

Built for Children Who No Longer Exist

Naming Post-2012 SEL and Reclassifying the K-12 Social and Emotional
Learning Field

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The author developed the curriculum evaluated here and is the founder and owner of Control the Moment, LLC, which holds the curriculum and all associated intellectual property. That ownership is a direct financial interest in the classification advanced here, and readers should weigh the analysis accordingly. No external funding supported this manuscript, and no organization other than Control the Moment, LLC reviewed it before release.

The classification framework, the four-point test that carries the central claim, and the procedure for challenging the classification are published in full, so that the claim can be applied, checked, and if warranted overturned by parties with no relationship to the author. Every coding conclusion rests on materials the named programs and public agencies have themselves published, and the correction procedure in Appendix B commits the author to review and, where the published record supports it, revise those conclusions.

Abstract

This manuscript defines a category within K-12 social and emotional learning, called Post-2012 SEL, and applies it to fifteen programs and to the current CASEL Program Guide list. The category rests on three conditions, and the case for drawing it rests on dated public records. United States adult smartphone ownership first passed half the adult population in spring 2013, at 56 percent, up from 35 percent in 2011 (Pew Research Center, 2013, 2026). Federally tracked measures of adolescent distress rose across the same decade and have not come back down (CDC, 2023; Daly, 2022). Exposure to that environment now starts in infancy, with 40 percent of American children having a tablet of their own by age 2 (Mann et al., 2025). The research describing how that environment bears on attention, inhibitory control, and reward-driven engagement is itself recent, and the umbrella-level synthesis of youth screen research was published in 2024 (Sanders et al., 2024). Programs were coded against a four-point test applied to published theories of change, published dosing, and published architecture, using materials anyone can retrieve and retrieved in July 2026. Every reviewed program in wide United States adoption is classified as Pre-2012 SEL on the basis of its published theory of change, including Second Step, PATHS, Positive Action, Responsive Classroom, RULER, Harmony, CharacterStrong, Wayfinder, 7 Mindsets, and Move This World. Control the Moment™, released in 2026, is the first K-12 Tier I universal prevention curriculum identified here whose published theory of change is built on the post-2012 literature. No claim of outcome superiority is made. The curriculum has no outcome data and has not been independently evaluated.

Keywords: social and emotional learning, universal prevention, adolescent mental health, screen media, program classification, curriculum design

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1. Introduction

American schools choose social and emotional learning curricula from a market whose leading products were built for a student population that no longer enters kindergarten. That is a point about the dates on the published foundations of those products, several of which have randomized evidence collected within the last five years, and it is not a judgment of their quality. Between 2011 and 2013 the ordinary conditions of childhood in the United States changed in ways that show up in dated national series, and the peer-reviewed literature describing those conditions was assembled afterward, in most cases well after the curricula in widest adoption had fixed their theories of change. The gap between those two timelines is what this manuscript is about.

Adult smartphone ownership in the United States passed 50 percent in spring 2013, up from 35 percent when Pew first measured it in 2011 (Pew Research Center, 2013, 2026). Federal surveillance of adolescent mental health shows persistent sadness or hopelessness among high school students rising from 28 percent in 2011 to 42 percent in 2021, with the figure for female students reaching 57 percent (CDC, 2023), and past-year major depressive episode among adolescents rising from 8.1 percent in 2009 to 15.8 percent in 2019 (Daly, 2022). Nationally representative research on children from birth to age eight shows device access now beginning in infancy, with 40 percent of children having a tablet of their own by age 2 and 58 percent by age 4 (Mann et al., 2025). The synthesis literature describing what this environment does to attention and inhibitory control postdates all of it. The umbrella review harmonizing 102 meta-analyses of youth screen research appeared in 2024 (Sanders et al., 2024), and the federal advisory naming youth social media use an urgent public health issue appeared in 2023 (Office of the Surgeon General, 2023).

The field of social and emotional learning has no vocabulary for this discontinuity. Programs are compared on evidence tier, on CASEL designation, on grade span, on delivery model, and on cost, and each of those axes is useful for what it does. None of them records when the developmental problem a program was designed against was first described in the research record. A district comparing two curricula can find out which has the stronger randomized evidence base without being able to find out whether either was designed for the attentional and regulatory profile of the cohort now sitting in its classrooms. That missing axis is what this manuscript addresses.

The manuscript sets out to do four things. It documents the epidemiological and technological timeline at the strength the primary sources support, including the places where that timeline is less orderly than popular accounts of it. It summarizes what the post-2012 mechanism literature establishes about attention, executive control, and early exposure, and marks where that literature is correlational, conducted in adults, or carrying substantial risk of bias. It specifies a reviewable classification protocol and applies it to fifteen programs and to the extended CASEL Program Guide list, reporting results at two levels of confidence. And it defines Post-2012 SEL as a category with necessary and jointly sufficient conditions, one of which is a four-point test a third party can apply to any program without the author's participation.

One uniqueness claim follows, and it concerns design provenance. Control the Moment™ is the only K-12 universal social and emotional learning curriculum in the review scope whose published theory of change is built on the post-2012 research describing smartphone-era attention, inhibitory control, and reward-driven platform design. That is a claim about the public record as it stood in July 2026, and any program can defeat it by publishing a qualifying theory of change.

Several claims are not made, and Appendix A states them in full. The short version: no claim of outcome superiority, since Control the Moment has no outcome data; no claim that daily dosing or a K-12 spiral architecture is unique, since Move This World, Calm Classroom, Inner Explorer, and Schoolbeat all publish daily cadences and Move This World publishes spiral language matching the definition used here (Calm Classroom, n.d.; Inner Explorer, 2026; Move This World, 2020; Schoolbeat, 2026); no claim that any named program is ineffective or poorly designed; and no position on whether social media use causes the adolescent mental health inflection, a question still open in the published literature and one the argument here does not depend on.

2. Epidemiological and Technological Context

This section documents an inflection in adolescent mental health indicators recorded in federal surveillance data, sets it against a dated technological threshold, and identifies where the chronology is more complicated than summary accounts allow.

2.1 Adoption of Mobile Computing, 2011 to 2013

United States adult smartphone ownership first passed 50 percent in spring 2013, reaching 56 percent in a survey fielded between April 17 and May 19 of that year, up from 35 percent when Pew first measured smartphone ownership in 2011, and standing at 91 percent in the 2025 measurement (Pew Research Center, 2013, 2026). The measurement is of adults, not of households and not of children, and the crossing happened in spring 2013 rather than in late 2012, so any account that treats a single month as a switch point is claiming more than this series can support.

Twenge et al. (2018) used this period to mark the start of an adolescent inflection running roughly from 2010 to 2015, and a substantial literature since has adopted that framing. The framing is contested on both effect size and causal identification, and Section 9 takes that up. Nothing in the classification here requires the dispute to be settled, because the classification rests on the dates at which environments and literatures appeared and not on the mechanism connecting them.

2.2 Trends in Adolescent Psychological Distress

Four surveillance series document the change in adolescent distress across the 2010s, three of them federal or international and one of them a state trend file.

Past-year major depressive episode among United States adolescents rose from 8.1 percent in 2009 to 15.8 percent in 2019, and among girls from 11.4 percent to 23.4 percent over the same interval (Daly, 2022). Among United States high school students, the share reporting persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness rose from 28 percent in 2011 to 42 percent in 2021, a relative increase of 50 percent calculated from the published figures (CDC, 2023). By sex, female high school students reporting persistent sadness reached 57 percent in 2021, up from 36 percent in 2011, while the male figures were 21 percent in 2011 and 29 percent in 2021 (CDC, 2023).

Internationally, the Programme for International Student Assessment measured school loneliness in 2000, 2003, 2012, 2015, and 2018 across 37 countries with 1,049,784 respondents, and loneliness rose between 2012 and 2018 in 36 of the 37 (Twenge et al., 2021). No loneliness data were collected between 2003 and 2012, so the series supports no statement about the intervening years, and none is made here.

North Dakota, where this curriculum is being introduced, shows the same direction of travel in its own trend file. The share of North Dakota high school students who felt sad or hopeless for two or more weeks rose from 20.8 percent in 2003 to 36.0 percent in 2021 and stood at 35.0 percent in 2023, which the state flags as an increase across the 2003 to 2023 window (North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, 2024). The Department of Public Instruction reports that suicide is the second leading cause of death among North Dakotans aged 10 to 24 (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2026c).

These are surveillance data and they carry the limits of surveillance data. They record prevalence and how it moved. They do not identify a cause, and they do not attribute the movement to any deficit in any capacity of the students surveyed.

A separate federal document addresses not what caused the movement but what protects against it. The CDC's Suicide Prevention Resource for Action identifies seven strategies supported by the best available evidence, one of which is to teach coping and problem-solving skills, and it names support for social and emotional learning programs as the first approach under that strategy (CDC, 2022). The rationale given is that life skills including coping, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and critical thinking protect against suicidal behavior, and that teaching young people to manage everyday challenges is a developmental component of prevention rather than a response to crisis. The 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey supplement reports the corresponding association within the surveillance data, listing positive coping skills among the protective factors associated with lower prevalence of risk indicators (CDC, 2024). Neither document says a deficit in coping skill produced the increase in the trend series, and neither is cited here for that. What they establish is narrower: instruction in coping and emotional regulation is a federally recognized suicide prevention strategy, and universal school-based delivery is the vehicle the agency names for it.

My own clinical position, which is a position and not a finding, is that the rise in adolescent distress and suicide mortality reflects in part a deficit in learned coping and emotional regulation skill, and that a deficit of that kind can be addressed by instruction delivered at population scale. The federal surveillance sources do not make that attribution and are not represented as making it. The position draws on the prevention framework above and on the universal prevention literature, which shows school-based social and emotional learning programs producing small but consistent improvements in emotion regulation and reductions in internalizing symptoms across very large samples (Cipriano et al., 2023; Durlak et al., 2011). Read as a rationale for universal prevention, the position is defensible on that literature. Read as an explanation of why the surveillance curves moved, it would exceed the evidence, and no such reading is intended.

2.3 Youth Suicide Trends, 1975 to 2017

The frequently repeated version of the youth suicide timeline, in which adolescent suicide rose after 2010 following decades of stability, misstates the record. The accurate chronology is harder and carries more weight.

Youth suicide rates fell for roughly two decades before they rose, and the rise began around 2007 rather than after 2010. The rate among persons aged 10 to 24 was stable from 2000 through 2007 and then increased 56 percent between 2007, at 6.8 per 100,000, and 2017, at 10.6 per 100,000. For ages 10 to 14 the rate fell from 1.5 per 100,000 in 2000 to 0.9 in 2007 and then nearly tripled to 2.5 by 2017 (National Center for Health Statistics, 2019). Over a longer window, the rate for males aged 15 to 19 rose from 12.0 to 18.1 per 100,000 between 1975 and 1990, declined to 10.8 by 2007, then rose 31 percent to 14.2 by 2015. Female rates likewise declined from 1990 to 2007 before doubling between 2007 and 2015 (CDC, 2017).

The reversal begins about five years before the smartphone threshold, which rules out any argument treating 2013 as the moment of onset. Whatever turned the curve in 2007 was already working before mobile computing reached half the adult population.

The reversal also means more against its own baseline than a simple upward trend would. Two decades of falling youth suicide, built by sustained prevention work, means restriction, and expanded treatment access, were reversed and then passed. A rise from a baseline that was already climbing just continues a trend, and a rise that reverses a long decline and then keeps going is a break in the series.

The acceleration through the 2010s, rather than the turn itself, is where the smartphone-era argument holds. The developmental environment of American childhood changed materially across that decade, the change is documented in dated federal series, and a curriculum designed against the pre-change environment is aimed at a partly different problem. That holds whichever causal account of the 2007 turn eventually prevails.

2.4 Timeline

Figure 1 assembles the dated events above into one chronology, so the relationship between the technological threshold, the surveillance series, and the publication dates of the relevant research can be inspected directly.

Figure 1. *Chronology of Mobile Computing Adoption, Adolescent Distress Indicators, and the Publication of the Post-2012 Research Literature*

Year	Event
2007	Youth suicide rates, in decline since about 1990, begin to rise (National Center for Health Statistics, 2019). The literature window for the field's most-cited meta-analysis closes on December 31 (Durlak et al., 2011).
2010	The iPhone 4 launches with a front-facing camera, and Instagram launches in October as a photo-first mobile feed.
2011	Thirty-five percent of United States adults own a smartphone (Pew Research Center, 2026). Persistent sadness among high school students stands at 28 percent (CDC, 2023).
2012	Facebook announces its acquisition of Instagram in April and completes it in September following clearance by the Federal Trade Commission (Federal Trade Commission, 2012).
Spring 2013	United States adult smartphone ownership crosses 50 percent, reaching 56 percent in a survey fielded April 17 to May 19 (Pew Research Center, 2013).
2017	The suicide rate among persons aged 10 to 24 reaches 10.6 per 100,000, 56 percent above the 2007 rate (National Center for Health Statistics, 2019).
2018	School loneliness, measured across the 2012 to 2018 interval, rises in 36 of 37 countries assessed by the Programme for International Student Assessment (Twenge et al., 2021).
2019	Adolescent past-year major depressive episode prevalence reaches 15.8 percent, nearly double the 2009 rate (Daly, 2022).
2021	Persistent sadness reaches 42 percent among high school students overall and 57 percent among female students (CDC, 2023). The Surgeon General issues an advisory on youth mental health (Office of the Surgeon General, 2021).

Year	Event
2023	The Surgeon General's advisory of May 2023 names youth social media use an urgent public health issue and calls for a safety-first approach (Office of the Surgeon General, 2023). The CDC publishes the 2011-2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey trends report (CDC, 2023).
2024	An umbrella review harmonizes 102 meta-analyses of youth screen research (Sanders et al., 2024), and a widely read trade volume consolidates the post-2012 framing in policy debate (Haidt, 2024).
2025	The fifth Common Sense Census documents that 40 percent of children have a tablet of their own by age 2 (Mann et al., 2025).

Note. Events are drawn from the primary sources cited in each row. Data retrieved July 2026.

Every K-12 social and emotional learning curriculum in wide United States adoption was designed before the middle of this chronology, which Section 5 establishes program by program.

3. Mechanisms

The patterns below make up the environment a universal Tier I curriculum is now delivered into. Each is reported at the strength of its source, with the population actually studied named in the sentence that states the finding, and with the distance between the measurement and the school-aged population marked wherever that distance is substantial.

3.1 Sustained Attention

Among adult information workers observed at their office computers, average uninterrupted attention on a single screen fell from about two and a half minutes in 2003, to 75 seconds in 2012, to a mean of 47 seconds with a median of 40 seconds in measurements taken over roughly 2017 to 2022 (Mark, 2023).

These figures describe adults at work, not children in classrooms, and no design decision in the curriculum described later is derived from them. They establish one thing: measured attention behavior in the general adult population shifted across the same window in which mobile computing became ubiquitous, on a documented schedule rather than an asserted one. Extending these values to children would exceed their evidence base, and that extension is not made.

3.2 The Notification Environment

Among 203 United States 11-to-17-year-olds whose phones were monitored for a week, the median participant received 237 notifications a day, and 23 percent of those arrived during school hours (Radesky et al., 2023).

The sample was a monitored convenience sample, not a nationally representative panel, so the figures are an existence proof about the interruption environment rather than population estimates. What the study establishes is that a substantial fraction of a very large daily interruption load reaches children during instructional time, in a sample where the interruptions were counted directly rather than recalled.

3.3 Short-Form Video and Executive Control

In a cross-sectional electroencephalography study of 48 Chinese university students with a mean age of 21.8 years, higher self-reported short-video addiction tendency was associated with lower prefrontal theta power indexing executive control, $r = -0.395$, $p = 0.007$, which the authors interpret as weakened attentional control (Yan et al., 2024).

Three limits go with that finding. The participants were adults, not adolescents. The design was correlational and questionnaire-based with no exposure manipulation, so no participant was shown short-form video as part of the protocol. And a correlation of that size in a sample of 48 is suggestive rather than decisive. What carries forward is only what was measured: in young adults, self-reported short-video engagement covaries with a frontal electroencephalographic index associated with weaker executive control.

3.4 Umbrella-Level Evidence and Its Limitations

An umbrella review harmonizing 102 meta-analyses, comprising 2,451 primary studies and 1,937,501 participants, found small-to-moderate associations between youth screen use and a range of outcomes, with correlations from -0.14 to 0.33 . It reported a small negative association with

literacy, $r = -0.14$, which became positive when a parent co-viewed, $r = 0.15$, and a small positive association between social media use and depression, $r = 0.12$. The authors identified medium-to-high risk of bias in 95 of the 102 included meta-analyses, reported high heterogeneity throughout, and found that only 43 effects from 32 meta-analyses met their criteria for statistical certainty (Sanders et al., 2024).

That is a deflationary result. The average effects are small, the underlying evidence base carries substantial bias problems, and the education results are mixed rather than uniformly negative. Any representation to a school board that the screen literature demonstrates large and consistent harm misstates the largest synthesis available.

The classification developed here does not require large effects. It requires that the developmental environment changed on a dated schedule and that the research describing that environment postdates the design of the field's curricula, both of which are matters of published record. A small average association distributed across tens of millions of children is also, on standard prevention arithmetic, a population health matter, which is the logic universal programs are ordinarily justified on.

3.5 Adolescent Neurodevelopment: Established Findings and Inferential Limits

The prefrontal cortex is among the last brain regions to mature, and structural and functional development continues past adolescence into the twenties. The frequently repeated figure of full maturity at age 25 is an approximation rather than a measured threshold, since different regions and systems mature on different timetables and defining a single endpoint with current tools is harder than the shorthand implies (Arain et al., 2013; Somerville, 2016). The argument here uses the long maturational arc and rests on no specific endpoint age.

The dual systems account, under which adolescent risk-taking reflects heightened reward sensitivity alongside still-maturing impulse control, remains an influential framework whose architects have reaffirmed it (Casey & Caudle, 2013; Shulman et al., 2016). It is increasingly described as an informative heuristic rather than a confirmed and readily falsifiable theory, since the trajectory classes it predicts have proven difficult to recover in longitudinal data (Meisel et al., 2019). It is used here as a heuristic and nothing further is claimed from it.

On dopamine the limit is stated directly. Dopamine dysregulation produced by variable-reward algorithms is an inference drawn from adjacent literature rather than an established finding, and it is not asserted as fact anywhere in this manuscript. The best available direct human measurement combined quantitative magnetic resonance imaging in 146 participants aged 12 to 30 with positron emission tomography in the 79 participants aged 18 and older, and found presynaptic vesicular dopamine storage developmentally stable by age 18, with D2 and D3 receptor availability decreasing with age (Larsen et al., 2020). The positron emission tomography was not performed on any participant under 18, and the authors name pediatric restrictions on direct dopamine assessment as the reason. No study measures dopamine dysregulation in children caused by algorithmic feeds, and pediatric restrictions on direct in vivo dopamine assessment explain why such measurements are scarce. At the neurochemical level what exists is review-level inference.

The behavioral and self-report evidence on compulsive short-form video use is stronger than the neurochemical evidence, and the argument rests there. The operative constructs throughout are compulsive use patterns and reward-driven engagement, both of which have been measured.

3.6 Exposure Prior to School Entry

The 2012 to 2013 inflection is measured in adolescent outcome data because adolescents are where the federal surveillance instruments look. The exposure itself begins years earlier.

The 2025 Common Sense Census, the fifth wave of a nationally representative series on children from birth to age eight, documents that 40 percent of children have a tablet of their own by age 2, rising to 58 percent by age 4; that 51 percent of children age 8 and younger have a mobile device of their own; that roughly one in five families use mobile devices to help manage bedtime routines, mealtimes, and emotional regulation; and that children under age 2 average one hour and three minutes of daily screen media (Mann et al., 2025). The device measure needs a careful reading. The survey item asks the parent whether the child has a personal tablet or cellphone, so the finding describes a device assigned to a child rather than property a child holds, and a two-year-old owns nothing in any legal sense. What the figure establishes is routine and largely unsupervised access at an age when the child cannot yet negotiate for it, and that access is what the developmental argument below rests on. Legal ownership is not the point. Within that headline figure, 17 percent of parents report their child sometimes or often uses a device to calm down when angry, sad, or upset, 23 percent of children age 0 to 8 sometimes or often use a device while eating at home, and 20 percent watch or play on a device most nights in order to fall asleep.

The concern is substitution rather than exposure in the aggregate. When a toddler is handed a tablet in a car seat, at a restaurant, or in the middle of a hard cry, the back-and-forth with a caregiver that ordinarily builds self-regulation is not happening during that stretch of time.

The peer-reviewed evidence bearing on that substitution supports the following statements and no stronger ones.

In a study of 269 toddlers aged 2 to 3 and their parents, greater parental use of media to regulate a child's emotions was concurrently associated with more problematic media use and with more extreme emotional reactions when media was removed (Coyne et al., 2021). Those are cross-sectional associations measured at a single timepoint. No study cited here follows the same children over subsequent years, and no claim advanced here depends on longitudinal follow-up that does not exist.

Radesky et al. (2016) raised the developmental concern about using mobile technology to calm upset children in a commentary in *JAMA Pediatrics*. It is a three-page commentary rather than an original longitudinal study, and it is cited as informed clinical framing rather than as data

Parental phone use during caregiving, sometimes called technofence, is associated in cross-sectional parent-report data from 170 United States families with greater child externalizing and internalizing behavior, and the authors caution explicitly that directionality has not been established and call for longitudinal work (McDaniel & Radesky, 2018). A scoping review of 64 studies reports similar associations across parent-child relationship and child developmental outcomes, while finding no significant associations with children's medical and physiological health (Komanchuk et al., 2023).

The American Academy of Pediatrics identifies early screen use as displacing the caregiver interactions that early language, attention, and emotional regulation depend on, reporting that population studies show associations between excessive early television viewing and cognitive, language, and social-emotional delays, likely secondary to decreases in parent-child interaction

when the television is on, and that heavy parent use of mobile devices is associated with fewer verbal and nonverbal parent-child interactions (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016).

Children entering kindergarten in 2026 have spent five to six years inside this environment, whether through their own device access or through adult attention being redirected into a device during their most formative regulatory windows. Their self-regulation baseline at school entry differs from the baseline the field's curricula were designed and validated against, and a Tier I curriculum that does not address the patterns formed before school entry is intervening on a problem it has not described.

3.7 What the Mechanism Literature Does and Does Not Establish

Four propositions hold with reasonable confidence. Measured attention behavior in the adult general population shifted across the period of mobile computing adoption (Mark, 2023). Children in the United States now inhabit an interruption environment of a scale that can be counted directly rather than estimated (Radesky et al., 2023). Youth screen use is associated with a range of outcomes at small-to-moderate magnitude, within an evidence base carrying substantial risk of bias (Sanders et al., 2024). And device access, including the use of devices as regulatory tools by caregivers, now begins in infancy and is documented in nationally representative data (Mann et al., 2025).

The same literature does not establish several things frequently attributed to it. It does not establish that algorithmic media cause the adolescent mental health inflection, a question qualified researchers disagree about and which Section 9 treats. It does not establish dopamine dysregulation in children arising from feed design, since the required measurements have not been made (Larsen et al., 2020). It does not establish that short-form video degrades executive control in children, since the available electroencephalographic evidence is correlational and was collected in young adults (Yan et al., 2024). And it does not establish a causal pathway from early caregiver substitution to later regulatory deficit, since the relevant studies are cross-sectional and their authors say so (Coyne et al., 2021; McDaniel & Radesky, 2018).

What the classification in Section 6 needs from this literature is narrower than either list. It needs a body of research describing attention, inhibitory control, and reward-driven platform design in the smartphone era to exist, to have been published from 2013 onward, and to be citable in principle by a curriculum as the stated basis for instructional design. All three are matters of the published record.

4. Method

4.1 Review Aims

The review set out to do three things. First, to determine for each program in scope whether its published theory of change is built on post-2012 research on sustained attention, inhibitory control, or reward-driven platform design, as distinct from whether it teaches digital behavior as lesson content. Second, to record each program's published dosing and grade-band architecture in enough detail for a third party to verify or contradict the coding from the same public documents. Third, to characterize the Tier I provision currently in place in the state and districts where this curriculum is being introduced, so the classification could be applied to an actual adoption landscape rather than a national abstraction.

This is a structured document review, not a systematic review conducted under PRISMA, and it makes no claim to be the latter. The unit of analysis is the published program document, and the outcome of coding is a categorical classification rather than an effect estimate.

4.2 Inclusion Criteria

Programs were reviewed at two tiers, with results reported separately and at different levels of confidence.

Tier one comprised programs meeting three criteria as of July 2026: listing in the CASEL Program Guide, or documented wide district-level adoption in current trade coverage, or identification as a direct competitor in the daily short-format K-12 segment; availability of publicly accessible program materials; and a K-12, PreK-12, or K-8 universal Tier I scope. Fifteen programs met these criteria and were coded individually. The tier one set includes both the programs with the largest United States district footprints and the closest competitors on delivery format, since a review that omitted the latter would understate the competitive density of the daily short-format segment.

Tier two comprised programs holding a CASEL Program Guide designation of SElect, Promising, or SEL-Supportive as of July 2026 that were not already in tier one. Tier two programs were not coded individually against the three conditions. They were grouped by the theoretical tradition their own published materials identify as their foundation, and that grouping is reported as a preliminary classification of stated lineage.

Programs were excluded where scope rather than era placed them outside the category, including adult training programs, gatekeeper trainings, screening instruments, peer-led programs that are not universal Tier I curricula, and parent-facing resources. Exclusions of that kind are recorded in Table 2 rather than treated as classification failures.

4.3 Search and Retrieval Procedure

Retrieval was conducted in July 2026. For each tier one program the following document classes were sought in this order: a published theory of change, research foundation, or logic model; a published scope and sequence; a published statement of dosing, including lesson length, frequency, and duration across the school year; a published statement of grade-band coverage and progression; and the program's published research or evidence page together with any peer-reviewed publications listed on it. Where a program's own site did not publish a founding date, the

date was taken from primary sources about the program, including organizational history pages, published trainer materials, corporate acquisition announcements, and contemporaneous reporting.

The CASEL Program Guide was retrieved in July 2026 and used both as an inclusion source for tier one and as the enumeration source for tier two.

For the state and district review, retrieval was confined to North Dakota Century Code chapters, Department of Public Instruction pages and data files, Department of Health and Human Services grant and surveillance documents, and each district's own published handbooks, strategic plans, schedules, curriculum pages, and school counseling pages. Enrollment figures were taken from the Department of Public Instruction fall enrollment workbook for 2025-26 (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2026a).

Retrieval dates are material to every coding decision in Section 5, because published materials change. A coding conclusion accurate on the retrieval date may be superseded by later publication, which is why the correction procedure in Appendix B exists.

4.4 Coding Protocol

Each tier one program was coded against three conditions, all necessary and jointly sufficient for classification as Post-2012 SEL

Condition 1 concerns the theory of change. The program's published theory of change cites post-2012 peer-reviewed literature on sustained attention, inhibitory control, or reward-driven platform design as the stated basis for its instructional design. Section 6.2 states the four-point operational form of this condition in full, and that is the form applied in coding. The decision rule is conjunctive: failure on any one of the four points is coded as failure on Condition 1, and the point of failure is recorded.

Condition 2 concerns dosing. Published dosing is daily, on every instructional day, in a short segment of roughly five to fifteen minutes, sustained across a full academic year. The decision rule relies on the program's own published cadence statement. Where a program publishes daily delivery as an implementation option alongside a lower default cadence, the default is coded.

Condition 3 concerns architecture. Published architecture is a K-12 spiral beginning at kindergarten, in which the same competencies are revisited at increasing depth with a constant structural skeleton across grade bands. The decision rule relies on published grade-band coverage and on explicit published spiral language. Programs published as two separate curricula with different structures across grade bands, such as an elementary curriculum and a distinct secondary curriculum, are coded as not satisfying Condition 3 on the published record.

Coding was recorded per program with the specific document supporting each decision, and the per-program rationales appear in Appendix C.

4.5 Evidentiary Standard

Only publicly available published materials were coded. No coding relies on unpublished, internal, proprietary, or non-public information about any program, and no coding conclusion is offered as a representation about any program's internal development history, business decisions, or unpublished research.

Where a coded finding is an absence, it is recorded as absence of published evidence as of the retrieval date rather than as absence of practice. That distinction applies to programs whose materials do not include a published theory of change and to districts whose public documents name no Tier I curriculum, and it is applied explicitly to Grand Forks Public Schools and Minot Public Schools in Table 3. A district may well be delivering instruction its public documents do not describe, and a program may well hold a design rationale it has not published. Neither possibility is excluded by the coding, and neither can be established from public documents.

Any program can therefore change its own coding by publishing. Condition 1 is defined over the public record, and the public record is under the control of the programs it describes.

4.6 Limitations of the Method

The review was conducted by a single coder, and no inter-rater reliability statistics are reported because no second coder was employed. Categorical judgments about whether a citation functions as the basis of instructional design rather than as lesson sourcing involve interpretation, and independent coders might reach different conclusions on individual programs. The four-point test was specified in advance and published in full partly to constrain that latitude and to make disagreement locatable at a specific point.

The evidentiary base is restricted to published materials, which favors programs that publish extensively and may misrepresent programs whose design rationale is documented internally but not publicly. The direction of that bias is not uniform. A program with a thin public research presence may hold a strong internal rationale, and a program with an extensive publication record may publish theory of change documents that do not meet the four-point test

The results are sensitive to retrieval date. All tier one and district coding reflects materials as retrieved in July 2026, and several of the programs in Table 1 were identified late in the review, which suggests the market segment is expanding rather than stable.

The tier two grouping reports stated theoretical lineage only. It is not a completed program-by-program evidence review, and individual programs within these groupings may hold post-2012 empirical evidence the grouping does not reflect.

Finally, an asymmetry exists between the treatment of my own program and every other program in the review. The published theory of change for Control the Moment is the argument developed in Sections 2, 3, and 7, and it was coded against the same four-point test. The curriculum's step-by-step instructional content, cueing scripts, and teacher-delivery protocols are held as copyright-protected material and trade secret by Control the Moment, LLC, and were therefore not subject to the same public-document coding applied to competitor lesson materials. The comparison in Section 5 is accordingly a comparison between published theories of change rather than between curricula, and Section 9 returns to what that restriction does and does not permit.

5. Results

Every statement in this section is a coding conclusion drawn from the named program's or agency's own published materials as retrieved in July 2026, under the protocol in Section 4. Appendix A.2 states in full what is and is not being claimed about the programs named here.

5.1 Program Classification

Table 1. *K-12 Social and Emotional Learning Programs by Published Theory of Change*

Program	Founded, per published sources	Stated theoretical lineage	Published theory of change built on post-2012 attention, inhibitory control, or reward-design literature
Second Step (Committee for Children)	Mid-1980s; publisher dates the debut to 1985, research literature commonly cites 1986; organization founded 1979	Violence prevention, social skills, executive function, CASEL lineage	No
PATHS	1994	Affective-Behavioral-Cognitive-Dynamic model	No
Positive Action	1982	Thoughts-Actions-Feelings self-concept model	No
Responsive Classroom (Center for Responsive Schools)	Organization founded 1981; term coined 1990; first workshop 1991	Child development theory	No
RULER (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence)	Developed mid-2000s at Yale; Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence opened 2013	Mayer and Salovey ability model of emotional intelligence; theory of change published 2019	No
Harmony (formerly Sanford Harmony)	2008 at Arizona State University; transitioned to National University 2014	Peer-relationship and intergroup contact research	No
CharacterStrong	2016; acquired by FullBloom February 2025	Character education with SEL; publisher attributes its grounding to work by Bernat and Resnick published in 2006	No
Wayfinder	2015 origin; first year-long curriculum 2017	Purpose and adolescent development	No
7 Mindsets	2009; underlying study begun 2006	Mindset research derived from a 2006 study of happiness	No

Program	Founded, per published sources	Stated theoretical lineage	Published theory of change built on post-2012 attention, inhibitory control, or reward-design literature
Move This World	2007; became an online video-based program in 2014	CASEL competencies with creative movement	No
Schoolbeat (formerly moozoom)	Founding year not published	Bandura observational learning and explicit instruction	No
Calm Classroom	2007; launched in Chicago Public Schools 2008	Mindfulness and MBSR tradition	No
Inner Explorer	2011	Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction protocol	No
DopaMind	Founding year not published	Brain science and SEL; no peer-reviewed citations identified in published materials	No
Control the Moment	2026	Post-2012 literature on sustained attention, inhibitory control, and reward-driven platform design, with distributed practice and segmentation	Yes

Note. Programs are ordered by group rather than by rank. Founding years are as published by each program or by primary sources about it (7 Mindsets, 2026b; Calm Classroom, n.d.; Center for Responsive Schools, n.d.; Committee for Children, 2002; FullBloom, 2025; Inner Explorer, 2026; Move This World, 2026; PATHS Program Holding, 2026b; Positive Action, 2026; Sanford Harmony, 2026; Wayfinder, n.d.; Yale University, 2013). Harmony is cited under its legacy Sanford Harmony brand where its published documents carry that name. DopaMind is coded No because no peer-reviewed grounding for its content was identified in its published materials as retrieved in July 2026, and Section 6.2 sets out why that coding runs against the author's commercial interest. Data retrieved July 2026.

Five programs in the tier one set compete directly with the curriculum described here on delivery format: Schoolbeat, Calm Classroom, Inner Explorer, DopaMind, and Move This World. Schoolbeat occupies the same commercial niche of short daily video-based K-12 social and emotional learning, and a market scan that left it out would have a hole in it (Schoolbeat, 2026).

The final column is deliberately narrow. It does not record whether a program mentions phones or teaches digital citizenship, and several programs in the table do both. It records whether the program's published theory of change, meaning its stated basis for instructional design, is built on the post-2012 literature under the four-point test in Section 6.2.

The column is neither a quality judgment nor a measure of evidence recency. The randomized evidence base for CharacterStrong dates from 2023 to 2025 (CharacterStrong, 2026), and Committee for Children published four WestEd studies of Second Step in 2025 (Committee for Children, 2026b). Theoretical lineage and evidence recency are separate axes and are kept separate throughout.

Four programs are the most likely to be misread, and the full per-program rationales appear in Appendix C.

Second Step has been substantially rebuilt and extended by its publisher, including a ground-up digital elementary rebuild in 2021, a high school program launched in 2024, and a K-12 Digital Well-Being specialized unit launched for the 2025-26 school year covering digital stress, online behavior, misinformation, screen balance, media literacy, and emerging technologies (Committee for Children, 2025b). Its published K-12 digital scope and sequence contains social-media-specific objectives, including analysis of intent and evidence in social media posts (Committee for Children, 2024). The coding turns on architecture rather than vintage: the digital well-being content is delivered as a specialized supplemental unit layered on a lesson structure of five 15-to-30-minute lessons per unit rather than as a daily K-12 spiral, and the published theory of change remains grounded in social skills and executive function.

RULER published an updated theory of change in 2019, in which Brackett et al. (2019) describe the approach and the theories foundational to it. That updated theory of change remains grounded in the ability model of emotional intelligence, and RULER's published materials do not present post-2012 attention or platform-design research as the basis of instructional design.

Harmony publishes a technology paper covering digital citizenship that cites post-2012 sources (Sanford Harmony, 2020). Its published student scope and sequence, spanning Pre-K and kindergarten through grades 5 and 6, contains no technology, screen-time, or digital-citizenship unit (Sanford Harmony, 2026), and the technology material is educator-facing professional learning on teaching with technology. Its published research base is peer-relationship research.

Move This World satisfies two of the three conditions on its own published materials, which makes it the most consequential program in the table for the precision of the claim in Section 6. It publishes a daily cadence across PreK-12 with explicit spiral language, describing a sequence of skills that mirrors the developmental trajectory of learners and that students revisit at increasingly sophisticated levels (Move This World, 2020), and independent reporting describes the daily dose as ten minutes split between morning and afternoon (Stringer, 2017). Its published foundation is the CASEL competencies together with creative movement and expression, its published materials do not present attention or reward-design research as the basis of instructional design, and its principal technology framing is the provision of screen-free options.

DopaMind is the program closest to Control the Moment on subject matter. Its published TK-12 courses teach dopamine deficit states, intermittent reinforcement, prefrontal executive load, persuasive design, and smartphone mere-presence effects on focus, which is materially more than a digital-citizenship module (DopaMind, 2026). It fails the four-point test at point 2, because no peer-reviewed grounding for that content was identified in its published materials as retrieved in July 2026, and it states its basis as brain science without accompanying citations; and it fails Condition 2, because its units run 2.5 to 14.5 hours and are designed to complete in days or extend across a semester (DopaMind, 2026). Its existence indicates that the post-2012 design space is an emerging market segment rather than a closed category.

5.2 Extended CASEL Program Guide Review

Table 1 covers the programs with the largest United States district footprints together with the closest competitors in the daily short-format segment. This subsection extends the review to programs

designated by the CASEL Program Guide as SElect, Promising, or SEL-Supportive as of July 2026 (CASEL, 2026a).

Tier two results are reported at a lower confidence level than Table 1. Programs are grouped by the theoretical tradition their own published materials identify as their foundation, and the grouping is a preliminary classification of stated lineage. It is not a completed program-by-program evidence review and is not offered as one. Individual programs within these groupings may hold post-2012 empirical evidence the grouping does not reflect, and several demonstrably do. PurposeFull People, the CharacterStrong Secondary Curriculum, and the S.E.R.V.E. Model all appear below under a pre-2012 theoretical tradition and all three hold post-2020 randomized controlled trials. Any program is invited to submit published materials under the correction procedure in Appendix B.

Character-education tradition: CHARACTERplus Way, PurposeFull People, the S.E.R.V.E. Model, the CharacterStrong Secondary Curriculum, Kindness in the Classroom, Leader in Me, Manners of the Heart, The Character Effect, Getting Along Together, Tools for Getting Along Together, the Toolbox Project, TGFV: A Peaceable Place.

Early-childhood social skills research: 4Rs, Al's Pals, Caring School Community, Circle of Education, Competent Kids Caring Communities, Conscious Discipline, the HighScope Educational Approach for Preschool, I Can Problem Solve, Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management, Tools of the Mind, Ready to Learn, Zippy's Friends, Growing Early Mindsets, INSIGHTS Into Children's Temperament, Better Together Cubed, Emotional ABCs Premium Schools, Hallway Heroes, Adventures Aboard the S.S. Grin, Captain McFinn Explore Kindness, Merrell's Strong Kids

Mindfulness and MBSR tradition: Dot-b, Inner Explorer, Learning to Breathe, Mindful Practices and Class Catalyst, MindUP, Pure Power, the Heartfulness Program for Schools, SEE Learning, Sky Schools, Smart Brain Wise Heart, Transformative Life Skills and Dynamic Mindfulness, Flourish: The Compassionate Schools Project.

Conflict-resolution and violence-prevention research: PeaceWorks, Peace Learning Circles, the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways, Social Decision Making and Problem Solving, The Leadership Program's Violence Prevention Project, keepin' it REAL.

Social skills training theory or academic integration: the SSIS Classroom Intervention Program, SSIS Social Emotional Health Edition, Student Success Skills, EL Education, EduGuide, PBLWorks, Reading Apprenticeship, Reading with Relevance, Social Emotional Language Learning Arts, Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline, Facing History and Ourselves, Open Circle, Passport Skills for Life, Raising Healthy Children.

Adolescent development research: Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence, Lions Quest Skills for Growing, The Fourth R, the Teen Connection Project, the Teen Outreach Program, Peer Group Connection High School, PeerLearning.net, the nXu Curriculum, Changemakers, Get Real Comprehensive Sex Education, School-Connect, Ripple Effects for Teens, SPARK Pre-teen Mentoring, SPARK Well-being, Building Assets Reducing Risks, Mosaic, GiveThx, BASE Education, Michigan Model for Health Elementary, Michigan Model for Health Middle School, City Year's Whole Child Whole School Model, My Teaching Partner, Connect Science.

No tier two program was identified whose published lineage is the post-2012 literature described in Section 3. Given the confidence level attached to tier two coding, that is the absence of an identified case rather than a demonstration that no such case exists.

5.3 State and District Context in North Dakota

North Dakota is the first state in which Control the Moment is being introduced, and every statement here is built from state statute, Department of Public Instruction data files and pages, and each district's own published documents.

North Dakota does not adopt social and emotional learning curriculum at the state level. Districts select curriculum under the local-control structure of North Dakota Century Code chapter 15.1-21, which the Department of Public Instruction identifies as the chapter governing curriculum and standards (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2026b). Section 15.1-07-34, titled Youth behavioral health and child abuse and neglect training for teachers, administrators, and ancillary staff, requires each school within a district to designate an individual as a behavioral health resource coordinator, and makes an eight-hour biennial professional development offering permissive rather than mandatory (North Dakota Legislative Council, 2025). The statute does not mention the MIS03 report, annual reporting, or curriculum selection. Annual reporting of the coordinator on the MIS03 report in STARS is a departmental administrative requirement in place since fall 2019 rather than a statutory one (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2026c).

The Department of Public Instruction names no state-adopted Tier I social and emotional learning curriculum, and its content standards page lists eleven standards areas, none of which is social and emotional learning (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2026b). The state is not silent on the subject, though. North Dakota has adopted the CASEL definition of social and emotional learning, the state multi-tier system of supports has published learning goals organized by competency and frames them as guidance for selecting evidence-based programs (North Dakota Multi-Tier System of Supports, 2024), and the North Dakota Early Learning Standards include a social and emotional development domain (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2018). North Dakota has published social and emotional learning goals and definitions without adopting a Tier I curriculum.

Table 2. *Selected State-Level Named Resources and Their Category Status*

Resource	Description and category status
Sources of Strength	Peer-led suicide prevention. Not a Tier I K-12 daily curriculum.
Youth Mental Health First Aid	Adult training. Not a student curriculum.
QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer)	One-to-two-hour gatekeeper training. Not a curriculum.
ASIST	Two-day suicide intervention workshop. Adult training.
safeTALK	Half-day suicide alertness workshop. Adult training.
Parents Lead	State parent-facing prevention resource. Not a Tier I K-12 curriculum.

Resource	Description and category status
The Jason Foundation	Staff development modules on suicide prevention.
More Than Sad	Educational program on depression awareness. Not a Tier I curriculum.
B-HERO	State information dissemination system. Not a curriculum.

Note. A selection of the resources named on the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction youth behavioral health resource page, retrieved July 2026 (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2026c). The list is not exhaustive; the page also names FirstLink trainings, University of North Dakota online courses, ND HOPES, the Treatment Collaborative for Traumatized Youth, state behavioral health and child and family services, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention North Dakota chapter, federal SAMHSA and Suicide Prevention Resource Center resources, the North Dakota School Boards Association model suicide prevention policy, and several funding channels. None of the resources on the page is a Tier I K-12 social and emotional learning curriculum. Data retrieved July 2026.

Table 3. District-Level Tier I Social and Emotional Learning Adoption in the Eight Largest North Dakota Districts

Rank and district	2025-26 enrollment	Publicly identified Tier I SEL program	Post-2012 SEL
1. Bismarck	13,677	Second Step districtwide. District materials state that all Bismarck public elementary schools implement the Second Step curriculum, extending into middle school within an MTSS framework (Bismarck Public Schools, 2024, 2025)	No. Mid-1980s program with a pre-2012 theory of change
2. West Fargo	13,211	Responsive Classroom Morning Meeting at 20 minutes daily on the K-5 schedule, the CASEL framework, and the Panorama SEL screener administered one to two times per year (West Fargo Public Schools, 2026)	No. An approach named in 1990, a competency framework, and a screening instrument
3. Fargo	11,165	Second Step, named in district counseling program materials for classroom guidance lessons and not named on the district elementary curriculum overview (Fargo Public Schools, 2026)	No
4. Grand Forks	7,559	No Tier I SEL curriculum named in public district materials as of July 2026. The district publishes the CASEL competency framework, operates MTSS and PBIS, and runs Sources of Strength at all middle and high schools (Grand Forks Public Schools, 2020, 2026)	No Tier I curriculum identified

Rank and district	2025-26 enrollment	Publicly identified Tier I SEL program	Post-2012 SEL
5. Minot	7,243	Second Step is named on the counseling page of at least one elementary school, dated January 2019 (Minot Public Schools, 2019). Another building describes a counseling program aligned to the ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors. The district publishes no districtwide Tier I SEL curriculum (Minot Public Schools, 2026)	No
6. Williston Basin #7	5,584	Conscious Discipline as the named Tier I SEL program, with Panorama, Safe Space, and a district SEL word of the month inside a published SEL MTSS framework (Williston Basin School District #7, 2022, 2024)	No. The published Brain State Model predates 2012, and Panorama is a screener
7. Mandan	4,399	Not assessed	Not coded
8. Dickinson	4,081	No districtwide Tier I SEL curriculum. The current elementary handbook lists fifth-grade D.A.R.E. and counselor-delivered lessons on academic and social behaviors (Dickinson Public Schools, 2025); QuaverSEL and MindUP for K-2 appeared in the 2022-23 handbook but not the current one. One elementary school implements Top 20 with weekly teacher-delivered instruction on a published monthly scope plus biweekly counselor support (Dickinson Public Schools, Lincoln Elementary, 2026)	No

Note. Enrollment figures are 2025-26 K-12 enrollment from the Department of Public Instruction official fall enrollment workbook (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2026a). Mandan was not researched in this pass and no coding is offered; it appears in the table because omitting it would misstate the enrollment ranking. For Grand Forks and Minot the finding is absence of evidence in published district materials rather than confirmed absence of practice, since individual buildings may use materials not published on district sites. Data retrieved July 2026.

Every publicly identified Tier I program in wide district use in North Dakota as of July 2026 rests on a theory of change predating the literature described in Section 3. That includes Second Step in Bismarck, Fargo, and Minot, Responsive Classroom in West Fargo, Conscious Discipline in Williston Basin, and D.A.R.E. with building-level Top 20 in Dickinson, while Grand Forks operates the CASEL framework inside MTSS and PBIS without a named curriculum.

The second pattern is the more useful one. West Fargo and Williston Basin, two of the state's largest districts, administer the Panorama social and emotional learning screener. North Dakota districts are measuring need with current instruments while delivering instruction designed against an earlier developmental baseline.

5.4 Funding Context

North Dakota funds school behavioral health directly through the Behavioral Health School Grant, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. Grant funds may be used for prevention and early intervention, including emotional wellbeing promotion curriculums, which the

Behavioral Health Division reviews and approves before implementation. For 2025-26, 29 districts and special education units applied for roughly \$4.53 million, including Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, Dickinson, Mandan, Minot, and West Fargo (North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, 2026a, 2026b). The 2025-26 application window closed on March 31, 2026, so the following cycle is the relevant target for any district considering a new curriculum, and the Division's approval step is a substantive gate rather than an administrative formality.

6. The Post-2012 SEL Category

6.1 Definition and the Three Conditions

Post-2012 SEL is defined by three conditions, each necessary and the three jointly sufficient.

Condition 1. The curriculum's published theory of change cites post-2012 peer-reviewed literature on sustained attention, inhibitory control, or reward-driven platform design as the stated basis for its instructional design.

Condition 2. Published dosing is daily, on every instructional day, in a short segment of roughly five to fifteen minutes, sustained across a full academic year.

Condition 3. Published architecture is a K-12 spiral beginning at kindergarten, in which the same competencies are revisited at increasing depth with a constant structural skeleton across grade bands.

The three conditions are defined over published materials rather than over practice, for the reason given in Section 4.5. A category defined over unpublished design intent would be unverifiable by anyone outside the developing organization, and it would be useless to the district personnel who have to make selection decisions from public documents.

The label designates an era, not a threshold event. Adult smartphone ownership crossed 50 percent in spring 2013 rather than in 2012, as Section 2.1 reports, and the category name is not a claim to the contrary. What 2012 marks is the consolidation of the reward-driven mobile feed as an ordinary condition of childhood. Facebook announced its acquisition of Instagram in April 2012 and completed it in September following regulatory clearance (Federal Trade Commission, 2012), the international loneliness series that rises in 36 of 37 countries takes 2012 as its baseline (Twenge et al., 2021), and mean uninterrupted attention at the office computer measures 75 seconds in that year (Mark, 2023). The label also follows established usage in the research literature on this period (Twenge et al., 2018). Membership in the category is determined by the three conditions above and by no date.

6.2 Operationalizing Condition 1

Condition 1 carries the uniqueness claim, so it has to be checkable by a reader with no relationship to Control the Moment. A condition specified through a negative, such as a requirement that a program be more than a digital citizenship module, is unfalsifiable and useless as a test. Here is the operational form, in the terms a third party would apply it.

A program satisfies Condition 1 when all four of the following are true of its own published materials.

The program publishes a theory of change, a research foundation, or an equivalent statement of the basis for its instructional design, in a document that states why the program teaches what it teaches. A marketing page is insufficient.

That document cites peer-reviewed literature published in 2013 or later on at least one of: sustained attention in a media-saturated environment, inhibitory control under reward-driven load, or the design of reward-driven digital platforms.

Those citations are presented as the reason for the program's instructional design, meaning its dosing, sequencing, or structure, rather than as sourcing for lesson topics that students study.

The design consequence is traceable, so that a reader can identify which structural feature of the program follows from which cited finding.

The decision rule is conjunctive. Failure on any one point is failure on Condition 1, and the point of failure is recorded.

The test is demanding at point 3 and generous at point 2. A program does not fail because it teaches digital citizenship, which is a worthwhile activity several strong programs undertake. A program fails when the post-2012 literature appears as subject matter rather than as the stated reason for the program's structure.

Setting the threshold this way has two consequences that run against my commercial interest. DopaMind satisfies point 3 on substance and fails point 2 on sourcing, since its published TK-12 courses treat dopamine deficit states, intermittent reinforcement, prefrontal executive load, and persuasive design as instructional substance while no peer-reviewed citations for that content were identified in its published materials as retrieved in July 2026 (DopaMind, 2026). A sourced theory of change published by DopaMind would satisfy Condition 1, and the program would then fail only Condition 2, because its units run 2.5 to 14.5 hours and are not daily. And any program in Table 1 could satisfy Condition 1 by publishing, because the condition concerns the public record and the public record is under the control of the programs it describes.

6.3 Application to Control the Moment

Any curriculum, including this one, has to demonstrate that it passes rather than assert that it does. What follows is the design signature relevant to each condition, disclosed in the same terms every other program in this review was evaluated on.

Condition 1. The published theory of change for Control the Moment is the argument set out in Sections 2, 3, and 7. It cites as the stated basis for instructional design the measured shift in sustained attention behavior across the smartphone era (Mark, 2023), the notification and interruption environment children now inhabit (Radesky et al., 2023), the association between short-video engagement and weakened prefrontal indices of executive control (Yan et al., 2024), the umbrella-level synthesis of youth screen research together with its deflationary findings (Sanders et al., 2024), and the documented shift of early-childhood regulation from caregiver to device (Coyne et al., 2021; Komanchuk et al., 2023; Mann et al., 2025). The traceable design consequence required by point 4 is the ordering of the five steps as Regulate, Identify, Understand, Respond, and Reflect, which follows from a target of regulation under load and reward-driven responding, together with the daily repetition of the whole sequence, which follows from the finding that effortful cognitive regulation fails under acute stress and must therefore be trained toward automaticity (Raio et al., 2013).

Condition 2. Delivery is ten minutes on every instructional day across a full academic year, yielding roughly 180 exposures. The justification is distributed practice and instructional segmentation, developed in Section 7 (Cepeda et al., 2006, 2008, 2009; Rey et al., 2019), reinforced by dose and duration findings within the school mental health and social and emotional learning literatures (Sanchez et al., 2018; Shi & Cheung, 2024; USC Rossier, 2026). No uniqueness is claimed here.

Condition 3. The five-step skeleton holds constant from kindergarten through grade 12 while content matures across bands, with foundational attention and impulse regulation in grades K-4, affect regulation and delay under reward-driven exposure in grades 5-8, and metacognitive and identity-level integration in grades 9-12. No uniqueness is claimed here either.

6.4 Classification of Existing Programs

The fourteen programs in Table 1 other than Control the Moment are classified as Pre-2012 SEL on the basis of their published theories of change. This is a statement about design provenance and nothing else; Appendix A.2 says what that does and does not mean. Several of these programs are well designed for the problem set they were built to address, and several hold randomized controlled trials completed after 2020.

Reclassification is available on the published record. A program does not move into Post-2012 SEL by adding a mindfulness module, a mental-health lesson, a digital-citizenship supplement, or revised marketing language. Movement requires satisfying all three conditions in published materials.

The distinction matters for a structural reason. A curriculum's theory of change determines what it teaches, in what sequence, at what dose, and against what definition of success. A program built to reduce bullying through peer inclusion, to raise emotional intelligence through the ability model, or to build character through values instruction is aimed at a real problem and may well address it well. Adding a unit about phones to such a program adds content without altering the problem the program is aimed at.

One clarification is essential, because the distinction gets collapsed routinely. The most-cited evidence synthesis in the field, Durlak et al. (2011), aggregated 213 studies involving 270,034 students, none of which had appeared in published or unpublished form after December 31, 2007. That is a fact about the synthesis the field's case for universal social and emotional learning rests on. It is not a claim that any individual program's own evidence base stops at 2007, and any such reading would be false, since Committee for Children alone published four WestEd studies of Second Step in 2025 (Committee for Children, 2026b).

6.5 The Category Claim

Control the Moment is the only K-12 universal SEL curriculum found in this review whose published theory of change is built on the post-2012 research describing smartphone-era attention, inhibitory control, and reward-driven platform design. Every other program reviewed rests on a theory of change that predates that literature, and where those programs address digital behavior at all, they address it as lesson content rather than as the reason the program exists.

The claim rests on Condition 1 alone, and Condition 1 is written so that someone with no connection to the author can apply it to any program inside or outside this review. It says nothing about superiority, effectiveness, or outcomes. It describes the documented basis of design, inside a review scope and as of a retrieval date that are both stated.

Control the Moment has no outcome data and has not been independently evaluated. It may turn out to be less effective than any program named here, and the evaluation now being designed could show exactly that.

6.6 Institutional Notice and Revision Behavior Since 2023

The classification is a statement about published documents, not about what any developer knew or could have known when a program was first designed. That invites an objection of chronological fairness. The published founding dates in Table 1 run from 1979 to 2016, and a program whose instructional design was fixed in 1994 could not have cited literature published in 2013 or later. Read against founding dates alone, the coding in Section 5 would record nothing more interesting than the order in which programs were built.

Two federal advisories bear on that objection. On December 7, 2021, the Office of the Surgeon General issued an advisory on youth mental health that identified the pandemic-era deterioration in adolescent wellbeing as a public health concern and named social media among the contributing environmental factors (Office of the Surgeon General, 2021). On May 23, 2023, a second advisory addressed social media and youth mental health directly, characterized adolescent social media use as an urgent public health issue, and called for a safety-first approach from platforms, policymakers, and educators (Office of the Surgeon General, 2023). The second advisory is treated here as a notice date. After May 2023, the environment described in Section 2 and the literature summarized in Section 3 were the subject of a formal advisory from the senior federal health official, addressed in part to the education sector. The fair question is therefore not what a publisher knew at the time of original design, but what publishers have done since.

That interval has not been quiet. Of the fourteen programs in Table 1 other than Control the Moment, eleven published a new edition, a new unit, a new grade band, a new delivery platform, a new efficacy study, or a substantial product release on or after May 2023, as Table 4 records. The three exceptions are PATHS, for which no qualifying item was identified; Calm Classroom, whose identified activity in the interval consists of blog publication rather than a new edition or unit; and Inner Explorer, whose identified item is an independent dissertation study rather than publisher activity. These are organizations actively revising, evaluating, and extending their offerings, and several of the items are significant undertakings, including a fourth edition of a foundational text, a newly published randomized trial, a corporate acquisition, a platform migration away from print, and a full brand and product relaunch.

Across all fourteen programs, no revision to a published theory of change was identified in which post-2012 literature on sustained attention, inhibitory control, or reward-driven platform design was adopted as the stated basis for instructional design. Two publishers added digital subject matter during the interval. Committee for Children released a K-12 Digital Well-Being specialized unit, which its own announcement describes as extending instruction into digital contexts without disrupting existing implementation (Committee for Children, 2026a). CharacterStrong added an Online Wellness and Digital Habits campaign within an existing unit structure (CharacterStrong, 2025). In both cases the material is supplemental content layered onto an unchanged lesson architecture, which is the configuration point 3 of the Condition 1 test is built to distinguish from a design rationale.

Three qualifications belong here. The interval since notice is short by the standards of curriculum revision, and a publisher may have a foundational revision underway that is not yet public. Absence of a published revision is evidence about the public record, not about internal work. And no claim is made that any publisher was under an obligation, professional or otherwise, to revise its theory of change, nor that a revision would have improved outcomes for students. Whether a post-2012

foundation produces better results than an earlier one is an empirical question no available evidence answers, including for Control the Moment.

What the interval does establish is narrow and sufficient. The classification in Section 6.5 depends on no inference about what developers intended or understood. It rests on documents the programs themselves published, and it holds across a period in which the environmental evidence was the subject of a federal advisory and nearly every publisher in the review was demonstrably at work on its materials. Any program in Table 4 can change its classification at any time by publishing a qualifying theory of change, and Appendix B sets out how such a change gets recorded.

Table 4. Publisher Activity Since the May 2023 Surgeon General Advisory

Program	Impact report January 2024; research page dated 2026	Published theory of change revised to cite post-2012 attention, inhibitory control, or reward-design literature as the basis of instructional design (absence of an identified item is absence from the public record, not proof that none exists)
Second Step (Committee for Children)	High school program 2024; Tiered Interventions August 2025; Digital Well-Being specialized unit 2026	No
PATHS	None identified; the curriculum page references an update made in early 2011	No
Positive Action	Pasela web application announced August 2023 and launched March 2024; print kits discontinued December 2024	No
Responsive Classroom (Center for Responsive Schools)	Fourth edition of The Morning Meeting Book, December 2023	No
RULER (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence)	High school efficacy trial running 2024 to 2026; high school program page dated March 2026	No
Harmony (formerly Sanford Harmony)	CASEL SElect designation March 2024; T. Denny Sanford Harmony Institute launched at Arizona State University March 2024	No
CharacterStrong	Curriculum updates for 2025-26 released June 2025; acquisition by FullBloom February 2025; randomized trial published June 2025	No
Wayfinder	Impact report January 2024	No
7 Mindsets	Evidence-tier validations reported for 2025 and 2026	No
Move This World	Program update April 2024; addition to the CASEL Program Guide August 2024	No

Program	Impact report January 2024; research page dated 2026	Published theory of change revised to cite post-2012 attention, inhibitory control, or reward-design literature as the basis of instructional design (absence of an identified item is absence from the public record, not proof that none exists)
Schoolbeat (formerly moozoom)	Rebrand from moozoom August 2025; new content season August 2025	No
Calm Classroom	Blog publication through December 2024; no new edition or unit identified	No
Inner Explorer	Independent dissertation study posted April 2025	No
DopaMind	Middle school program page December 2024; organizational overview July 2025	No published theory of change, research foundation, or logic model identified

Note. Activity is drawn from each publisher's own website, press releases, and announcements, or from primary sources about the publisher, retrieved July 2026 (7 Mindsets, 2026a; Calm Classroom, 2024; Center for Responsive Schools, 2023; CharacterStrong, 2025; Committee for Children, 2025a, 2026a; DopaMind, 2024, 2025; Dunlap, 2025; FullBloom, 2025; Harmony Academy, 2025; Move This World, 2024a, 2024b; National University, 2024; PATHS Program Holding, 2026a; Positive Action, 2023, 2024a, 2024b; RULER, 2026; Schoolbeat, 2025a, 2025b; Wayfinder, 2024a, 2026; Yale Child Study Center, 2026; Zhang et al., 2025). The final column records whether the program's published theory of change was revised to rest on the post-2012 literature described in Section 3. It does not record whether the program mentions phones, teaches digital citizenship, or added digital subject matter, and two programs did add such matter during the interval.

6.7 What Would Disconfirm the Classification

The category claim is falsifiable, and four classes of evidence would disconfirm it.

First, evidence bearing on the underlying timeline: a demonstration that United States adult smartphone ownership did not cross 50 percent in spring 2013, or that the adolescent mental health measures tracked by federal surveillance did not rise and remain elevated across the 2010s (CDC, 2017, 2023, 2026; Pew Research Center, 2013, 2026).

Second, evidence that a K-12 social and emotional learning curriculum in wide United States adoption as of July 2026 already satisfies all three conditions in its published materials. This is the most likely route to disconfirmation, and the classification is published in a form built to make the attempt straightforward.

Third, evidence that the patterns described in Section 3, including the measured decline in sustained attention behavior, the association between compulsive short-video use and weakened executive-control indices, and the documented substitution of device for caregiver in early-childhood regulation, are absent from the post-2012 peer-reviewed literature cited here.

Fourth, and bearing on the design argument rather than the category boundary: evidence that distributed practice and segmentation do not apply to school-based social-emotional skill instruction, or trial evidence that daily short-format delivery of this curriculum produces no benefit or produces harm. The last is not hypothetical. It is what the planned evaluation in Section 8.4 is built to detect, and a null or adverse result will be published.

Appendix B sets out how a third party may submit materials bearing on any of these grounds and what commitments the author accepts on receiving such a submission.

7. Curriculum Design and Rationale

Each design decision below is presented with the evidence it rests on and with a statement of how much weight that evidence carries. Where a choice reflects a reasoned judgment rather than a demonstrated result, it is identified as such. The curriculum has no outcome data, and the argument here concerns alignment between the design of the curriculum and the environment described in Sections 2 and 3.

7.1 Structure and Sequence

Control the Moment is delivered as a ten-minute lesson on every instructional day of the academic year, at approximately 180 exposures per grade. Each lesson follows a fixed five-step sequence, Regulate, Identify, Understand, Respond, and Reflect, and each step targets a capacity the media environment described in Section 3 is documented to tax. The sequence is constant across all grade bands, so the structural skeleton of the lesson becomes familiar early and stays stable while the content of each step matures.

Table 5. *The Five-Step Lesson Sequence and the Environmental Feature Each Step Targets*

Step	Capacity addressed	Feature of the environment
1. Regulate	Physiological self-calming	Interruption load and arousal without recovery
2. Identify	Emotional granularity	Compressed and performed emotional display
3. Understand	Causal reasoning	Continuous-scroll reactivity
4. Respond	Choice under load	Reward-driven, low-latency responding
5. Reflect	Metacognition	Absence of pause and review

Note. The right-hand column characterizes features of the contemporary media environment as documented in Section 3. It records no measurement of neural damage in any individual child and asserts no measured impairment of any specific neural pathway.

The five steps are ordered as they are because the target is regulation under load and reward-driven responding. Regulation precedes identification because a student in an aroused state has limited access to the vocabulary identification requires, and reflection closes the sequence because consolidating a practiced routine depends on a brief review the surrounding environment rarely supplies. The sequence repeats daily so the routine moves from effortful execution toward automatic availability, for the reasons in Section 7.5.

7.2 Rationale for Distributed Daily Delivery

Distributed practice, meaning the spreading of a fixed quantity of practice across many separated sessions rather than concentrating it into few, is among the most reliably replicated findings in the learning sciences. Cepeda et al. (2006) synthesized 839 assessments drawn from 317 experiments reported in 184 articles and found a consistent advantage for distributed over massed schedules. Inter-session gaps of at least one day reliably outperform shorter gaps, and appropriately spaced practice has improved final recall by as much as 150 percent (Cepeda et al., 2009). The optimal gap

widens as the retention interval widens (Cepeda et al., 2008), which is the relevant condition for skills students are expected to carry across years rather than across a testing window.

Evidence from within school-based mental health and social and emotional learning points the same way on frequency. In a meta-analysis of school-based mental health services, services delivered daily or multiple times per week showed medium effects for externalizing problems, at Hedges' $g = 0.61$ and 0.59 respectively, while services delivered weekly or less did not show a significant effect, at $g = 0.11$, $p = .18$ (Sanchez et al., 2018). Longer-running programs also produce larger academic benefit than shorter ones (USC Rossier, 2026), and a meta-analysis of 12 programs, 59 studies, and 83,233 participants, reporting an overall effect size of 0.15 , found duration to be significantly related to effectiveness (Shi & Cheung, 2024). A short daily dose sustained across a full academic year is the delivery schedule that follows: frequent, spaced across days, and sustained.

Two rationales commonly offered for daily social-emotional practice are not advanced here, because neither is supported by the sources usually cited for them. The first is a fixed habit-formation window of 59 to 66 days. The underlying study followed adults performing self-selected single-action health behaviors, reported times to automaticity ranging from 18 to 254 days, and obtained a good model fit for fewer than half of participants (Lally et al., 2010); the systematic review often cited alongside it covered 20 studies with participant mean ages between 21.5 and 73.5 years, of which only four reported a time to habit formation, with variability that prevented pooling (Singh et al., 2024). No habit-formation timeline has been established for children or for emotion-regulation skills. The second is the proposition that a lesson cadence can mirror the variable-reward timing of social platforms. A fixed daily sequence operates on a fixed schedule and contains no response-contingent reinforcer, so the analogy fails on its own terms and is not used anywhere in this manuscript.

7.3 Rationale for Segmentation and Format Congruence

The ten-minute lesson is divided into five segments of 90 seconds, two minutes, three minutes, two minutes, and 90 seconds. That internal division rests on two independent bodies of evidence, one describing the media environment the target population inhabits and one describing how instructional material is best organized for learners, plus a design judgment connecting them.

The first is a documented feature of the media environment rather than an inference from it. Short-form video platforms deliver content in discrete units measured in seconds to low single-digit minutes, and they rotate that content continuously. Section 3 sets out the characteristics of that environment and the research on its association with attentional and executive-control measures, including the EEG evidence in young adults reported by Yan et al. (2024) and the umbrella-level synthesis reported by Sanders et al. (2024). The unit length of the format is a property of the platforms themselves and requires no experimental warrant.

The second concerns the accumulated exposure children bring to school. Nationally representative data on children from birth to age eight document that 40 percent have a tablet of their own by age 2 and 58 percent by age 4, that 51 percent of children age 8 and younger have a mobile device of their own, and that daily screen media averages one hour and three minutes among children under 2 (Mann et al., 2025). As Section 3.6 notes, that device measure records assigned access rather than legal ownership. Children entering kindergarten in 2026 have accumulated thousands of hours of exposure to instruction-free content delivered in short units, beginning years before school entry. Their familiarity with that presentation format is not a hypothesis about their neurology. It is a description of how they have spent a substantial share of their waking hours.

The third is the segmenting literature. Dividing instruction into manageable units reduces extraneous cognitive load and improves both retention and transfer, a result established by Rey et al. (2019) across 56 investigations and 88 pairwise comparisons. The segmenting effect is a general property of instructional design rather than a claim about any particular population, and it applies to a ten-minute social-emotional lesson as it applies to any other instructional block of comparable length. Combined with the distributed-practice evidence in Section 7.2, it supports an architecture in which a small amount of material is presented in separated units, repeated across many days, and sustained across a year.

The design inference Control the Moment draws from those three elements is a design decision. The curriculum presents instruction in a format congruent with the attentional demands the target population is habituated to, rather than in a format presupposing a period of sustained attention the population may not bring to the task. Congruence with the format of a child's prior experience is a claim about instructional presentation, and it carries no implication that the curriculum reproduces, counteracts, or borrows anything from the reinforcement structure of any platform. The five-segment structure organizes ten minutes of instruction into five bounded units with an explicit transition between each, so a student who loses the thread at minute six re-enters at the next segment boundary rather than at the end.

The specific durations of 90 seconds, two minutes, three minutes, two minutes, and 90 seconds are a cognitive-load and classroom-feasibility judgment made by the developer. They are not derived from an experimental finding, no attention-shift window of any duration has been established in children, and the design rationale does not depend on their precise values. The widely repeated proposition that student attention collapses after 10 to 15 minutes has been examined and set aside: the available primary data do not support a 10-to-15-minute attention limit, and the source most often cited for rapid attentional decline gives student attention little direct treatment (Bradbury, 2016; Wilson & Korn, 2007). What the evidence supports is the general architecture rather than any particular parameter within it. Revising the segment lengths on the basis of classroom observation or later evidence would leave that architecture, and the argument for it, intact.

7.4 Emotion Labeling

Identification of the emotional state is a distinct step rather than an implicit part of regulation, because labeling has measurable regulatory consequences of its own. In an imaging study of 30 adults, affect labeling, relative to other forms of encoding, diminished amygdala and related limbic response to negative emotional images while increasing right ventrolateral prefrontal activity (Lieberman et al., 2007), and a review of subsequent work reports that the pattern replicates across experiential, autonomic, neural, and behavioral measures (Torre & Lieberman, 2018). Classroom evidence in children points the same way: in a 30-week pre- and post-test quasi-experimental study of 273 students in fifteen fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms, an emotion-vocabulary curriculum improved year-end grades and teacher-rated social and emotional competence relative to comparison classrooms (Brackett et al., 2012). That study evaluated the RULER Feeling Words Curriculum, and RULER is coded No on Condition 1 in Table 1. The coding concerns whether a program's published theory of change rests on the post-2012 literature described in Section 3, not whether its instructional components have empirical support, and component-level evidence is credited here wherever a primary source establishes it.

The effects are modest and sensitive to context. Levy-Gigi and Shamay-Tsoory (2022) found that affect labeling reduced distress for high-intensity aversive stimuli while increasing it for low-intensity stimuli, which indicates the technique is not uniformly beneficial across levels of arousal. The review summarizing those classroom gains observes that the mechanisms by which emotional granularity produces them remain unknown (Kashdan et al., 2015). No pooled effect size for affect labeling in children is reported here, because none was located in a primary source during the review.

7.5 Automaticity

Repetition can move a regulation strategy from effortful execution toward greater automaticity. This manuscript uses the terms automaticity and overlearned response. It does not use the term instinct, which denotes an innate and unlearned behavior and is therefore wrong for a trained routine.

Automaticity rather than knowledge is the target because effortful cognitive regulation degrades under acute stress, which is the condition a student most needs it in. Raio et al. (2013) trained 78 participants in cognitive reappraisal and observed robust fear reduction when participants were tested unstressed and no reduction when they were tested after acute stress, concluding that stress markedly impairs the cognitive regulation of emotion. That finding is the strongest published objection to any regulation curriculum, this one included, and it is also the clearest available argument for overlearning a short routine rather than teaching regulation as a body of facts to be recalled under pressure. Whether daily classroom practice generalizes to real emotional arousal is an open empirical question the evaluation in Section 8.4 is designed to test, and it is not treated here as a premise.

7.6 Universal Tier I Delivery and the Public Health Rationale

Control the Moment operates at Tier I of the multi-tiered system of support framework, as universal prevention delivered to every student in a classroom on every instructional day. The multi-tiered system of support is the standard architecture for this kind of delivery, with Tier I defined as high-quality schoolwide academic, social, emotional, and behavioral support (Texas Education Agency, 2026), and CASEL frames explicit social and emotional learning instruction as requiring consistent opportunities and dedicated time (CASEL, 2026b).

Universal school-based social and emotional learning produces small but consistent positive effects at scale. Cipriano et al. (2023) synthesized 424 studies covering 252 interventions and 575,361 students across 53 countries and reported positive effects across multiple outcome domains, with larger effects among longer-running programs (USC Rossier, 2026). Universal delivery also produces smaller effects than targeted delivery. In a meta-analysis of school-based mental health services covering 43 controlled trials and 49,941 children, the overall effect was Hedges' $g = 0.39$, with targeted intervention reaching 0.76 and selective prevention 0.67, while universal prevention reached 0.29 (Sanchez et al., 2018). A district considering any universal program, including this one, should hold that comparison in view.

The 2023 Surgeon General's advisory frames youth social media use as an urgent public health issue requiring a safety-first, multi-stakeholder response, and it recommends supporting the development, implementation, and evaluation of digital and media literacy curricula in schools and within academic standards (Office of the Surgeon General, 2023). The regulatory analogies drawn in that document are to toy safety and to motor vehicle safety, including third-party testing, airbags, and seat belts.

The comparison to childhood vaccination and public sanitation is my own and is not drawn from the advisory, which makes neither analogy. I offer it in my own voice, as a nurse. The interventions that changed child health outcomes most in the last century were universal, delivered to every child regardless of individually assessed risk, and justified by population arithmetic rather than by large individual effects. Universal programs need only demonstrate modest effects in order to matter at population scale, given the size of the population they reach (The place of school-based strategies, 2024). That is an argument from analogy and from prevention logic, and readers should weigh it on those terms.

The clinical position stated in Section 2.2, that part of the distress recorded in the federal and state surveillance series reflects a deficit in learned coping and emotional regulation skill, bears on the delivery model rather than on the epidemiology. A deficit in a learnable capacity can be addressed by instruction, and instruction reaching an entire population reaches the students whose need no screening process has identified. That is a rationale for universal delivery, and it remains an argument rather than a causal account of the surveillance trends. It is also an inference the federal prevention framework already supports. The CDC names the teaching of coping and problem-solving skills as one of seven evidence-based suicide prevention strategies and identifies social and emotional learning programs as the approach that instruction is delivered through (CDC, 2022). What the framework does not specify is dose or reach. A strategy delivered as an occasional block to some students is a different intervention from the same strategy delivered daily to every student, and the design described here is an attempt to give effect to the second.

7.7 Spiral Progression

Control the Moment is architected as a K-12 spiral, with the five-step skeleton constant across grade bands and content maturing across the three bands set out in Section 6.3. The rationale is the long maturational arc of prefrontal development described in Section 3.5, together with the documented onset of exposure before school entry described in Section 3.6. Kindergarten is the earliest point a school-based Tier I curriculum can reach.

One qualification belongs with that. Whether there are true sensitive periods for executive function development remains an open question, and the researchers who have examined it argue for the possibility of multiple sensitive periods for constituent processes and call for a systematic research agenda to test the idea (Thompson & Steinbeis, 2020). This manuscript therefore treats kindergarten as the earliest reachable point rather than as a closing window, and it continues instruction through grade 12 for that reason.

Neither the spiral architecture nor the daily delivery is claimed here as a differentiator. Move This World publishes spiral language matching the definition in Section 6.1 across a PreK-12 range (Move This World, 2020), and several programs reviewed in Section 5 publish daily cadences. Section 6.5 states the single respect in which the classification here is exclusive.

7.8 What Is Withheld and Why

The step-by-step lesson mechanics of Control the Moment, including instructional content, cueing scripts, and teacher-delivery protocols, are protected by copyright and held as trade secret by Control the Moment, LLC, and are not published here. The trademark protects the name of the curriculum and confers no protection over curriculum content; the two are kept distinct because they get conflated routinely. What this manuscript places on the record for evaluation is the architectural

signature: the daily dose, the segment structure, the five-step sequence, the grade-band progression, and the mapping from each cited finding to each design decision.

That disclosure is narrower than what is required of every other program coded in Section 5, and the asymmetry is material to how the classification should be read. Three things bound it. The comparison drawn throughout is between published theories of change rather than between curricula, so the classification turns on documents every program controls and none is asked to surrender. The full scope and sequence, grade-band progression, segment structure, and design-to-evidence mapping for Control the Moment are documented and will be provided to any district, evaluator, board, or independent reviewer under a mutual confidentiality agreement, so no district is asked to accept the design claim without inspection. And any program may alter its own classification by publishing a theory of change satisfying the four-point test in Section 6.2, with Appendix B committing the author to act on such a submission within thirty days.

8. Discussion

8.1 Implications for Curriculum Selection

The classification gives a district a test it can apply to public documents without relying on any representation by a vendor. The test asks whether the program's published theory of change cites peer-reviewed literature from 2013 or later on sustained attention, inhibitory control, or reward-driven platform design as the stated basis of its instructional design, and whether a reader can trace a structural feature of the program to a cited finding. That question is answerable in an afternoon from materials the programs themselves publish, and it produces the same answer regardless of who asks it.

Several programs classified in Section 5 as Pre-2012 SEL hold randomized controlled trials completed after 2020, and several are well designed for the problem sets they were built to address. Theoretical lineage and evidence recency are separate axes, and a district evaluating options should read them separately. A program with a pre-2012 theory of change and a 2025 randomized trial has demonstrated something about its effects that Control the Moment has not demonstrated about its own.

What the classification does bear on is the match between a program's design target and the developmental population a district is currently serving. A curriculum's theory of change determines its sequence, its dose, its grade-band progression, and its definition of success. A program built to reduce bullying through peer inclusion, to raise emotional intelligence through the ability model, or to build character through values instruction is aimed at a defined problem and may address that problem well. Adding a unit on digital behavior to such a program adds content without altering the problem the program is organized around. Districts weighing options should treat the classification as one input among several, alongside evidence of effect, implementation demands, cost, and fit with existing multi-tiered structures.

8.2 Implications for Adoption Timing

A defensible case exists for deferring adoption of any program without outcome data. Universal programs produce smaller effects than targeted ones (Sanchez et al., 2018), the largest universal school mental health trial conducted to date returned a null result and reported an adverse dose signal in its process evaluation (Kuyken et al., 2022; Montero-Marín et al., 2022), and an untested curriculum consumes ten minutes of instructional time each day that carries an opportunity cost. Each of those propositions is supported by sources cited here, and a district that weighs them and waits has reached a reasonable conclusion.

The other side of that ledger is just as specific. A district that adopts nothing new keeps delivering, or keeps declining to deliver, instruction designed against a developmental baseline the evidence in Sections 2 and 3 describes as having shifted. In North Dakota the measurement has been updated ahead of the instruction, and two of the state's largest districts screen social-emotional need with a current instrument while the Tier I curricula publicly identified in those districts rest on theories of change assembled decades earlier, as Section 5.3 documents. Students only pass through each grade once.

The structure that resolves this without requiring a district to gamble is a no-cost pilot with a pre-committed measurement protocol, harm monitoring, and subgroup analysis. Such a pilot generates

outcome data in the district's own students against the district's own baseline, which is the evidence neither this manuscript nor any published source can currently supply. Section 8.4 describes that design.

8.3 Anticipated Objections and Responses

Three objections are the strongest a district research director or a peer reviewer is likely to raise.

The MYRIAD trial. The largest universal school mental health trial conducted to date randomized 84 schools and 8,376 students and found no evidence of superiority over teaching as usual at one year, with a standardized mean difference of 0.005 for risk of depression (Kuyken et al., 2022). Its process evaluation reported that higher dose and reach were associated with worse social-emotional-behavioral functioning at post-intervention (Montero-Marin et al., 2022). The response is that MYRIAD tested school-based mindfulness training, a therapeutically framed universal intervention, and the iatrogenic signal in this literature clusters on interventions of that kind, in which all students are exposed to therapeutic content regardless of need (Foulkes & Stringaris, 2023). Control the Moment is a skills and behavior curriculum delivering no clinical content, which is a reason to expect a different risk profile rather than a demonstration of one. Harm monitoring and subgroup analysis are therefore required elements of the evaluation protocol in Section 8.4, and any subgroup showing deterioration is a stop condition.

The sufficiency of weekly delivery. Teaching emotion vocabulary for 20 to 30 minutes per week improved children's social behavior and academic performance (Brackett et al., 2012), which is a demonstrated result at a weekly cadence, though it comes from a pre- and post-test quasi-experimental design rather than a randomized trial. No claim of futility is made about weekly delivery anywhere in this manuscript. The claim concerns the shape of the schedule: for a fixed quantity of instructional time, a greater number of separations produces better retention than a smaller number (Cepeda et al., 2006, 2009), and within school-based mental health services specifically, delivery daily or multiple times per week outperformed weekly or less for externalizing problems (Sanchez et al., 2018).

Transfer. Across meta-analyses, cognitive training reliably improves performance on the trained task and does not reliably generalize beyond it, with no convincing evidence of far transfer against treated controls (Melby-Lervåg et al., 2016) and an overall far-transfer effect described as null (Sala & Gobet, 2023). Five weeks of computerized inhibitory-control training produced behavioral gains only in 10-year-old boys and none in adolescents, and the authors describe their results as preliminary (Delalande et al., 2020). Combined with Raio et al. (2013), the accurate summary is that trained regulation may not deploy in the situations where it is needed. The response is that on Diamond and Ling's (2016) own criteria for when executive-function interventions do generalize, which include sustained duration rather than a short block, embedding in a real social context rather than a laboratory task, diversity of skills rather than a single trained operation, and continuation rather than termination, a daily year-long classroom practice is better positioned than the computerized paradigms in which transfer was not observed. That is a hypothesis about why the design might generalize, and transfer under real emotional load is the primary measurement hypothesis of the planned evaluation rather than an assumption of the design.

8.4 Directions for Evaluation and the Design of the Planned Pilot

Independent randomized evaluation is the appropriate next step, and the classification is placed on the record at the category-defining stage so evaluation can proceed against a stated design rationale rather than a marketing description. The evaluation now being designed is a district pilot, and its principal features are set out below so they can be assessed before results exist.

The pilot is offered to participating districts at no cost for the pilot term. The district receives the curriculum, staff training, and materials without charge, and Control the Moment receives permission to use de-identified aggregate outcome data for research and publication together with the right to name the district as a pilot site, subject to the district's review of that language. The exchange is structured as a research partnership rather than a commercial trial, and continuation beyond the pilot term is optional, requires a separate written agreement, and carries no obligation of purchase. The district's contribution is the daily ten-minute dose delivered with fidelity and the timely completion of the measurement protocol.

The default grade band is K-5, delivered as Tier I universal instruction to every student in participating classrooms, within the multi-tiered system of support structure the district already operates. The pilot term is one academic year, the minimum duration consistent with the distributed-practice and dosage evidence in Section 7.2, and the design accommodates a small number of buildings rather than a single classroom so implementation variation is observable.

Primary outcome measures are teacher-report instruments and district-held administrative data, including indicators such as office discipline referrals and attendance that districts already collect for other purposes. That choice is deliberate on two grounds. Teacher-report and administrative measures capture behavior in the classroom setting where transfer under real conditions would be observed, and they avoid making parental consent under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment a gating item for the evaluation as a whole. Any optional student self-report component is identified as requiring the district's own consent process and is scheduled so that process can be completed before instruction begins. Data provided to Control the Moment are de-identified and aggregate, consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and no student names, personally identifying information, or images are transferred.

Implementation fidelity is measured directly rather than assumed, through a daily delivery log maintained at the classroom level, so dose received can be distinguished from dose assigned in the analysis. The primary measurement hypothesis is transfer: whether a daily practiced regulation routine is deployed under real emotional load outside the lesson, which the training-transfer literature in Section 8.3 identifies as the decisive question. Harm monitoring and prespecified subgroup analysis are required elements of the protocol rather than optional additions, in direct response to the MYRIAD dose finding, and deterioration in any monitored subgroup is a prespecified stop condition.

Publishable research requires review by an institutional review board, and the pilot is structured so a university faculty partner can be added during the pilot term without renegotiating the underlying agreement with the district. The measurement protocol is committed in advance of data collection, and I have committed to publishing the results whether they are positive, null, or adverse. A null or adverse result would be evidence against the design argument in Section 7, and the protocol is built to be capable of producing that result.

9. Limitations

Control the Moment has no outcome data. It has not undergone independent randomized evaluation, no effect size exists for it, and it may prove less effective than any program named here. The evaluation in Section 8.4 is capable of demonstrating that, and until it or a comparable study is completed, every statement made here about the curriculum concerns its design rather than its effects.

The causal question in the screen literature is unsettled. A published academic debate exists over whether social media use is a direct cause of the adolescent mental health inflection documented in Section 2, with one line of argument holding that effect sizes are small and causation is not established (Odgers, 2024; Odgers et al., 2020) and another holding that convergent evidence including natural experiments and dose-response patterns supports a causal reading (Haidt, 2024). The largest available synthesis reports small-to-moderate associations with medium-to-high risk of bias in 95 of 102 included meta-analyses and substantial heterogeneity, and its authors characterize the effects as small (Sanders et al., 2024). The classification here does not require that question to be resolved, since it rests on the dated arrival of the environment and on the publication dates of the literature describing it. A reader who expects the mechanism literature to carry more weight than that will find the design argument in Section 7 correspondingly weaker.

The review method was executed by a single coder without inter-rater reliability assessment, which leaves the coding vulnerable to systematic error a second independent coder would detect. Publishing the coding protocol and the per-program rationales in Appendix C allows external replication of the coding; it does not substitute for it.

The evidentiary base is restricted to publicly available published materials retrieved in July 2026. Where a feature is recorded as absent, the finding is absence of published evidence rather than confirmed absence of practice, and that applies to program coding and district coding alike. Published materials change, and a coding conclusion accurate on the retrieval date may be superseded by later publication, which is why the correction procedure in Appendix B exists.

The coding is asymmetric with respect to my own program. Other programs were coded from public documents, while the proprietary instructional content of Control the Moment was not published and therefore not subject to the same public-document coding. Section 7.8 states the terms that material is available for review on, and the asymmetry remains a limitation of the comparison notwithstanding those terms.

I developed the curriculum classified here as the first member of the category and own the entity that holds it, which is a direct financial interest in the classification. The Author Note discloses that interest without qualification. The classification framework, the operational test, and the challenge procedure are published so the claim can be evaluated independently of me, and readers should weigh the disclosed interest against the checkability of the criteria.

The category claim is a claim about design provenance rather than about efficacy. It states that one curriculum's published theory of change is built on a body of literature other programs' published theories of change predate. It does not state that a theory of change built on that literature produces better outcomes, and no evidence presented here would support that further step.

10. Conclusion

The argument here depends on holding three things at the same time, and it does not work if any one of them is dropped.

The developmental environment of American childhood changed on a dated and documentable schedule across the 2010s, and that change shows up in federal surveillance series, in international survey data, and in nationally representative research on children from birth to age eight. The effects reported in the screen literature are small, the evidence base carries documented bias and heterogeneity problems, and the causal question is still open. And the K-12 social and emotional learning field rests on theories of change assembled before the literature describing that environment was published.

None of that needs to be overstated. Together it gives a school board a boundary it can check from public documents, which is whether a program's published theory of change cites post-2012 research on attention, inhibitory control, or reward-driven platform design as the stated reason for its instructional design.

As of July 2026, and within the review scope defined in Section 4, Control the Moment is the only K-12 universal social and emotional learning curriculum identified in this review that meets that condition. It has no outcome data, it claims no superiority over any program named here, and any program named here can change its own classification by publishing. What it offers a district right now is alignment with a documented shift in the population it serves, delivered daily at Tier I inside multi-tiered structures the district already runs, along with a measurement protocol committed in advance of any data.

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Appendix A. Scope of Claims and Non-Affiliation

A.1 What Is Claimed

This manuscript claims that Post-2012 SEL is a distinct category defined by the three conditions in Section 6.1; that every K-12 social and emotional learning curriculum reviewed under the protocol in Section 4 and in wide United States adoption as of July 2026 does not satisfy Condition 1 on its published materials; and that Control the Moment™ is the first curriculum identified in this review, within the scope defined in Section 4 and as of the July 2026 retrieval date, whose published theory of change satisfies that condition. Every coding conclusion rests on materials the named program itself published, retrieved in July 2026.

A.2 What Is Not Claimed

This section states the limits of the claim in full. The body of the manuscript cross-references here rather than repeating them.

On outcomes. No claim of outcome equivalence or outcome superiority in a randomized controlled trial is made. Control the Moment has no outcome data and has not undergone independent randomized evaluation.

On other programs. No claim is made that any program named here is ineffective, poorly designed, or unsupported by evidence. Several programs classified here as Pre-2012 SEL are supported by randomized controlled trials, including trials completed after 2020, and achieve the outcomes they were built to produce. The classification is a statement about design provenance. It is not a judgment of program quality, implementation fidelity, effect size, evidence recency, or developer good faith.

On daily dosing. No claim is made that daily dosing is unique to Control the Moment. Move This World, Calm Classroom, Inner Explorer, and Schoolbeat all publish daily cadences, and Move This World publishes a ten-minute daily dose.

On spiral architecture. No claim is made that a K-12 spiral architecture is unique to Control the Moment. Move This World publishes spiral language matching the definition in Section 6.1.

On reinforcement schedules. No claim is made that the Control the Moment lesson cadence mirrors, matches, counteracts, or derives from a variable-ratio or any other variable reinforcement schedule. A fixed daily sequence operates on a fixed schedule and contains no response-contingent reinforcer.

On attention windows. No claim is made that a documented attention-shift window exists in children. No such window has been established, and the related proposition of a 10-to-15-minute attention limit has been examined and set aside (Bradbury, 2016).

On dopamine. No claim is made that dopamine dysregulation caused by algorithmic feeds has been measured in children. It has not been measured.

On segment durations. No claim is made that the segment durations used in Control the Moment were derived from an experimental finding, or that the structure of the lesson produces any neurological effect.

On causation. No claim is made that social media use alone caused the adolescent mental health trends documented in Section 2.

A.3 Trademarks and Non-Affiliation

Control the Moment™ is a trademark of Control the Moment, LLC. All other program, product, and organization names referenced here, including Second Step, PATHS, Positive Action, Responsive Classroom, RULER, Sanford Harmony, Harmony Academy, CharacterStrong, PurposeFull People, the S.E.R.V.E. Model, Wayfinder, 7 Mindsets, Move This World, Schoolbeat, Calm Classroom, Inner Explorer, DopaMind, Conscious Discipline, Panorama, QuaverSEL, MindUP, Top 20, D.A.R.E., Sources of Strength, and the Second Step Digital Well-Being unit, are the trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. All such names are used nominatively, for the sole purpose of identifying the programs under discussion and conducting comparative analysis of published materials. Their use implies no affiliation with, sponsorship by, or endorsement by their owners.

Control the Moment, LLC is not affiliated with, endorsed by, sponsored by, or reviewed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. References to the CASEL Program Guide and to CASEL designations are descriptive references to a publicly published resource and imply no CASEL review or approval of this manuscript, of its coding, or of the curriculum described in it.

Control the Moment, LLC is not affiliated with any North Dakota school district, with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, or with the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services. References to district and state materials are descriptive references to published public documents.

Appendix B. Classification Challenge and Correction Procedure

The classification in Section 6 is offered as a falsifiable claim about the public record. This appendix states how any party may challenge it and what commitments the author accepts in response. The procedure applies to the tier one coding in Section 5.1, the tier two grouping in Section 5.2, and the North Dakota district coding in Section 5.3.

B.1 Grounds for Challenge

The claim that Control the Moment™ is the first curriculum within the Post-2012 SEL category may be challenged on any of three grounds, each assessed against published materials only.

Ground (a): the reviewed program's published theory of change satisfies the four-point test in Section 6.2.

Ground (b): the reviewed program's published dosing is daily, on every instructional day, in a short segment of roughly five to fifteen minutes, sustained across a full academic year.

Ground (c): the reviewed program's published architecture is a K-12 spiral beginning at kindergarten, in which the same competencies are revisited at increasing depth with a constant structural skeleton across grade bands.

A program satisfying all three grounds falls within Post-2012 SEL, and this manuscript will be corrected to record that. A program that does not satisfy one or more remains classified as Pre-2012 SEL under this taxonomy, which is a statement about design lineage and about nothing else.

B.2 The Condition 1 Test

Section 6.2 states the four-point test in full, together with the reasoning behind where the threshold sits and the two consequences of that threshold that run against the author's commercial interest. A party preparing a challenge under Ground (a) should work from that section. It is not repeated here.

B.3 Correction Commitments

Any program, district, agency, or other party named here may submit published materials showing that a coding conclusion is inaccurate or incomplete. Submissions may be sent to controlthemoment@outlook.com or to 667 East Villard, Dickinson ND, 58601.

The author commits to reviewing any submission within thirty days of receipt.

The author commits to publishing a correction or a reclassification in an updated version of this manuscript wherever the submitted published materials support one, with the correction identified as such in the revised document.

The author commits to retaining superseded versions in publicly available form, so every change between versions is traceable by a third party.

The author commits to publishing the results of the evaluation described in Section 8.4 whether those results are positive, null, or adverse.

B.4 What Would Disconfirm the Category Claim

Section 6.7 enumerates the four classes of evidence that would disconfirm the category claim, and a challenge submitted under B.3 may rest on any of them. The second class, evidence that a K-12 curriculum in wide United States adoption as of July 2026 already satisfies all three conditions in its published materials, is the most likely route to disconfirmation and the one this appendix is written to accommodate.

B.5 Formal Withdrawals of Statements Published in Version 1.0

Program characterizations in earlier unpublished drafts of this manuscript were revised following primary-source verification. Only verified conclusions appear here. No earlier draft was distributed.

All references in this version were verified against the original sources. Several citations that could not be confirmed as existing publications were removed, and a number of reference details, including authors, years, journal titles, volume and page numbers, and DOIs or URLs, were corrected for accuracy. Where a secondary or press-release locator had been used, it was replaced with a direct citation to the primary source.

Appendix C. Program Coding Detail

This appendix records the per-program coding rationale for the tier one programs in Table 1, drawn from each named program's own published materials as retrieved in July 2026 under the protocol in Section 4. Appendix A.2 states what these conclusions do and do not assert. Control the Moment™ is coded in Section 6.3 under the same three conditions and is not repeated here.

C.1 Second Step (Committee for Children)

Second Step is among the most widely adopted social and emotional learning curricula in the United States. The publisher dates the program's debut to 1985 and the research literature commonly cites 1986; the organization was founded in 1979 (Committee for Children, 2002). Committee for Children has substantially rebuilt and extended the program, including a ground-up digital elementary rebuild released in 2021, a High School program launched in 2024, and a K-12 Digital Well-Being specialized unit launched for the 2025-26 school year covering digital stress, online behavior, misinformation, screen balance, media literacy, and emerging technologies, with instruction described as growing in depth and complexity as students mature (Committee for Children, 2025b). The published K-12 digital scope and sequence contains social-media-specific objectives, including analysis of intent and evidence in social media posts (Committee for Children, 2024).

Coding conclusion. Condition 1 is not satisfied: the published theory of change is grounded in violence prevention, social skills, and executive function within the CASEL lineage, and the post-2012 digital material is published as lesson content rather than as the stated basis of instructional design. Condition 2 is not satisfied: the digital well-being content is delivered as a specialized supplemental unit layered on a lesson structure of five lessons of 15 to 30 minutes per unit rather than as a short daily dose. Condition 3 is not satisfied for that unit, which is supplemental rather than a K-12 spiral. The program's evidence base is current, including four WestEd studies published in 2025 (Committee for Children, 2026b), and evidence recency is coded separately from theoretical lineage throughout.

C.2 PATHS

PATHS was released in 1994 and publishes an Affective-Behavioral-Cognitive-Dynamic model as its theoretical foundation.

Coding conclusion. The published theory of change was developed prior to the literature described in Section 3, and the published materials do not present post-2012 attention, inhibitory-control, or platform-design research as the basis of instructional design. Condition 1 is not satisfied.

C.3 Positive Action

Positive Action was founded in 1982 and publishes a Thoughts-Actions-Feelings self-concept model as its theoretical foundation.

Coding conclusion. The published theory of change predates the literature described in Section 3, and the published materials do not present post-2012 attention or reward-design research as the basis of instructional design. Condition 1 is not satisfied.

C.4 Responsive Classroom (Center for Responsive Schools)

The Center for Responsive Schools was founded in 1981, the term Responsive Classroom was coined in 1990, and the first workshop was delivered in 1991 (Center for Responsive Schools, n.d.). The published foundation is child development theory.

Coding conclusion. Responsive Classroom is an approach to classroom practice with a published lineage in child development theory, and its published materials do not present post-2012 attention or platform-design research as the basis of instructional design. Condition 1 is not satisfied.

C.5 RULER (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence)

RULER was developed in the mid-2000s at Yale, and the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence opened in 2013. It is adopted by hundreds of United States districts as a whole-school approach spanning pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Yale published an updated theory of change in 2019, describing RULER as a systemic evidence-based approach to social, emotional, and academic learning and setting out the theories foundational to it (Brackett et al., 2019).

Coding conclusion. RULER's published theory of change, updated in 2019, is grounded in the Mayer and Salovey ability model of emotional intelligence, and RULER's published materials do not present post-2012 attention or platform-design research as the basis of instructional design. Condition 1 is not satisfied. The 2019 publication date of the theory-of-change document is recorded here because the coding turns on the content of the document rather than on its date.

C.6 Harmony (formerly Sanford Harmony)

Harmony was developed at Arizona State University in 2008 and transitioned to National University in 2014. It is distributed free of charge and has broad national reach in United States PreK through grade 6 classrooms, and its published research base is peer-relationship and intergroup contact research (Sanford Harmony, 2026). The program publishes a technology paper covering digital citizenship that cites post-2012 sources (Sanford Harmony, 2020). Materials appear under both the legacy Sanford Harmony brand and the current Harmony Academy brand, and both are cited here under the name each document carries.

Coding conclusion. The published student scope and sequence, spanning Pre-K and kindergarten through grades 5 and 6, contains no technology, screen-time, or digital-citizenship unit, and the technology material the program publishes is educator-facing professional learning on teaching with technology rather than a statement of the basis for instructional design (Sanford Harmony, 2026). Condition 1 is not satisfied. Condition 3 is not satisfied on scope, since the published architecture does not extend through grade 12.

C.7 CharacterStrong

CharacterStrong was founded in 2016 and was acquired by FullBloom in February 2025 (FullBloom, 2025). Its published theoretical grounding is character education combined with healthy youth development, which the publisher attributes to work by Bernat and Resnick published in 2006. Its published curricula include a social-media lesson within PurposeFull People. PurposeFull People spans PreK through grade 5 and the Secondary curriculum spans grades 6 through 12.

Coding conclusion. The published theory of change is grounded in the character-education and healthy-youth-development traditions, and the social-media material appears as lesson content

rather than as the stated basis of instructional design. Condition 1 is not satisfied. Condition 3 is not satisfied, since neither published curriculum is a single K-12 spiral. The program's randomized evidence base is recent, with completed trials of both the elementary and the secondary curricula (CharacterStrong, 2026), and that recency is coded separately from theoretical lineage.

C.8 Wayfinder

Wayfinder originated in a Stanford d.school fellowship in 2015 and released its first year-long curriculum in 2017. Its published foundation is research on purpose and adolescent development. The program publishes vertically aligned K-12 content and delivers roughly 20 to 26 lessons per year at 20 to 30 minutes each (Wayfinder, 2024b). Wayfinder is the program in Table 1 whose founding narrative most directly invokes the adolescent mental health crisis.

Coding conclusion. The published theory of change is grounded in purpose and adolescent development research rather than in post-2012 attention, inhibitory-control, or reward-design literature, so Condition 1 is not satisfied. Condition 2 is not satisfied on the published cadence of 20 to 26 lessons per year.

C.9 7 Mindsets

7 Mindsets was started in 2009 and derives its framework from a study of happiness begun in 2006. Its published default cadence is roughly 30 minutes per week, with daily delivery offered as an implementation option (7 Mindsets, 2026b).

Coding conclusion. The published theory of change is grounded in mindset research developed prior to the literature described in Section 3, so Condition 1 is not satisfied. The published default cadence is weekly rather than daily, so Condition 2 is not satisfied as published.

C.10 Move This World

Move This World was founded in 2007 and became an online video-based program in 2014 (Move This World, 2026). It publishes a daily cadence, described in its own materials as a robust daily curriculum, across PreK through grade 12, and it publishes explicit spiral language stating that there is a sequence of skills mirroring the developmental trajectory of learners and the move from concrete to abstract, with students revisiting those skills at increasingly sophisticated levels (Move This World, 2020). Independent reporting describes the daily dose as ten minutes, split between morning and afternoon (Stringer, 2017).

Coding conclusion. Move This World satisfies the daily-dosing condition and the spiral-architecture condition from its own published materials, which is why this manuscript claims no uniqueness for Control the Moment on either. The published foundation is the CASEL five competencies together with creative movement and expression; the published materials do not present smartphone, attention-economy, or reward-design research as the basis of instructional design; and the program's principal technology framing is the provision of screen-free options. Condition 1 is not satisfied.

C.11 Schoolbeat (formerly moozoom)

Schoolbeat is a direct commercial competitor in the daily short-format K-12 segment, and its inclusion reflects that position. It publishes a cadence of 15 minutes every morning, a fixed Monday-through-Friday structure, and K-12 coverage, with students practicing the same regulation routine

across lessons, classrooms, and grade levels (Schoolbeat, 2026). Its published theory of change is Bandura's observational learning combined with explicit instruction.

Coding conclusion. Condition 1 is not satisfied: the published theory of change is grounded in observational learning theory, and digital topics including social media, digital life, and phones in class appear as lesson subjects rather than as the stated basis of instructional design.

C.12 Calm Classroom and Inner Explorer

Calm Classroom was founded in 2007 and launched in Chicago Public Schools in 2008; it publishes a cadence of three minutes, two to three times daily, across K-12 (Calm Classroom, n.d.). Inner Explorer was founded in 2011 and publishes a cadence of five to ten minutes daily across PreK through grade 12, describing its evidence base as 40 years of mindfulness-based stress reduction research (Inner Explorer, 2026).

Coding conclusion. Both programs satisfy the daily-dosing condition on their published cadences. Both publish theories of change grounded in the mindfulness and mindfulness-based stress reduction tradition rather than in post-2012 attention or reward-design literature, so Condition 1 is not satisfied for either.

C.13 DopaMind

DopaMind is the program in this review closest to Control the Moment on subject matter, and its presence is why this manuscript does not treat the post-2012 design space as closed. Its published TK through grade 12 courses teach dopamine deficit states, intermittent reinforcement, prefrontal executive load, persuasive design, and smartphone mere-presence effects on focus, which is materially more than a digital-citizenship module (DopaMind, 2026). Its founding year is not published.

Coding conclusion. DopaMind satisfies point 3 of the Condition 1 test on substance, since the post-2012 subject matter is the substance of the program rather than an appended unit. It does not satisfy point 2, because no peer-reviewed grounding for that content was identified in its published materials as retrieved in July 2026, and it states its basis as brain science without accompanying citations.

Condition 1 is therefore not satisfied as published, and the program is coded No in Table 1 on that basis. Condition 2 is not satisfied, since its units run 2.5 to 14.5 hours and are designed to complete in days or to extend across a semester rather than to run daily across a year. A sourced theory of change published by DopaMind would satisfy Condition 1 on the four-point test.

C.14 Programs Coded in the North Dakota District Review

Conscious Discipline, coded in Section 5.3 as the named Tier I program in one district, publishes a Brain State Model developed prior to the literature described in Section 3, and Condition 1 is not satisfied on its published materials. Panorama is a screening instrument rather than a Tier I curriculum and falls outside the category by scope. The state-named resources in Table 2, including peer-led suicide prevention programs, gatekeeper trainings, adult workshops, and parent-facing resources, likewise fall outside the category by scope rather than by design provenance, since none is a Tier I K-12 student curriculum.

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