluate each Solution Option against the Evaluation Criteria. During a single meeting, this group used the information shown below in the Evaluation Measures Table (Table 4) to collaboratively assign the Importance Scores shown in the Evaluation Data Table (Table 5).*

*They also collected information on the costs and resource requirements to implement each Solution Option, which was used in the cost step of the analysis. Lucy Liu piloted a lesson from each curriculum with students and elicited student feedback through a survey.*

Table 4. Evaluation Measures Table

Evaluation Criteria	Measures	Option 1: RULER	Option 2: Character First	Option 3: Status quo: (Advisory sessions + currently offered PD)
	Evaluation method and scale	What information will you use to make this decision?		
<b>Availability of professional development opportunities and support</b>	Rate availability of PD and support on a scale of 0 to 10 (10 = very available, 0 = not available at all)	Information from vendor: Initial training includes a 2 hr online course followed by a 2-day training session in New Haven for an administrator, 2 teachers (representing grades 9-10 and 11-12), and a school psychologist. This will be the core implementation team. The training fee includes 4 coaching/mentoring calls after the initial training.	Information from vendor: For initial training, a Character First trainer travels to the school for a 2-hour orientation session. Ideally, all staff in the building attend the training. The trainer can provide additional staff development on the same day for an additional cost.  For ongoing support, Dr. Virginia Smith is the researcher/author of the	Based on current experience: This option leaves the school with no support or PD for SEL.

		<p>Additional support requested is usually free.</p> <p>To train the rest of the school staff, the vendor recommends that the core implementation team hold a 20-30 minute meeting (usually during a monthly staff meeting) to introduce staff to RULER and to build buy-in. Schools are encouraged to make a school charter outlining how members of the school community aspire to treat each other in order to establish supportive and productive learning environments. Staff can then take the 2-hr online training course. The core implementation team can hold sessions/meetings with staff during monthly staff or departmental meetings on an as-needed basis to facilitate implementation.</p>	<p>curriculum, and she answers emails for schools who have purchased the curriculum. She typically holds 30-minute conference calls with schools on an as-needed basis for free.</p>	
<p><b>Fit with school calendar/schedule: Feasibility of integration into the current schedule</b></p>	<p>Ask School Scheduler to review each Solution Option and score fit with schedule on a scale of 0-10.</p>	<p>Information from vendor: Sessions can be implemented during the current Friday advisory sessions which last 45 minutes.</p>	<p>Information from vendor: Sessions can be implemented during Friday advisory sessions for 30-60 min; with the first session of each unit introducing the character trait of the month, followed by related activities in subsequent weeks that month.</p>	<p>Current experience: Advisory sessions are already occurring on Fridays.</p>
<p><b>Student preference/buy-in/support</b></p>	<p>Ask students or representatives to rate their preference or support for each Solution Option on a Scale of 0-10. Average the scores</p>	<p>Student survey taken after attending a 25-minute pilot lesson: Students rated RULER an average of 5.42 on a scale of 0 to 10 when asked “<i>How much would you enjoy participating in RULER lessons?</i>”</p>	<p>Student survey taken after attending a 25-minute pilot lesson: Students rated Character First an average of 4.8 on a scale of 0 to 10 when asked “<i>How much would you enjoy participating in Character First lessons?</i>”</p>	<p>Student survey taken during advisory after students attended the two pilot lessons: Students rated their current advisory</p>

	across all the respondents.			sessions an average of 6.6 on a scale of 0 to 10 when asked “ <i>How much do you currently enjoy advisory?</i> ”
<b>Feasibility of planning requirements for SEL activities</b>	Rate feasibility of planning requirements on a scale of 0 to 10 (10 = very feasible, 0 = not at all feasible)	Information from vendor: Teacher prep time is 30 minutes per week on average, but it is up to the teacher. Lessons are written to get teachers 85-90% of the way to full delivery. Administration/management time varies by school, but this would include time for the core implementation team to plan and execute any staff meetings + any coaching calls, estimated at a few hours per month.	Information from vendor: Teacher prep time is 10 minutes per week on average, but varies by teacher. Administration/management: The vendor recommends having a core team championing implementation, which can introduce monthly traits at staff meetings. Time needed to prepare and lead these meetings is estimated to be a couple of hours per month on average.	Previous experience: Teachers currently spend little time preparing for advisory.
<b>Inclusion of parents and community in SEL programming</b>	Rate on a scale of 0 to 10 (10 = ready-made materials and high level of support for interacting with families and communities, 0 = curriculum provides no inclusion of parents and community)	Information from vendor: An initial workshop is provided by the core implementation team to introduce RULER to parents. These can be implemented in the morning or evening whenever it is feasible to get parents and families to the school. The core implementation team can conduct additional parent/family workshops as needed. RULER has an entire team at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence focused on family outreach, and online resources that can also support family outreach. They suggest that families also make a family charter with their kids, similar to the	Information from vendor: To provide initial training of parents and families, aspects of the curriculum can be provided as a hand-out to send home to parents. There may be a one-pager designed specifically for parents that explains what the program is about. The core implementation team can access the online library resources geared to the adult level. These include 3-5 minute video presentations to introduce the monthly trait that can be shown to parents. Character First staff members are available to travel to provide family workshops for an additional cost, but many schools do this on their own through their core implementation team. For ongoing	There is no parent or family component related to advisory sessions.

		<p>school charter, to outline how members of the family aspire to treat each other. Hot topics for workshops include homework, respect, sleeping, getting students off technology, and sibling rivalry.</p>	<p>support for parents and families, there are resources and written materials (a workbook) that can be provided for free if the core implementation team wants to conduct training sessions with parents. Ongoing trainings can be monthly engagements with parents based on the trait of the month. There are additional resources available through the online library.</p>	
<p><b>Grade level differentiation/rigor of SEL curriculum</b></p>	<p>Rate on a scale of 0 to 10 (10 = curriculum provides different materials for each year of high school, 0 = no difference in curriculum by year/grade level).</p>	<p>Information from vendor: The curriculum contains developmentally specific content for each year. Grade 9 is basic skills for emotional intelligence. Grades 10-12 are developmentally specific and address subjects related to student experiences in each grade such as applying to college or thinking about identity outside of school.</p>	<p>Information from vendor: The curriculum consists of 18 units over 2 years, which includes one character trait per month. Schools could add on Intermediate curriculum for another year, but the curriculum is not geared to developmental stages for each grade level.</p>	<p>Current experience: This option does not include an SEL curriculum, therefore there is no differentiation of SEL curriculum across grade levels.</p>

Table 5. Evaluation Data Table

Evaluation Criteria	Measures	Option 1: RULER	Option 2: Character First	Option 3: Status quo: (Advisory sessions + currently offered PD)
	Evaluation method and scale	Evaluation score		
<b>Feasibility of planning requirements for SEL activities</b>	Rate feasibility of planning requirements on a scale of 0 to 10 (10 = very feasible, 0 = not at all feasible)	8.7	3.0	10.0
<b>Inclusion of parents and community in SEL programming</b>	Rate on a scale of 0 to 10 (10 = ready-made materials and high level of support for interacting with families and communities, 0 = no inclusion).	7.8	5.8	0.0
<b>Grade level differentiation/rigor of SEL curriculum</b>	Rate on a scale of 0 to 10 (10 = curriculum provides different materials for each year of high school, 0 = no difference in curriculum by year/grade level)	9.3	2.8	0.0
<b>Availability of professional development opportunities and support</b>	Rate availability of PD and support on a scale of 0 to 10 (10 = very available, 0 = not available at all)	8.3	1.3	0.0
<b>Feasibility of integration into the current schedule</b>	Ask School Scheduler to review each Solution Option and score fit on a scale of 0-10.	9.3	7.5	10.0
<b>Student preference/buy-in</b>	Ask students or representatives to rate their preference or support for each Solution Option on a Scale of 0-10. Average the scores across all the respondents.	5.4	4.8	6.6

*When evaluating each Solution Option, stakeholders considered the information they gathered from the vendors, their own experiences with implementing advisory sessions, and the survey on student preferences.*

*The status quo, since it was already being implemented in a way that worked practically for teachers, scored 10 on “Feasibility of implementation” and “Feasibility of planning.” Of course, for any criteria specifically related to SEL programming, the status quo scored 0 since it does not provide SEL-related content.*

*To elicit student preferences, both RULER and Character First were piloted with a group of students, and students were asked to rate each program option relative to their current advisory classes. Notice that students rated advisory higher than RULER and Character First. The principal speculated that this may be because advisory sessions are usually unstructured and students enjoy the freedom to choose what to do. Between the two SEL curricula, the students preferred RULER to Character First.*

*Notice also that Character First scored relatively low on criteria such as “Availability of PD” and “Grade level differentiation.” Character First did not offer any standardized ongoing support for the SEL implementation team at the school and is designed as a one-year curriculum that could be spread over two years, whereas RULER provides grade-specific curriculum.*



**IX. Costs:**

*Information on the costs associated with each program were also collected from the vendors. While, for budgeting purposes, the principal of Sunnyvale focused on identifying any new expenditures related to the implementation of an SEL curriculum, costs considerations should include all resource requirements that go into implementing a program, such as teachers' and other staff members' time. This is particularly true for SEL interventions that require the involvement of all the members of the school community. Full cost analyses may also include potential savings, e.g., from reduced intervention time by teachers and administrators if programs improve student social and emotional competencies and reduce behavior incidents.*

*Table 6 shows that new expenditures in Year 1 of implementation for each of the two SEL curricula are related to training and materials (i.e., curriculum). These are the "costs" that the principal presented when arguing for a budget allocation for an SEL program.*

*Table A2 in the Appendix shows full costs of implementation, including teacher and administrator time and also estimated savings from a reduction in behavior incidents. The principal assumed that RULER and Character First would result in the same reduction in behavior incidents and that this would result in time savings, primarily for the Assistant Principal of Sunnyvale. Note that if these full cost numbers were used in the analysis instead of only expenditures, the cost-utility metrics would be quite different, with both SEL curricula providing net savings. Character First would result in more savings because it is less time-intensive to implement.*

*See the associated cost spreadsheet showing the details of the full cost analysis for each Solution Option.*

Table 6. Year 1 expenditure by ingredient for SEL curricula

Ingredient	RULER	Character First	Advisory and current PD offerings
Initial training session	\$6,000	\$495	\$0
Travel - flights	\$2,250	\$250	\$0
Travel - local transportation	\$720	\$280	\$0
Accommodations	\$2,000	\$0	\$0
Curriculum	\$0	\$299	\$0
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>\$10,970</b>	<b>\$1,324</b>	<b>\$0</b>

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**X. Make a Decision**

Table 7 summarizes of the overall utility values, expenditures, and expenditures per unit of utility for each of the Solution Options considered. Table A1 in the Appendix shows detailed utility results for each Solution Option against each Evaluation Criterion.

*Table 7. Overall utility value or stakeholder satisfaction, expenditures, and expenditures per unit of utility for each Solution Option*

Solution Option	Overall Utility Value or Stakeholder Satisfaction (0-10)	Expenditures	Expenditures per Unit of Utility
<b>RULER</b>	8.2	\$10,970	\$1,331
<b>Character First</b>	4.1	\$1,324	\$324
<b>Status quo</b>	4.3	\$0	\$0

The principal considered all three metrics that resulted from the analysis: overall utility value or stakeholder satisfaction, expenditures, and expenditures per unit of utility. She decided to select the RULER program because it had the highest utility value (8.2/10). Even though Character First required much lower expenditures (\$1,324), which resulted in a lower expenditure per unit of utility (\$324), many stakeholders did not feel it would meet the needs of the school, as reflected in the low utility value (4.1/10).

Also, given that the utility value for the status quo (maintaining current advisory sessions) was higher (4.3/10) than the utility value for Character First, it would be hard to argue for a budget allocation for a curriculum that would result in less satisfied stakeholders!

Note that in the full cost analysis, although there is no empirical evidence that Character First and RULER reduce behavioral incidents, the principal assumed that implementing either RULER or Character First could potentially result in fewer behavioral incidents to manage. This would allow for a reduction in an administrator’s time equivalent to 0.5 FTE. Under this assumption, when full costs and savings of each program were estimated (see Table A2 in the document associated with this Case Study), Character First could yield net savings for the school of approximately \$29,000 and RULER could yield net savings of approximately \$12,000.

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**Appendix**

*Table A1. Evaluation measures and criterion-level utility values*

Evaluation Criteria	Importance weight	Data to enter	Lowest plausible value	Highest plausible value	The higher the value is, the better (Yes/No)	RULER		Character First		No SEL	
						Rating on measure	Utility value (0-10)	Rating on measure	Utility value (0-10)	Rating on measure	Utility value (0-10)
Feasibility of planning requirements for SEL activities	0.17	Scale	0	10	Yes	8.7	8.7	3	3	10	10
Inclusion of parents and community in SEL programming	0.15	Scale	0	10	Yes	7.8	7.8	5.8	5.8	0	0
Grade level differentiation/rigor of SEL curriculum	0.17	Scale	0	10	Yes	9.3	9.3	2.8	2.8	0	0
Availability of professional development opportunities and support	0.20	Scale	0	10	Yes	8.3	8.3	1.3	1.3	0	0
Feasibility of integration into the current schedule	0.17	Scale	0	10	Yes	9.3	9.3	7.5	7.5	10	10
Student preferences	0.13	Scale	0	10	Yes	5.4	5.4	4.8	4.8	6.6	6.6
<b>Overall Weighted Utility</b>							<b>8.2</b>		<b>4.3</b>		<b>4.1</b>

*Table A2. Full costs and estimated savings associated with each Solution Option*

	<b>RULER</b>	<b>Character First</b>	<b>Advisory and current PD offerings</b>
Total implementation costs in Year 1 including teacher and administrator time	\$121,499	\$104,533	\$111,944
Incremental costs in Year 1 (i.e., costs or savings compared with the status quo: advisory and current PD offerings related to advisory).	\$9,556	-\$7,411	\$0
Expected savings in Year 1 due to reduction in behavior incidents	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$0
<b>Total savings in Year 1</b>	<b>\$12,444</b>	<b>\$29,411</b>	<b>\$0</b>