

# A Unified Vision for College & Career Readiness: Social-Emotional Learning in Racine Unified School District

Over the last five years, **college and career readiness has been a priority at Racine Unified School District (RUSD)**. Guided by its [North Star Vision](#), the urban Wisconsin district is committed to ensuring that all students—from kindergarten through 12th grade—are on track for college, career, and life readiness. This has meant building developmentally-appropriate [social-emotional learning \(SEL\)](#) and life skills from the moment a student steps into a Racine elementary school.

In need of a way to **benchmark students' social-emotional growth over time**, RUSD partnered with Panorama. Today, the district uses [Panorama's SEL surveys](#) to collect student perception data on skills like social awareness, grit, and emotion regulation. Educators can view the results in Panorama by grade level, student, subgroup, and more—helping them **allocate supports in the right areas**.

## Key Trend:

### Students in Grades 3-5 Report Low Emotion Regulation Skills



Data from RUSD's Panorama survey showed that **Emotion Regulation** was an **area for growth** in elementary schools. "We need to help build those skills in kids," said Andrea Rittgers, director of student services at RUSD. "If students can regulate their emotions, then they're going to attend class more and learn more effectively... and academics will improve as well."

**Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey**  
Sample Questions: Emotion Regulation (Grades 3-5)

- How often are you able to pull yourself out of a bad mood?
- When everybody around you gets angry, how relaxed can you stay?
- When things go wrong for you, how calm are you able to stay?

[Download](#) the full survey

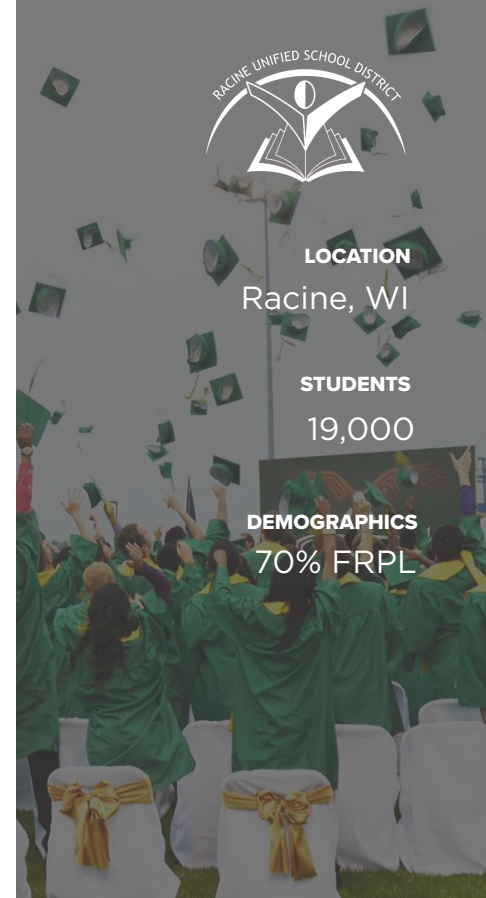
## Taking Action:

### RUSD's Strategies to Improve Emotion Regulation

Based on the data from Panorama, school and district leaders at RUSD implemented the following interventions to help elementary school students better manage their emotions:

- 1. Second Step program:** RUSD uses [Second Step's](#) social-emotional learning curriculum, which provides educators with tools and resources for teaching skills like emotion regulation in the classroom.
- 2. Mindfulness exercises:** Students participate in "STAR breathing" exercises to navigate stressful situations. At one school, the principal holds STAR breathing sessions over the PA once or twice a day so students can practice this important skill.
- 3. Lunch groups:** Using student-level reports from Panorama, educators and counselors identify students who need similar Tier 2 supports around SEL and bring them together for lunch sessions to work on SEL skills.

As RUSD continues its journey to realize the North Star Vision, social-emotional learning remains an essential piece of the puzzle. By using SEL data to understand the cause of a student's behavior or struggles, educators can confidently take action to get each and every student back on track.



**LOCATION**  
Racine, WI

**STUDENTS**  
19,000

**DEMOGRAPHICS**  
70% FRPL

*"We wanted to move beyond the academics to make sure that we're preparing students for college and career readiness, and truly measuring the things that will help students be successful."*



**Eric Gallien**  
Superintendent  
Racine Unified School District