



CASE STUDY

# Anaheim Elementary School District

*Second Step Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) was the catalyst for districtwide cultural shift around social-emotional health.*



## Situation

Anaheim Elementary School District (AESD) is home to 24 schools with an enrollment of approximately 18,500 PreK-Grade 6 students. It's the second-largest elementary school district in the state, and its 22 square miles include Anaheim, Orange County's largest city.

Second Step® SEL had been taught in K-6 classrooms since 2006 as a violence prevention program, complying with Safe and Drug Free Schools to promote a positive school climate. There was mounting recognition that social-emotional learning was needed, but it was still widely viewed as independent from academic achievement.

By 2008, the district could see that teachers were increasingly spending more of their instructional time addressing student behavioral issues in the classroom.

## Approach

To support the whole child and address teachers' classroom challenges, the district was awarded a three-year Safe Schools Healthy Students grant in 2009. As a result, all K-6 classrooms received the latest version of Second Step. A portion of the grant funds were allocated to help teachers develop and share best practices in implementing the program. Over the next seven years, the district allocated funds to purchase and implement updated versions of Second Step SEL for all grade levels.

*“As instructional minutes were dedicated to SEL, there was a collective realization of just how critical these skills are to academic success. It was a top down, bottom up approach at the same time.”*

Sandra Renner, Pupil Services Specialist  
Anaheim Elementary School District



## Outcomes

Initially, Second Step SEL was perceived and implemented as a stand-alone program. Today, the district is striving for daily integration. The relevance and extendibility of the materials, the minimal prep time, and its profound impact has led the Second Step Program to become an integral part of each school's culture.

Second Step SEL is a seamless resource for counselors and teachers in the district using restorative practices.

Customized report cards place an equal emphasis on academics and social-emotional skill-building, showing the district's deep level of commitment.

### SOURCES:

Interview: Jason Ferrell, Pupil Services Specialist, 2/9/2017

Interview: Sandra Renner, Pupil Services Specialist, 2/9/2017

*“ The district’s commitment to Second Step began with compliance to federal guidelines for violence prevention. The continued use of Second Step is evidence of the district’s commitment to social-emotional learning as a foundation for academic achievement and successful engagement in the classroom and school community. ”*

Sandra Renner, Pupil Services Specialist  
Anaheim Elementary School District

## Contact

Research-based Second Step SEL is a universal, classroom-based curriculum for Preschool through Grade 8 that teaches students the skills they need to be safe, succeed in school, and get along well with others.

Learn about more educators' experiences with Second Step SEL at [SecondStep.org/success](https://SecondStep.org/success) or call Committee for Children at 800-634-4449, ext. 1.

## Who We Are

Though we're best known for our innovative SEL-centric programs for schools, Committee for Children is involved in all kinds of initiatives to improve the lives of children. Founded as a nonprofit in 1979 to help victims of child sexual abuse, we continue to advocate for policies and legislation to protect kids and provide equal opportunities for all. From our headquarters in Seattle, Washington, we partner with researchers, publishers, and nonprofits around the world. Our programs reach students in over 70 countries, and we work to make sure all children have a chance to thrive.