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# Emotional Wellness And Learning

Emilie Correa

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EMOTIONAL WELLNESS AND LEARNING

Emilie Day Dieck-Correa

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of  
Doctor of Education  
in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National Louis University

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# Document Origination Statement for Digital Commons @ NLU

This document was created as *one* part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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## Abstract

“Education has two great goals: to help students become smart, and to help them become good” (Lickona & Davidson, n.d., p. 15). This program evaluation is an evaluation of the Emotional wellness (EW) program in District 1234 (pseudonym). Through this program evaluation, one can expect to gain a deeper understanding of the original program goals, framework, and effectiveness, based on district-wide culture and climate surveys. The primary research questions for this program evaluation are to determine if the emotional wellness program (EWP) is being implemented with fidelity, and how the EWP is impacting stakeholders in D1234. This program evaluation serves to inform, advocate for, and increase awareness and support for SEL, and EW programs in schools.

## Preface

I am the EW Coordinator in District 1234 (pseudonym). I am currently in my fourth year of serving the district in this capacity. My job responsibilities include oversight of the EW Committees at each individual school, and working collaboratively with students, staff, administrators, parents, and community members to further enhance a multitiered approach to EW and SEL.

As the coordinator, I must exemplify emotional well-being while demonstrating a commitment to provide a healthy culture and climate in all district endeavors. In addition to supporting the work of EW Committees at each school in the district, I coordinate wellness initiatives and opportunities at the district level, publish a district-wide EW newsletter, gather, and analyze data from culture and climate surveys, conduct longitudinal studies of data, and report findings annually to the Board of Education.

In my role as emotional wellness coordinator, this program evaluation has served to help me gain a deeper understanding of the history of the program, the original goals of the program, program framework, and program effectiveness based on district wide culture and climate surveys. This research has strengthened my knowledge and understanding of the program and informed my role as program leader. In terms of my early career in leadership, one of the most important leadership lessons I have learned is to embrace change. If there is one thing that we can count on, it is change. In a leadership role, change cannot be feared, it must be expected and embraced.

Another valuable lesson I have learned from my leadership role is to be inspirational, by that I mean, walk the talk, and affirm others when they have done something well. I aim to be genuine in my leadership, to have transparency. I am very cautious that everything I say and do is an act of leadership. I have learned that integrity is a vital component in leading by example

and doing the right thing even when no one else is watching. I do not want to come across as a person who never makes mistakes, because I am human, therefore, I make mistakes. I have learned that one of the most important aspects of leadership is to own your mistakes, apologize for wrongdoing, or miscommunications, and most importantly, learn from the mistakes you have made so as not to repeat the same mistakes over. As such, in the developmental phase of my leadership skills, I am optimistic that if I can just be myself, trust my instincts, embrace change, act with integrity and transparency, lead by example, learn from mistakes, and affirm the people I work with, I will have a successful road ahead.

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my husband, Luis, and my most precious gifts in life, Luis and Evelyn, whom I love fiercely. Thank you, family and friends, whose support and encouragement continue to play an integral role, in my journey. I would like to thank my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Elizabeth Minor, for scaffolding this process through timely scholarly advice, meticulous scrutiny, and genuine interest in helping me develop as a leader while completing this task. I am thankful for my colleagues, supervisors, professors, and the educational institutions that have provided opportunities for personal and professional growth. I would like to acknowledge the unwavering support and friendship of my emotional wellness committee coach, Lynn Moore, whose contributions to my professional development and capacity as a leader will always be greatly appreciated. Lastly, I would like to honor my Mom and Dad who have loved me unconditionally, been my biggest cheerleaders in life, and inspired me to be the best version of myself.

## **Dedication**

To Mom & Dad, Big & Little Luis, Evie, Sarah (the best sister a girl could ask for), Garrett, O'Gretta Day, and all the Madigan's, Dieck's, and Correa's.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Preface.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	v
Dedication.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Section 1: Introduction.....	1
Social Emotional Learning.....	2
Purpose.....	6
Emotional wellness program (EWP).....	6
Emotional wellness building mentors.....	12
Rationale.....	15
Goals.....	18
Research Questions.....	20
Section Two: Literature Review.....	22
Social Emotional Learning and Character Education.....	22
Scope and Interest in SEL.....	24
Benefits of SEL.....	28
SEL: The Missing Ingredient in the Common Core.....	34
Section Three: Methodology.....	41
Participants.....	42
Data Gathering Techniques.....	42
Data Analysis Techniques.....	43
Section Four: Findings and Interpretation.....	43
Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education.....	44
D1234 11 Principles of Character Education Survey Results.....	46
School-Wide Behavior Support Survey.....	51
School Workplace Satisfaction Survey (SWSS).....	55
Section Five: Judgment and Recommendations.....	61
References.....	66
Appendix A.....	73

Appendix B .....	76
Appendix C.....	77
Appendix D .....	80

**List of Tables**

Table 1. *D1234 11 Principles of Character Education Survey Results*..... 46

Table 2. *District 1234 Grades 2-8 SWBS All Categories Mean/Overall Mean Score by Year* .... 52

Table 3. *District 1234 Grades 2-8 SWBS All Categories Mean/Overall Mean Score by year*..... 53

Table 4. *SWSS Comparison of D1234 Staff Responses from 2010 to 2012*..... 56

Table 5. *SWSS Mean Score from School A, B, and C from SY 2010-2012*..... 58

## List of Figures

<i>Figure 1.</i> Social emotional learning competencies .....	3
<i>Figure 2.</i> Approaches to promoting SEL.....	4
<i>Figure 3.</i> Eleven principles of character education .....	45

## Section 1: Introduction

“Education has two great goals: to help students become smart, and to help them become good” (Lickona & Davidson, nd. p.15). Plato, arguably one of the most influential figures in western thought, proposed his ideal of education in *The Republic*, as a holistic education, inclusive of a balanced curriculum of training in physical education, the arts, math, science, character, and moral judgment. He explained, "By maintaining a sound system of education and upbringing, you produce citizens of good character” (Aristotle, quoted in, Straub, 2012. p. 39). Aristotle spoke of virtue and good moral character as human excellence or an excellence of soul, and contended that education of the mind, without education of the heart, is no education at all (Reed & Johnson, 2000).

The founding fathers of our democracy knew that moral (character) education was essential to the viability of our democracy, which depends on knowledgeable and caring citizens (Lickona, 1992). Theodore Roosevelt pointed out that to educate a man in mind and not morals is to create a menace to society (Golosinski, 2008). Baptist Minister, social activist, and leader of the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote an article in 1947 in the Morehouse College Student Paper in which he stated, “We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education” (King Jr., 1947, para. 5). These prolific thinkers were all aware of the marked importance of educating the whole child, which in modern vernacular, is the goal of Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

By placing SEL and Character Education (CE) in historical context, one can see that education of the whole child is certainly not a new, twenty-first century, educational fad. Like many western ideas, the origins of SEL and CE are rooted in ancient Greece. Over the past two decades, there has been a resurgence in this important notion of educating the whole child,

“Societies around the globe are rediscovering ancient wisdom: Character matters” (Lickona, 2012, para. 1). A broad body of research substantiates that academic ability works in conjunction with SEL and CE to support student success in the 21st Century (Garcia, 2014). Researchers now know that, “in meaningful and sustained learning, the intellect and the emotion are inseparable. Brain research, for example, has demonstrated that ... emotions [drive] attention, learning, memory, and other important mental and intellectual activities” (McCombs, 2001, para. 2). If that is the case, then all learning is SEL. As we prepare students for the demands of the twenty-first century, the need for SEL and CE in schools is becoming more essential for students to thrive in school, work, and life.

### **Social Emotional Learning**

What exactly is SEL? In 1994, an effort to advance the science and practice of SEL surfaced. Researchers at Yale established the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) under the leadership of Roger P. Weissberg (Scelfo, 2015). In 1996, CASEL moved headquarters from Yale to the University of Illinois at Chicago. CASEL defines SEL as, “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (CASEL, “What is SEL,” n.d.). Drawing upon years of research, CASEL established the five competencies of SEL for students. These include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (see Figure 1). Maurice Elias, psychology professor at Rutgers University and director of the university’s Social-Emotional Learning Lab, describes SEL as, “the process through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and

responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors” (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2007, p. 203).



*Figure 1.* Social emotional learning competencies.

- Self-awareness: The ability to reflect on one’s own feelings and thoughts.
- Self-management (or self-control): The ability to control one’s own thoughts and behavior.
- Social awareness: The ability to empathize with others, recognize social cues and adapt to various situations.
- Relationship skills: The ability to communicate, make friends, manage disagreements, recognize peer pressure, and cooperate.
- Responsible decision-making: The ability to make healthy choices about one’s own behavior while weighing consequences for others. (CASEL, “What is SEL.” n.d.)

CASEL suggests that the most effective approaches to teaching SEL are explicit social and emotional skills instruction, freestanding SEL lessons, integration with academic curriculum

areas, teacher instructional practices, and organizational strategies (CASEL, “What is SEL,” n.d.). Successful implementation of these approaches will produce the following program outcomes: increased knowledge and skills, supportive learning environment, and improved attitudes about self, others, and school, which will benefit all stakeholders including students, staff, and the greater community. With a sound SEL program in place, the following student outcomes can be expected; improved positive social behavior, reduced problem behavior, reduced emotional distress, and improved academic performance (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011, p. 416). Figure 2 further explains the Approaches to Promoting SEL, Program Outcomes, and Student Outcomes.

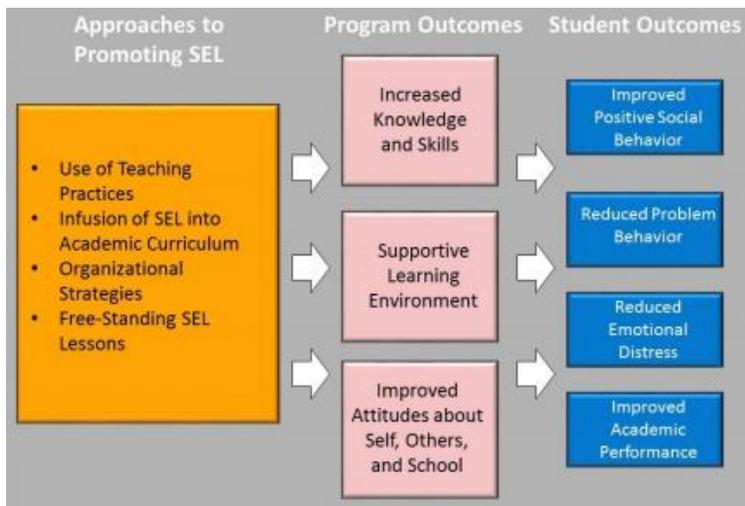


Figure 2. Approaches to promoting SEL (CASEL, n.d.).

At this point, I have clearly defined SEL and listed the most effective approaches to teaching SEL. One thing to keep in mind is that SEL programming is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful (CASEL, 2015). Adopting an evidence-based SEL program is not enough to ensure positive outcomes, rather, the success of a program depends on

high-quality implementation (CASEL, 2015). With high quality programming and high-quality implementation, the culture and climate will likely be positively impacted. SEL improves school climate by establishing a safe, caring learning environment through peer initiatives, classroom management, school community building, and improved teaching techniques (CASEL, 2015).

Many professionals in the field of education readily understand the inextricable nature of SEL and healthy, developmentally appropriate academic education. CASEL has, over the past two decades, grown to be a worldwide leader in advancing SEL science, evidence-based practice, and policy. According to CASEL, proponents of SEL believe that character, virtue, and morally good behaviors can and should be taught in our nation's schools (CASEL, 2015). Likewise, educators, parents and policymakers who recognize that the core SEL competencies are necessary for effective life functioning, also know these skills can, and should, be taught (CASEL, 2015). In an article about why emotional intelligence can matter more than IQ, Daniel Goleman, internationally known psychologist and author of the book, *emotional intelligence*, states, "Because school success is predicted largely by emotional and social measures, teachers and parents cannot start too early in helping children develop their emotional intelligence" (Goleman, 1996 p. 50).

SEL is practiced and promoted both in the United States and on an international scale. States are implementing SEL learning standards and some school districts are implementing systemic SEL programs (Cruz, 2015). SEL is growing in existential ways, one of which is that top universities nationally and internationally, are developing SEL programs and centers for SEL research and advocacy. Additionally, there are large scale organizations committed to the research and advocacy of SEL.

With a career background of 14 years in public school teaching, two master's degrees, one in elementary education and one in school counseling, I have seen firsthand how the priorities of schools have stepped into a race to the top, academic-centric, more-is-more curriculum overload, as well as the dismal effects that high stakes testing is having on students, teachers, and the overall culture and climate of schools. I am fortunate enough to be a part of a school district that values SEL. Demonstrative of the district's commitment to SEL and the EW of all stakeholders is the unique position I hold, Emotional Wellness Coordinator. Throughout this dissertation I will be discussing SEL through the lens of this unique perspective. I say unique perspective because I am not aware of any other school districts that have a district coordinator for EW. As such, this dissertation will serve to both describe and evaluate the emotional wellness program (EWP), in D1234. Additionally, I will attempt to gauge the influence that the EWP has had on the primary stakeholders in School District 1234.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of evaluating this program is to provide a deeper understanding of the EWP in D1234 and to describe how the EWP relates to SEL. I hope that this program evaluation will serve to inform, advocate for, and increase awareness and support for SEL and EWPs in schools. The intended audience of this report includes, but is not limited to, superintendents, school administrators, staff, students, parents, professors of teacher preparation programs, and lobbyists in the arena of educational policy.

**Emotional wellness program (EWP).** The Emotional Wellness Program in D1234 was established in school year 2007-2008 under the name of the Student Development Committee (SDC). This committee, comprised of a team of teachers and administrators from each of the four schools in D1234 (three elementary schools and one middle school), set out with the

specific purpose of improving the climate and culture of the schools by implementing the 11 Principles of CE, and infusing SEL into district programming and curriculum. The district SDC held monthly meetings and worked collaboratively to generate ideas that would be implemented in D1234 schools that would impart positivity, create a sense of belonging, and inspire physical and emotional health and well-being. The SDC was formed in response to some tragic occurrences in the community. A string of teenage suicides in neighboring communities left the D1234 community on high alert and urgently seeking to address the social-emotional problems that faced students. The SDC sought to provide preventative programming, such as the 11 Principles of SEL and CD. The intention of the SDC was to build a positive culture and climate in the schools by teaching and emphasizing CE and SEL.

The establishment of the SDC was jump started by a community partnership with the Charmm'd Foundation, a local non-profit leadership development organization. In SY 2007-2008, D1234 entered a ten-year matching grant with Charmm'd to increase leadership potential within D1234 leaders, leadership teams, and community coalitions. This partnership encouraged multiple layers of community leadership to partake in opportunities that enhance leadership and in turn strengthen the community. The Charmm'd Foundation embraces the idea that leadership development builds capacity. They contend that if the adult climate and culture in the schools is healthy, then the student culture will thrive and emulate their example.

Through the collaboration with Charmm'd, the SDC morphed into the Emotional Wellness Committee (EWC). As part of the services provided to D1234 by the Charmm'd Foundation, an EW coach, Laura Mott (pseudonym), was assigned as a consultant to work with the EWC to launch and sustain the initiative district-wide. By SY 2010-2011, the EWC began to gain momentum. A district administrator was appointed the part-time position of being the

district EW Coordinator. The program structure strengthened and developed over time. In 2013 the EW Coordinator left the district unexpectedly at mid-year. To keep the momentum, Mott, the Charmm'd Coach, took over the program for the remainder of the year, however, the loss was very impactful. In SY 2014-2015, I was hired to take on the part-time position of EW Coordinator.

The D1234 EWP has a well-established, feasible structure and function that is easily replicable. A district level coordinator, the EW Coordinator, oversees the committees at each individual school. The primary role of the of the coordinator is to work collaboratively with students, staff, administrators, parents, and community members to further enhance a multi-tiered approach to EW and SEL. The coordinator must exemplify EW while demonstrating a commitment to provide an emotionally well culture and climate in all district endeavors. The specific roles and responsibilities of the EW Coordinator include, but are not limited to, supporting the work of the EWCs at each school in the district, promotion of EW initiatives and opportunities at the district level, data and reporting, administering, analyzing, and preparing on-going School-Wide Behavior Support Survey, gathering and analyzing discipline data summaries for principals and teaching teams, conducting a longitudinal study of District 1234 Culture and Climate data, and providing periodic updates and annual reporting to the District 1234 Board of Education.

To be clear, the EW initiative in D1234 is focused on sustained growth and development of SEL and character development as it pertains to our three major stakeholders: students, staff, and parents/community. SEL and EW involves the whole system, not just the students. The D1234 EWP operates based on the following core beliefs:

- All adults who come into contact with our students have a profound impact on their development as individuals.
- When schools effectively promote positive character development, they actually see strong academic benefits!
- We know that successes in life and personal wellness are linked to a set of relational skills that truly can be modeled, practiced, and encouraged each day.
- The skills toward working in teams, effective listening and speaking, positive decision-making, and calm conflict resolution can be strengthened and refined in our schools.
- With a true spirit of collaboration between school staff, parents, and the community, we can guide our students toward reaching their unique potentials (Information Retrieved from district website omitted for anonymity).

In terms of student and staff development, the EW Coordinator attends regular monthly EWC building meetings at all schools. The coordinator works with individual building EW Committees to plan and coordinate pro-social EW programming for students, staff, and parents/community throughout the school year. Some examples of EW programming include: creation of EW district newsletter, creation of EW website including EW and SEL resources for all stakeholders, creation of student bathroom stall newsletter infused with positive messaging (ex: The Stall Street Journal), seeking out and coordinating staff professional development (PD) opportunities in the realm of EW, seeking out and coordinating EW assemblies for students, Family involvement nights such as Family Movie Night, Family Game Night, Family Reading Night. In addition, the EW Coordinator spearheads educational talks for the parent community addressing SEL topics such as: stress management, healthy parenting, dealing with anxiety, body image, and appropriate technology usage. Other examples that involve promoting EW in the

community are circulating a district EW newsletter, partnering with local non-profits to host a Community Conversation Series based on relevant EW topics, and partnering with local law enforcement to coordinate Internet Safety talks for parents and students.

The EW Coordinator is charged with keeping abreast of the most current SEL legislation, news, and happenings both nationally and internationally. The coordinator must engage in continuous conversations to advocate for SEL district wide. The coordinator should engage in conversations with core teachers as to how to infuse SEL into existing curricula. The coordinator seeks out PD opportunities for staff, students and parents on topics relating to EW. The coordinator is charged with conducting ongoing research, reviewing, and piloting implementation of current district pro-social programs and curriculum, i.e. Character Counts, Second Step, Capturing Kids Hearts (Flippen, 2011) and Foundations Program by Randy Sprick (Sprick, 2002).

Direct teaching of SEL to the student population in D1234 at the middle school level had been accomplished in the past through an Advisory Program. The purpose of the Advisory Program is to promote SEL, character development, and significantly and positively impact individual students, as well as the school climate as a whole. As research suggests, school leaders are increasingly recognizing that a strong, positive school culture is key for students to experience academic and social success (Schwartz, 2016). Advisory is a program that aspires to do just that, to forge connections among students and the school community and to create conditions that facilitate academic success and personal growth. In D1234, the EW Coordinator is responsible for facilitating evaluation of the Advisory Program, creating, and distributing Advisory curricula, and providing leadership to collaboratively make revisions based on feedback with an intentional focus on SEL skill building and prevention of at risk behaviors.

In SY 2015-2016, District 1234 launched a new initiative in place of the traditional Advisory Program called, Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO). The EW Coordinator serves on the ELO committee and will be closely monitoring the program effectiveness. ELO meets two times a week for 30 minutes and runs for eight-weeks per session. After each session, students submit new ideas for classes and topics of interest. From this list teachers select the courses they would like to facilitate, and the learning expands beyond traditional subject matter for both students and staff. To clarify, ELO is defined as exploration with learning attached to it, either by trying something new, doing something different, or researching something interesting. Exploration and enrichment should lead to self-improvement in some capacity where students discover passions and want to dig deeper into their learning. Some examples of ELO classes being offered based on student interests are Coding, Rocketry, Knitting, Environmental Exploration, Brain Games, Photography, Read and Relax, Yoga, and Zumba. As an educator, counselor, and parent, I find great value in ELO. The concern I have as EW Coordinator, is that this program has replaced Advisory, therefore, there is no longer direct teaching of SEL and CE. D1234 continues to search for ways to infuse SEL into existing curricula and through staff development.

In the area of Staff Development, the EW Coordinator is expected to provide on-going, intentional focus on staff EW. The coordinator works directly with building level EWCs to generate ideas for implementation of EW activities and programming to be carried out during the school year. The coordinator promotes both formal and informal experiential staff PD all-encompassing in the realm of EW. The coordinator seeks out and conducts PD (in small or large settings) on best practices for teaching and modeling EW, SEL, appropriate disciplinary

practices, and preventative practices through the SEL lens. Overall, the coordinator is seen as the expert in EW and SEL and serves as the go-to district resource.

In the area of parent/community development, the EW coordinator is expected to chair the district emotional wellness committee, work directly with EW Parent Representatives and serve as liaison between D1234 and neighboring districts. D1234 partakes in shared services, community wellness organizations, and the Charmm'd Foundation, on all EW, SEL, and substance abuse prevention programs. The coordinator is responsible for making connections in the community and establishing partnerships with community resources. The coordinator seeks out opportunities to bring SEL educational programs to parents, and the greater community emphasizing preventative programming. The coordinator collaborates with D1234 Technology Coaches and SRO Officer to educate students, staff, and parents on safe use of social media and other instructional technology tools.

**Emotional wellness building mentors.** As previously mentioned, each of the four schools in D1234 has a building level EWC. This building level EWC is headed by two individuals who are paid a stipend to be the Emotional Wellness Committee building mentors. EW mentors should emulate the qualities and character traits associated with EW by being positive, kind, caring, mindful, professional, and, to the best of their abilities, set the example of EW behaviors and actions in their buildings. In other words, EW mentors are expected to walk the talk. As part of their leadership role in the building, EW mentors help facilitate and coordinate PD activities related to EW at the building and district level.

The role of building EWC Mentors is very important and requires time and dedication, as there are many expectations as to the roles and responsibilities required. One such responsibility is that the building Mentors analyze districts surveys, such as the comprehensive school climate

inventory (CSCI), completed by staff, students, and parents, to determine areas of strength and areas of need. Once needs have been identified, SMART goals are set to address these specific needs (See Appendix B). EW mentors divide their committees into three subcommittees to address the three major subgroups, student, staff, and parent community. Subcommittee action plans are used to focus efforts and drive accountability. Building Mentors work in cooperation with the EW coordinator and the Charmm'd Foundation Coach to produce an EW action plan for each school year.

In addition to the submission of the building goals, EW mentors choose a theme for the year to support their goal and the work that they will be doing. Some examples of past themes are “What is Your Mindset,” “On the Journey,” “#Balance,” and “Inspired by Change.” Using a theme, mentors weave their EWC message into activities and programming. For example, mentors might create interactive staff bulletin boards with positive messaging for visual reminders of the goal and theme. Some schools print t-shirts with their theme and the EWC logo to be given out to all adults in the building. Typically, the EWC will ask adults to participate in showing unity by wearing the staff t-shirt on a certain day of each month.

Based on smart goals, EWC Mentors are responsible for administering Pre-Assessment and Post Assessment surveys to staff, parents, and students (if applicable). Beginning SY 2015-2016, mentors will be transitioning to the use of Google Docs. In addition to facilitating collaboration, the use of Google Docs for EWC Sub-Committee Action Plans serves to archive EW programming, efforts, events, and activities sponsored by the EWC over the course of the school year. By documenting EWC programming with structured templates in a shared database, mentors can easily generate and submit both Mid-Year and End-of-Year reports, illustrating their

progress toward their goals, and the effectiveness of the work that has been done in relation to their goal.

Additional Building EWC Mentor roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, coordinating and facilitating a monthly EWC meeting, creating an agenda, and recording meeting minutes. Mentors are expected to complete Post-Meeting Reflections (See Appendix C) to articulate what went well, what did not go well, what was done in relation to meeting their goals, and what they will do differently next time. Building mentors take on the role of the expert in the building for EW and SEL.

There are four quarterly district level EWC meetings, facilitated by the Emotional Wellness Coordinator, that mentors are required to attend in addition to their monthly building meetings. Additionally, in conjunction with the District EWC Coordinator and Charmm'd coach, mentors at each building coordinate and facilitate two building level half-day EW workshops. The goal of the EW half-day workshop is to support the expert role of the Emotional Wellness Committee by providing ongoing PD to EW mentors and their building committees, to provide EWC members time to adequately reflect on their work and accomplishments and to plan out the Emotional Wellness programming for the year. The workshops are designed to allow EWC members time to work together in a whole group session as well as break into subcommittees consisting of students, staff, and parents/community, to generate ideas and infuse SEL into the planning and programming of EWC events offered in D1234.

Of great importance, the EWC, as well as the building EWC mentors and their committees, must demonstrate commitment in the realm of EW PD and continuing education. In doing so, the EWC, building mentors, and their committees, are expected to seek out and participate in local/national workshops and conferences and be responsible for bringing material

and knowledge gained back to the EW committee and school building community. The EWC coordinator, mentors, and committee members should be knowledgeable about the foundations of the EW program, the partnership with the Charmm'd Foundation, and the vision of EW in D1234.

## **Rationale**

I have chosen to evaluate the EW program because, as the program coordinator, I am committed to the betterment of the program. In evaluating the program, I hope to gain a deeper understanding of my role, the original program goals, program framework, and program effectiveness, based on district-wide culture and climate surveys. This research has provided in-depth knowledge and insight that I will use in order to make recommendations for program improvement. I have been fortunate to be supported not only by district administration, but also by the coaching provided by the Charmm'd Foundation. Both of these pillars of support have proven to be tremendously effective in helping the EW program gain momentum, make an impact, and demonstrate accountability in the process.

Research suggests that there is a positive relationship between school climate and student achievement (Bulach, Malone, and Castleman, 1995). With an increase of devastating occurrences of school violence, bullying, and teenage suicides, I hope to build a case for schools to take a proactive stance in improving the climate and culture of their environments by implementing preventative programming, fueling SEL, and establishing an EWP. I have chosen to evaluate this program because, in my professional opinion, it is imperative to have preventative programming in place in our nation's schools as opposed to reactive programming in the wake of tragedy.

Successful implementation of an EWP, requires support and prioritization of SEL by district administration. When the EWP was founded, D1234 was fortunate to have a superintendent with a vision for improving school climate and culture, and who valued and prioritized SEL. Another helpful factor was the partnership with the Charmm'd Foundation which served to enhance and support the program. This partnership with Charmm'd continues to promote program sustainability and impact. As previously mentioned, the Charmm'd Foundation promoted the belief that if the staff climate and culture was healthy, it would have a direct influence on the student climate and culture. With that in mind, the original program implementation was clearly geared toward staff wellness.

In 2014-15, when I became the EW Coordinator, I spent the first year learning about the program, acclimating to the leadership role and all that the position entailed. I quickly realized that there was a hyper-focus on staff EW, and significantly less attention on student and parent community programming. Coming from a teacher's perspective, I wanted to expand the reach of the program to include students and the parent community. A couple of the schools in D1234 were already using a subcommittee structure, however, the majority of the EWC programming was focused on staff. Being that my background is that of teacher/counselor, I took the initiative to improve school climate and culture by addressing all stakeholders in our EWC efforts including, students, staff, and parent community.

I believe I was chosen for this job based on my credentials in teaching and school counseling, as well as my positivity and genuine passion for SEL. Not knowing much about the program when I was hired, the first year had proven to be a year of growth and development for me, both personally and professionally. Upon completion of my first year as the EW Coordinator, I grew confident in the value, structure, and relevance of the program, the support

being provided to our program by Charmm'd, and the capacity, reach, and potential benefits of the program. I am optimistic about the possibilities for continued growth and development of the program as we continue to work together to determine what is best for the emotional well-being of our students, staff, and parent community. I have chosen to evaluate this program because as the program coordinator, not only do I have a vested interest in the success of the program career-wise, I am genuinely committed to EW and SEL for all.

It is very important to me to invest my time in work that is valuable, relevant, practical, meaningful, and applicable to all stakeholders in the larger educational community. I did not want to spend three years researching and writing a dissertation to produce a body of work that would be filed away and forgotten. My goal is to make an impact in the field of education, more specifically, SEL. I aim to offer a compelling case for implementing an EW program that has profound implications for students, staff, and the greater community. In a world of racing to the top, where teaching to the test has become a standard practice, we need to remember that we have a greater responsibility to our students, as well as our civilization. In the educational arena, SEL and EW must not only be a part of what we do, it must be the foundation of what we do and how we do it.

The rationale for evaluation of the EW program is that, as the Emotional Wellness Coordinator in District 1234, I am committed to creating a descriptive database that will serve as a roadmap of how to create an EWP that would allow other districts to initiate and replicate the important work that we are doing in our schools and community. I am truly passionate about EW and SEL and I firmly believe that all districts would benefit from having an EWP in place. I hope that districts can and will implement an EW program that strives to build trusting relationships

by focusing on positive connections between the three major subgroups of stakeholders in the educational arena; Students, Staff, and Parent Community.

Taking into consideration that D1234 is the only district that I am aware of that has an EWP, I feel that I am in the unique situation of being able to share our initiative with other districts, and to highlight the value of the emotional well-being of the students, staff, and parents/community. I envision this program evaluation serving as a tool for a practical application, a “how to” guide, for how to implement an EWP in a school district. By sharing our structure and process with other educational institutions, I aim to illuminate the importance of EW in schools, districts, and communities. I find that in the field of education, teaching SEL skills and competencies in schools is our obligation to the well-being of society. Research conducted by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue, suggests that children and adults live and learn better with SEL and integrity and that this can positively impact performance in schools, professions, and workplaces (Jubilee Centre For Character and Virtue, 2014). By sharing this information with other districts, the scope of this initiative extends to a larger audience, and therefore promotes SEL and well-being beyond my current work in D1234.

Not only is this program evaluation important to me as the Emotional Wellness Coordinator, it is altruistically intended for the betterment of the EW program in D1234 and all the stakeholders. By evaluating the current strengths and challenges of the program, and emphasizing the value of such programs, we may continue to provide the best circumstances and environment for academic rigor and social-emotional wellness of all stakeholders. Ideally, with the positive research supporting SEL, this program evaluation will serve as an instructional model for future EW programs both nationally and internationally.

## **Goals**

The goals of this program evaluation are to formally document, analyze, and evaluate the EWP in D1234. I will do this by using archival materials such as meeting agendas, annual goals, annual reports, and district surveys. Further, by looking at the trends in data collected over time, I aim to discern the program's strengths, challenges, and overall impact. As the program coordinator, I have a vested interest in the program history, course of action, present, and future. By determining if the EWP has been implemented with fidelity to the original program goals, I will be able to proceed with a deeper understanding of where the program stands, and the future of the program.

The original goal of the EW Initiative was to improve the overall culture, climate and learning environment for all D1234 stakeholders through social and emotional support of staff and the direct teaching of SEL skills and competencies. The EWP set out to implement a sustainable and intentional approach to embed CE and SEL into all EW programming and activities. In researching the EWP, I found that the exact history of the program is not very clearly documented. Thus, trying to map out the program's history, growth and development over time has posed a fair number of challenges. One thing that was clear: the original goal of the program, the 11 Principles of CE were used as the north star to guide the program.

Given that the EW program was using the 11 Principles of character education as a roadmap to guide action and intention in D1234, I have selected the 11 Principles of character education rubric set forth by The Character Education Partnership (CEP), now Character.org, as a tool for measurement and data gathering. According to Thomas Lickona, if these 11 principles are followed, school officials will have an effective CE Program. To clarify, in recent development, the verbiage "Character Education" seems to be phasing out, making way for the new catch phrase "SEL," which encompasses CE and a host of other relational skills such as

values, ethics, and citizenship education. Lickona emphasizes the importance of including core ethical values and their justification, a definition of character, a comprehensive approach to developing good character, developing the school as a caring community, and building a relationship between CE and the academic curriculum and evaluation (Lickona, 1996, p). The idea is that if a SEL program is effectively implemented, student behaviors should improve, and improvement of student behavior should result in an improvement in school climate (Lickona, 1996). Furthermore, since there is a positive relationship between school climate and student achievement, student achievement should also improve (Bulach, Malone, and Castleman, 1995).

The SDC was instituted in SY 2007-2008 and it morphed into the EWP in SY 2010-2011, leaving a paper trail of meeting agendas, newsletters, and a school culture and climate survey that was used to collect student and staff feedback of school environment and culture. In addition to serving as a road map detailing the history of the program, as well as documentation of the growth and development of the program, these aforementioned archives, coupled with this program evaluation, will help determine if the program is being implemented with fidelity to the original goals, and to measure the influence of the program as it relates to the major stakeholders, students, staff and community.

### **Research Questions**

The primary research question for this program evaluation was, “Has the Emotional Wellness Program been implemented with fidelity to the 11 Principles by which was designed?” To answer this question, I looked to the 11 principles survey, taken by D1234 EWC Mentors, to gauge Mentor perception of the EWP and alignment to original program goals. I have also analyzed the data to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The secondary research question that guides this evaluation is, “How is the Emotional Wellness Program

impacting stakeholders in D1234, specifically, students and staff?” To answer this question, I have looked at the outcomes of district surveys from SY 2010-2013. Very intentionally, embedded in this research, is the additional question, “Can the D 1234 Emotional Wellness Program model be replicated and implemented in other districts, to the greatest benefit of all stakeholders in an educational community?”

## **Section Two: Literature Review**

The EWP in D1234 was established to meet the growing social and emotional needs in the educational community. Since the inception of the program, SEL has made its way into the mainstream conversation of education. As you will read in this review of literature, SEL matters. In fact, SEL should not be viewed as an additional thing added to the plate of teachers and administrators. Rather, SEL should be viewed as the plate itself. For learning to occur, students must be available and feel safe, socially, and emotionally. As the EWP in D1234 is rooted in SEL practices and application, this literature review will serve to define and present research that supports the need for SEL. I will be discussing the widespread growth and development of the field of SEL by looking at the scope of interest in SEL, state legislation, and advocacy measures regarding SEL. Finally, I will share research alluding to the benefits of SEL in schools and posit that SEL is the missing piece in the Common Core Learning Standards.

### **Social Emotional Learning and Character Education**

To this point I have used the terms SEL and CE together and somewhat interchangeably. These two fields are separate, yet they are rooted in the same fundamental belief: if we are to create safer schools, improve academic performance, and produce responsible and caring citizens, we must educate the whole child; head and heart (Character Education Partnership 2004; Elias, 2003, p. 6). Although SEL and CE are not exactly the same, they each play a significant role in educating the whole child. According to Character.org, “Character Education is the intentional effort to develop in young people core ethical and performance values that are widely affirmed across all cultures” (Character.org, 2015, p. i).

As I discuss SEL and CE, it is critical to remember that teaching and learning in schools have strong social, emotional, and academic components (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Wallberg, 2004). Emotions can facilitate or impede children's academic engagement, work ethic, commitment, and ultimate school success (Elias et al., 1997). There is a growing body of research suggesting significant benefits of SEL. Included in this literature review I will be examining a meta-analysis of 213 rigorous studies of SEL in schools (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

As more is learned about the brain, one can ascertain that SEL is a significant factor in learning. According to Marc Brackett, director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, senior research scientist in psychology and faculty fellow in the Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University, "The neural pathways in the brain that deal with stress are the same ones that are used for learning" (Brackett, 2015, para. 8). Brackett points out that, "Schools are realizing that they have to help kids understand their feelings and manage them effectively if we want our kids to achieve more academically, but we can't do this if our kids aren't emotionally healthy." (Brackett, 2015).

How can we teach our students to be emotionally healthy? Can this be accomplished with SEL? Julie Scelfo, once a staff writer, and now frequent contributor, to the New York Times says that SEL is not just about teaching kids the golden rule. She states, "SEL, often referred to as CE, embraces not just the golden rule but the idea that everyone experiences a range of positive and negative feelings. It also gives children tools to slow down and think when facing conflicts, and teaches them to foster empathy and show kindness, introducing the concept of shared responsibility for a group's well-being." (Scelfo, 2015, para. 9).

A national teacher survey conducted in 2013 confirmed that 93% of teacher respondents thought it was important for schools to promote the development of non-cognitive skills and that 88% of surveyed schools already had efforts underway to help students develop these skills (Gabrieli, Ansel, & Krachman, 2015). These appear to be promising numbers, however, just because there is an SEL program in place does not mean that it is an effective program. How can the impact of SEL be measured? In the absence of clear and consistent SEL curriculum standards and measures, it can be difficult to assess which programs and practices are most effective in building student skills and competencies. Adding to the complexity, most approaches are inconsistent across districts, schools, grade levels, and even classrooms (Gabrieli, Ansel, & Krachman, 2015). There is frustration in knowing that SEL promotes non-cognitive competencies, and a great majority of teachers view these skills as necessary, yet schools, system wide, are struggling to hold themselves accountable for the growth, development, and measurement of these skills. As schools and districts across the nation continue with efforts to tend to the social and emotional well-being of students, one must remember that SEL skills and competencies are critical influencers of the outcomes we all want for students: success in school, work, and life (Gabrieli, Ansel, & Krachman, 2015).

### **Scope and Interest in SEL**

SEL is being practiced, researched, and promoted both in the United States and on an international scale. States such as Illinois, Kansas, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia have implemented comprehensive, freestanding, SEL learning standards (Zinnser, 2015). As D1234 is in the state of Illinois, I will focus on the Illinois SEL Standards. In 2004, Illinois passed legislation requiring all schools to provide SEL for all students. This law requires all Illinois school districts to develop policies to incorporate SEL and that the Illinois State Board of

Education should develop and implement SEL standards (Public Act 93-0495). Passage of this legislation clearly demonstrates that SEL is valued by the state of Illinois. Legislators were able to declare and set into law the notion that children's social and emotional development were essential underpinnings to school readiness and academic success (Public Act 93-0495). That said, every Illinois school district should have a policy for incorporating social and emotional development into the district's educational program. Additionally, districts should have a policy addressing teaching and assessing social and emotional skills and protocols for responding to children with social, emotional, or mental health problems, or a combination of such problems, that impact learning ability (Public Act 93-0495). Unfortunately, many schools are not in compliance with this law. Without a system of accountability in place, enforcement of the law is nominal.

Austin Independent School District (AISD) in Texas, is an example of an entire school district that has implemented a systemic SEL program (Cruz, 2015). According to the CASEL, AISD is a recognized leader in urban education as it is one of the first districts in the nation to commit to the development of the whole child by incorporating SEL (CASEL, 2015). In AISD, SEL implementation focuses on three core areas: positive culture and climate, SEL skill and concept integration, and explicit SEL instruction (Khine & Areepattamannil, 2016, p.48). In a recent webinar entitled “Social-Emotional Learning: Systemic Innovation for Improved Outcomes,” the superintendent of AISD, Paul Cruz, stated that schools that explicitly teach social-emotional learning create positive learning environments and see an average 11% increase in academic achievement (Cruz, 2015). Under the leadership of Dr. Cruz, AISD graduation rates are at an all-time high, and AISD is ranked among the best in the country, according to the Nation’s Report Card (AISD.org, “Welcome to AISD,” n.d.).

SEL is growing in existential ways. A genuine interest in SEL is evident at top universities, both nationally and internationally. In fact, many of our nation's top universities are developing SEL Programs and Centers for SEL research and advocacy. Harvard University has a program called Making Caring Common in which SEL skills are linked to helping students meet the Common Core State Standards ([mcc.gse.harvard.edu](http://mcc.gse.harvard.edu)). Yale University's Center for Emotional Intelligence ([ei.yale.edu](http://ei.yale.edu)) promotes the idea that emotions drive learning, decision-making, creativity, relationships, and health. The center conducts research and teaches people of all ages how to develop their emotional intelligence. The University of California, Berkley, is home of the Greater Good Science Center ([greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu)). The GGSC studies the psychology, sociology, and neuroscience of well-being, and teaches skills that foster a thriving, resilient, and compassionate society (The Science of a Meaningful life, n.d.). Rutgers University has The Center for Social & Character Development ([rci.rutgers.edu](http://rci.rutgers.edu)) whose mission is to provide guidance, networking and evaluation services for educators, parents, and community members to ensure that children are nurtured in safe and caring schools guided by agreed-upon core ethical value. CASEL, which originally began at Yale, then moved to the University of Illinois, Chicago, is a worldwide leader in advancing SEL science, evidence-based practice and policy ([CASEL.org](http://CASEL.org)). The Center for Character and Citizenship (CCC) at the University of Missouri, St. Louis, engages in research, education, and advocacy to foster the development of character, democratic citizenship, and civil society. The CCC focuses on generating and disseminating knowledge and research pertaining to how individuals develop moral and civic character ([characterandcitizenship.org](http://characterandcitizenship.org)). Finally, The Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, focuses primarily on the science of emotions, contemplative practices

and qualities of mind that affect well-being, including attention, resilience, equanimity, savoring positive emotions, kindness, compassion, gratitude and empathy ([centerhealthyminds.org](http://centerhealthyminds.org)).

The programs and centers I have listed above are only a sample of the universities in the United States researching and advocating for SEL, practicing SEL techniques, and studying implications in education, academic achievement, and overall well-being. In addition to the SEL movement in higher education, there are also large-scale organizations fueling SEL research and advocacy. SEL Alliance for Massachusetts (SEL4MA), is a group of over 850 individuals who work for schools, hospitals, associations, businesses, and nonprofits that care deeply about introducing SEL into schools and communities as a long-term education plan to improve academics and reduce violence and addictions in their communities (SEL Alliance For Massachusetts, n.d.). Another leading organization centered on the national promotion and advocacy of SEL and CE is Character.org. This not-for-profit organization is focused on defining and encouraging effective SEL practices and providing a forum for the exchange of ideas (Character.org, n.d.). Character.org offers a framework which can be used as a rubric for evaluating effective school practices: 11 Principles of Effective CE (Character.org, n.d.). In addition to the framework of the 11 Principles, Character.org hosts an annual conference, the National Forum on CE and a Schools of Character Program, where schools across the world can apply to be recognized for their SEL programs, practices, and accomplishments.

In addition to the SEL research and advocacy carried out nationally by top universities and large-scale organizations, there is also an international movement in SEL. A world leader in the study of character, virtue and human flourishing is the Jubilee Centre of Character and Virtue (JCCV), at the University of Birmingham in England. This past summer, I had the pleasure of visiting the Jubilee Centre and meeting with the Deputy Director, Kristján Kristjánsson, Sandra

Cooke, Director of Partnerships and a member of the Centre's Management Committee, and Research Fellow, Dr. David Walker. After sitting with this team of professionals, it was clear that the idea of educating for citizenship and good character is a key conviction underlying the existence of the JCCV. Founded in 2012, the JCCV has become a leading center for the examination of how character and virtues impact individuals and society in the UK and on an international scale. The JCCV operates on the belief that the virtues that make up good character can be learned and taught, and these virtues have largely been neglected in schools and in the professions (Arthur, Harrison, Kristjánsson, & Davisdon, 2014). The JCCV promotes the idea that the more people who exhibit good character and virtues, the healthier our society (Arthur, 2015).

### **Benefits of SEL**

The most renowned, scientifically rigorous, compelling research in the field of SEL that demonstrates the benefits of SEL is the 2011 meta-analysis of 213 studies of SEL in schools (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011). This review of studies included school, family, and community interventions designed to promote SEL in students between the ages of 5 and 18. The research was divided into three main areas: studies about (a) school-based interventions, (b) after-school programs, and (c) programs for families. For this program evaluation, I will be focusing on results of the school-based research, which included 207 studies of programs involving 288,000 students (promoteprevent.org, 2016). This research revealed that SEL can have a positive impact on school climate and promote a host of academic, social, and emotional benefits for students (CASEL, 2015). Specific results were as follows:

- 9% decrease in conduct problems, such as classroom misbehavior and aggression
- 10% decrease in emotional distress, such as anxiety and depression

- 9% improvement in attitudes about self, others, and school
- 23% improvement in social and emotional skills
- 9% improvement in school and classroom behavior
- 11 % improvement in achievement test scores (Durlak, et al, 2011, p.14).

This research illuminates how students receiving quality SEL instruction demonstrated:

- better academic performance: achievement scores an average of 11 percentile points higher than students who did not receive SEL instruction;
- improved attitudes and behaviors: greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork, and better classroom behavior;
- fewer negative behaviors: decreased disruptive class behavior, noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, and disciplinary referrals; and
- reduced emotional distress: fewer reports of student depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal (Durlak, et al., 2011, p. 14).

It is important to note that while SEL programs take time out of the school day, away from academic time, they did not detract from student academic performance. In fact, as noted above, on average, students receiving school-based SEL scored 11 percentile points higher on academic achievement tests than their peers who did not receive SEL, and they also attained higher grades (Durlak, et al., 2011, p. 14). As grades and achievement test scores were improving, classroom behavior, feelings about self, and emotional problems were improving as well (promoteprevent.org, 2016).

For these results to have occurred, there were certain conditions in place. Three key findings cited in the research that allude to these conditions included the following:

1. students achieved significant gains across all six of the outcome areas studied only when the SEL program was well implemented. There had to have been a consistent and methodological delivery of the program by a staff member who was knowledgeable and following the program exactly. This finding implies that it is necessary to invest the time and resources necessary to implement SEL programs in a high-quality way (promoteprevent.org, 2016).
2. Significant gains were only seen across these six areas when school staff and teachers were delivering the program firsthand to the students. This finding demonstrates that schools do not need to hire outside experts in the field to successfully implement a SEL program. Additionally, engaging staff in the process and delivery of implementation may increase the likelihood that SEL becomes an essential part of the climate and culture of the school. With staff participation and buy in, the program is more likely to gain ground and sustenance (promoteprevent.org, 2016).
3. Only programs and interventions characterized as “S.A.F.E.” achieved significant gains across all six outcome areas (promoteprevent.org, 2016, p. 2-3). The S.A.F.E acronym program interventions were:
  - “Sequenced” curriculum and set of activities to develop SEL skills in a step-by-step manner;
  - “Active” forms of learning where students were engaged physically in the activities such as role-plays and behavioral rehearsal that allowed students opportunities to practice SEL skills;
  - “Focus” attention on SEL, using a minimum of eight sessions devoted to SEL skill development;

- “Explicitly” target specific SEL skills for development, with the expectation that the skills being taught are clearly communicated as the learning objectives.

(promoteprevent.org, 2016, pp. 2-3)

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham, England, conducted a research project called, CE in the UK. It is one of the most extensive studies of CE ever undertaken, including over 10,000 students in four UK countries, England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales (Lickona, 2014). Using triangulated methodology, employing three different ways of measuring adolescent character, this study helps us understand what the best schools do to develop character by identifying the top seven and bottom seven schools according to students’ performance on a moral dilemma test of their ethical reasoning (Lickona, 2014, p. 4). One key finding from fieldwork experiences/notes was that in each of the seven top performing schools was the presence of at least one teacher who was passionate and knowledgeable about the development of the whole child – sometimes described by them as ‘character.’ This person combined key personal qualities, such as: a passion for developing the whole child; a personal drive toward these ends; and a hands-on role in the school (Arthur, Kristjánsson, Walker, Sanderse, & Jones, 2015, p. 25).

Several recommendations from the Jubilee Centre’s research on CE in the UK were made. First, school staff should be trained in developing character, and each school should have at least one teacher (preferably more) who is especially passionate and knowledgeable about CE and directly involved with its implementation (Arthur, Kristjánsson, Walker, Sanderse, & Jones, 2015). Second, schools should implement a CE policy that will be influential across all staff. Third, students require direct teaching in being less motivated by self-interest and more motivated by moral orientations concerned with others. Researchers believe that this is an aspect

of character development deserving of emphasis in schools. Finally, schools should assess their own efforts toward the development of students' characters (Arthur, et al., 2015, p. 26). This last recommendation proves to be a complicated one in that there is no one character development measure. In fact, many researchers are trying to create a measure that provides accurate information about character growth and development, but no one measure has surfaced as a reliable and accurate measure.

Schools must be tasked with more than just the cognitive development of students. Research suggests that the SEL component and academic learning need to be addressed equally (Jones, Brown, & Aber, 2011; Raver, Jones, Li-Grining, Zhai, Bub & Pressler, 2011). There is a considerable amount of developmental research that suggests the mastery of SEL competencies is associated with greater well-being and better academic performance (Belfield, Bowden, Klapp, Levin, Shand, & Zander. 2015). In fact, in a recent study by the Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education, at Teachers College, Columbia University, researchers analyzed existing evaluations of six prominent SEL programs designed for use in K-12 schools: 4Rs, life skills training, positive action, responsive classroom, second step, and social and emotional skills training. Benefits were measured by gauging the financial impacts of the interventions' outcomes. Researchers estimated the program costs versus the costs of the absence of SEL programs. An example used was that if a school implements a bullying intervention program there is a cost; however, if that program is successful, it will reduce the number of days missed by students who are the victims of bullying. Therefore, school attendance is higher, and students are missing fewer days school (Blad, 2015, p.5). When students miss school regularly, it often causes them to struggle academically requiring extra supports, which is an additional cost. So, as this study examined, the benefits of SEL programs outweigh the costs. Additionally, SEL

programs lead to improved academic results, which may lead to higher income for students later in life. The researchers suggested that for every dollar schools spend on six commonly used social-emotional learning programs, those interventions return an average \$11 worth of benefits to society (Blad, 2015). Could it be that there is an economic value to SEL? “It is now becoming widely recognized that SEL in schools can be as important as or even more important than cognitive gains in explaining important developmental and life outcomes” (Belfield, Bowden, Klapp, Levin, Shand, & Zander, 2015, para. 6).

Despite findings that dramatically demonstrate the beneficial effects of SEL curriculum and instruction, schools seem to be moving further and further away from direct teaching of SEL. This sentiment is echoed in *An Open Letter to the American People*, composed by CASEL Board of Directors Jennifer Buffett and Timothy Shriver. The authors argued that children in too many classrooms and schools across the nation are missing a critical piece of their education (Buffett & Shriver 2013). That critical missing piece being referred to is SEL. With a lack of social-emotional competencies students become less connected to school as they progress from elementary to middle to high school; this lack of connection negatively affects their academic performance, behavior, and health (Blum & Libbey, 2004). Resounding with pure frustration, Buffett and Shriver point out that year after year, and test after test, students and their teachers focus on the cognitive elements of education, while other life skills, such as SEL, are often absent from the in-school experience (Buffett & Shriver 2013). As if to point out that we are missing what seems completely obvious, Buffett and Shriver report that, “state and school policy on education is missing the critical piece, ‘academic skills’ have been emphasized, tested, and reported upon, but another essential aspect of a child’s education—SEL—has been

underemphasized or altogether forgotten—with serious consequences to children, schools, and communities” (Buffett & Shriver 2013, para 1).

### **SEL: The Missing Ingredient in the Common Core**

The demands of the Common Core Curriculum have been overwhelming the focus of classrooms, leaving SEL marginalized and viewed as optional unnecessary fluff; the kind of teaching that no one has time for and should be left to the parents and “touchy-feely” teachers. Although the research overwhelmingly suggests the linkages between SEL, student outcomes, and school performance (Buffett & Shriver 2013), we still seem to be fighting tooth and nail to implement quality SEL programming in our nation’s schools. United States Representative Tim Ryan argues, “Social and emotional competencies aren’t ‘soft skills.’ They are the foundation for all the other skills. If we want a tolerant society, a compassionate society... we need to teach the skills that create that society — the social and emotional.” (CASEL.org, 2015, para. 5)

Testing drives curriculum. The problem seems to be that the only measurement we are taking from our schools to determine their effectiveness, funding, reputation, and overall quality is an academic standardized test. How can an institution be judged solely on the criterion of standardized academic performance tests? How often are our students being tested? What exactly is being measured? Who is benefiting from these tests? How are they benefiting? One thing seems obvious, the well-being of the whole child is not the goal of this test taking practice.

Unfortunately, there are people benefiting significantly from these standardized tests, and these people are not students. According to John Merrow, a correspondent for Frontline on PBS, *The Testing Industry’s Big Four*, there are four companies benefiting from these tests. They are Harcourt Educational Measurement, CTB McGraw-Hill, Riverside Publishing (a Houghton Mifflin company), and NCS Pearson (Merrow, 2002) These companies are bringing in

unprecedented earnings. The National Board on Educational Testing and Public Policy at Boston College compiled data from The Bowker Annual, a compendium of the dollar-volume in test sales each year. They reported that while test sales in 1955 were \$7 million, that figure was \$263 million in 1997, an increase of more than 3,000 % (Merrow, 2002). Press reports put the value of the testing market anywhere from \$400 million to \$700 million (Merrow, 2002).

Does the emotional well-being, the development of the whole child, and the depth of character of an individual child matter to any of the above-mentioned testing companies? What matters is measured, and I have yet to see a test question on a high stakes state standardized test that has to do with the social-emotional development and competencies of a student. How is it that we are allowing these for-profit institutions to drive the curriculum, and determine what is best for students in schools across the nation? How are we allowing an arbitrary numeric value on a standardized test to drive our educational practices of the whole child? There is a belief that what gets assessed gets taught. Is this barrage of state standardized testing preparing our students for college, career, and citizenship? What kind of children we are grinding through the educational system? Is a test score all we should be concerned about at the end of the day? We must exercise caution and closely examine how schools are preparing students. Are schools preparing students for life beyond school, or to be able to perform on standardized tests?

If forms of assessment drive forms of knowledge, then it appears that the only knowledge that is deemed worthy and valued is to rote memorization and the ability to regurgitate the “three Rs”: reading, writing and arithmetic. Jonathan Cohen, President of the National School Climate Center, called for knowledge of a different set of “Rs” in a lecture entitled, “Relationships, Relationships, and Relationships” (Cohen, 2015). Does it matter if students know right from wrong, or how to treat one another? Does it matter if our students are passionate and show

compassion toward others? Does it matter if our students feel safe, secure, and valued? Is our goal, or end product, solely academic performance? Many districts say that they value SEL, yet their actions do not match their words. When it comes down to it, academic performance is clearly the first and foremost priority. Interestingly, research shows that students cannot grow academically if their social and emotional needs are not being met (Durlak, et al, 2011).

Research strongly suggests that with quality SEL programs in place, students demonstrate better academic performance, improved attitudes, and behaviors, fewer negative behaviors and reduced emotional distress (Durlak, et al, 2011). If this is accurate and we are a data driven society, SEL accountability should be required in every classroom, in every school, and throughout every school district in our nation. I am not advocating one over the other (SEL over the core subjects), or even that we should prioritize one over the other. What I am proposing is that we incorporate a deliberate blend, an explicit infusion of academic rigor and SEL; it is our obligation to our children and our society. As suggested on the CASEL website, our goals for all students should be for them to become knowledgeable, responsible, caring and contributing members of society (CASEL.org, n.d.).

What message is sent to the staff, students, and greater community about what truly matters in our nation's schools if the only data we collect to demonstrate student growth and development is academic standardized test scores? Sadly, the Common Core Curriculum does not include SEL, and it is overshadowing all else. We are heading into dangerous times where educational institutions produce a society of students who may have all the smarts in the world yet lack a moral compass to direct the application of this knowledge. Will they be able to lead with a great awareness of personal and social responsibility, kindness, compassion, honesty, and integrity? Will they be empathetic, humane, and know how to work collaboratively with

perseverance? Or will they use their math and engineering skills to design weapons of mass destruction? Will they use their logic and intellect to embezzle and cheat the system? I invite you to read the following poem, written by an American-Jewish Head Teacher, to his colleagues. It describes why merely educating people in math, science, and language arts is not enough:

Dear Teacher,

I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:

Gas chambers built by learned engineers.

Children poisoned by educated physicians.

Infants killed by trained nurses.

Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.

So I am suspicious of education. My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.

Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human. (quoted in Supple, 1993, p. 291)

With high stakes testing fueling and driving the Common Core Curriculum nationwide, the emphasis on direct and indirect teaching of SEL is clearly being left behind. This sentiment is echoed in a recent study of CE in UK Schools by the JCCV. They found that, “the current school assessment system and associated pressures have hindered attempts to cultivate students’ characters” (Seldon, 2015, pg. 20). It appears that with so much emphasis on test scores, we forget that we are teaching students; living, breathing, feeling, human beings, from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. They deserve to be recognized as individual learners

who matter, whose very presence is a contribution to, and an enrichment of, their learning communities.

Students should spend as much time learning about themselves and how they relate to the world around them, as they do learning algorithms, literature, science, and social studies. Teachers should be teaching and modeling how to care about others and oneself, how to be both sympathetic and empathetic, and how to build relational capacity in a healthy way. Students should be taught how to recognize and regulate their emotions and be able to read the emotions of others. Students should be taught tolerance and acceptance, understanding that we are all different, yet we are also the same, and every one of us matters. Students need to be reminded of how to recognize right from wrong, and that every action is a choice, and every choice has consequences. We should be inspiring our students to want to make the world a better place, and give them the tools, support, and encouragement to do so. Our young people should always take into consideration the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others. Our students must be prepared and taught to be human, we must be teaching the whole child.

From a philosophical standpoint, as Seldon posited, the more virtuous the people, the healthier the society (Seldon, 2015). From an educational research standpoint (Durlak, et al, 2011), SEL improves academic performance, attitudes, and behaviors, minimizes negative behaviors, and reduces emotional distress. One might ask, then, why are we not advocating more for quality SEL programs in schools? The questions that continue to baffle me are, why is SEL not included in the Common Core? Why are we more focused on test scores, than the students who are producing them? I cannot seem to shake the feeling that by neglecting to teach SEL skills and competencies, schools could be making a big mistake.

In another study, *What Communities Must do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents*, a national sample of 148,189 sixth to twelfth graders were surveyed. A range of responses, from 29%-45% of surveyed students, reported that they had social competencies such as empathy, decision-making, and conflict resolution skills. Only 29% indicated that their school provided a caring, encouraging environment (Benson, 2006). There is broad agreement among educators, policy makers, and the public, that educational systems should graduate students who are proficient in core academic subjects, able to work well with others from diverse backgrounds in socially and emotionally skilled ways, practice healthy behaviors, and behave responsibly and respectfully (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2007; Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, & Resnik, 2003.) This research is testament to the fact that not all students are learning SEL competencies that are imperative for success in school and life in our current curriculum, and there is a growing need for SEL programs in schools.

Tim Shriver, co-founder, and board member of the CASEL, speaks of the importance of integrating SEL and Academics. Shriver explains that going beyond core subjects by teaching SEL can improve academic performance (Shriver, 2015). He proposes that students learn in and through relationships, that they learn best when their emotions, their interpersonal relationships, and their cognitive curiosity are simultaneously engaged (Shriver, 2015). This sentiment recalls the notion that all learning is SEL. Shriver reiterates the fact that through teaching SEL skills and competencies, schools can reduce problem behaviors like aggression and delinquency while improving academic engagement and performance (Shriver, 2015).

An additional study, conducted by researchers from Penn State and Duke, illustrates just how much SEL matters. The researchers looked at 753 adults who had been evaluated for social competency nearly 20 years earlier while in kindergarten. The results from this study revealed

that scores for sharing, cooperating, and helping other children nearly always predicted whether a person graduated from high school on time, earned a college degree, had full-time employment, lived in public housing, received public assistance or had been arrested or held in juvenile detention (Jones, Greenberg & Crowley, 2015). Interestingly, Dr. Greenberg, a co-author of the study, stated that he was struck by how much social competence outweighed other variables such as social class, early academic achievement, and family circumstances when it came to predicting outcomes such as high school graduation rate, college degree completion, employment status, and run ins with the law (Greenberg, 2015). “That tells us that the skills underlying what we’re testing — getting along with others, making friendships — really are master skills that affect all aspects of life.” (Greenberg, 2015, para. 4). In addition to how teaching skills in social competence directly relate to predicting outcomes later in life, SEL practices such as teaching positive relationships, emotional competency and resilience have also been widely identified as helping to prevent mental illness (Scelfo, 2015).

Based on the findings of these studies, it is clear that SEL skills correlate with increased outcomes in students’ lives (Brackett, 2015; Durlak, et al, 2011; Jones, Greenberg & Crowley, 2015; Scelfo, 2015; Shriver, 2015). What are the takeaways from these types of studies? SEL matters. I am eager to delve deeper into the data that has been collected in D1234 to determine if the EWP has been implemented with fidelity to the original program goals, and to determine how the EWP is impacting the stakeholders of D1234, namely, the students and staff. Although it is difficult to give a numeric value to assess a person’s happiness, or emotional well-being, having a program in place, such as the EWP, is a proactive, positive, preventative measure that can have profound effects in a school organization’s climate and culture.

### **Section Three: Methodology**

One form of evaluation I have used could potentially fall under Michael Scriven's Goal Free Evaluation; not because I do not have a goal for the evaluation, but because I have looked at a larger context of goals, rather than specific objectives of the program (Patton, 2008, p. 275). As each individual school committee sets an EW goal for the year, and I set annual goals for the district, there are multiple goals in action throughout the school year. As we are all working toward our individual goals, as well as the collaborative district goal, our purpose is to promote emotional health and well-being among all district stakeholders: students, staff, parents/community. In the work I have done with the individual schools I feel that my entry point of evaluating the district EWP will be a Developmental Evaluation with Reflective Practice (Patton, 2008).

In terms of methodology, I found using a mixed methods design, including both quantitative and qualitative measures, was the best-suited research methodology for this study. The quantitative data measures used are the survey results from the School Wide Behavior Survey (SWBS), the Staff Workplace Satisfaction Survey (SWSS), and the 11 principles survey. The qualitative data came from the open-ended questions on the 11 principles survey, informal conversations with stakeholders, personal observations of program organization and participation, archives including primary source documents, and personal experience as the program coordinator. While analyzing these data, I looked for themes and trends that offered insight as to the program impact and benefits. More specifically, I sought to determine if the EWP has been implemented with fidelity to the original program goals in D1234. I also looked for evidence of program impact on climate and culture of the schools according to the students and staff of D1234.

## **Participants**

The key participants in this research were the EW mentors from D1234 schools, a coach from the Charmm'd Organization who has been working with the EWP from its inception, and myself, in that I have supplemented my own personal experience and insights. Participation in this study was voluntary and there were no foreseeable risks in participation. The benefits of participating in this research came in the form of identification of positive results, program strengths, and provision of insight that allows us to strengthen the current EWP. Being able to sustain and improve the current program would prove beneficial for all stakeholders in D1234.

Participants signed a consent form and were notified that they were free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason, and without consequence for doing so. I also made sure to communicate that withdrawing from the study would not affect the relationship they had with myself as the researcher. Participants were informed that their responses to the survey would be anonymous. The measures taken to ensure confidentiality were assigning code names/numbers for participants that were used on all research notes and documents, and keeping notes, and any other identifying participant information, in a password protected file and in my personal possession.

## **Data Gathering Techniques**

Three surveys were used to gather the data for this evaluation. The first two surveys were district-created. They included the SWBS, completed by a majority of students in the district and the SWSS, completed by the majority of staff in the district. The third survey was created specifically for this study. It was based on the 11 principles of CE rubric (Character.org). The 11 principles survey was taken by EWP mentors and the Charmm'd coach. A mixed methodology design, combining the narrative with the numbers, has allowed me to delve deeply into the whole

story and give an accurate portrayal of program history, foundation, purpose, assessments, reflections, and outcomes. In addition to answering my research questions, this information allowed me to understand the EWP in a more profound sense and to see the many ways in which the Emotional Wellness Program has impacted the students, staff, and parents/community in District 1234.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

To provide context for the Evaluation of the EWP, program archives, including goals, pre-assessments, post-assessments, surveys, and trends over time were examined. After a complete analysis of those sources, it became clear that to determine the level of fidelity of the EWP to the original program goals, and to measure the program's impact on D1234's school climate and culture, the combined results of the SWBS, SWSS, and the 11 principles of CE survey would need to be evaluated.

In analyzing the SWBS and SWSS data, I compared mean scores over time. For the analysis of the 11 Principles Survey (Appendix D), which I created specifically for this study, there was no previous data to compare. As the EWP was founded on the 11 Principles, I believed this survey would reveal whether or not the program was implemented with fidelity to original program goals.

### **Section Four: Findings and Interpretation**

The primary research question that guided this study was, "Has the Emotional Wellness Program been implemented with fidelity based on the original program goals?" The 11 principles survey y, taken by the EWC Mentors, provided an in-depth report, from the the Mentor's perspective, on how well each school is following the 11 principles of CE. By analyzing these results, I was able to learn what the mentors felt were strengths and challenges of by the EWP in

D1234. As for the research question, the data suggest mixed results. In certain areas, or principles, the EWP has been implemented with fidelity to the original program goals. However, in other areas, or principles, the EWP has not been implemented with fidelity to the original program goals.

### **Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education**

To measure the fidelity of the EWP to the original goals, I used the rubric of the 11 principles of CE as developed by the CEP (Appendix A). Although there is not one single measure for competent and comprehensive SEL and CE, there are some guidelines set forth to illustrate the important guiding principles of this work in schools. “Based on the successful practices of effective schools, the 11 principles of effective character education form the cornerstone of Character.org’s philosophy on how best to develop and implement high-quality character education initiatives.” (Character.org., 2015). The 11 principles serve as comprehensive standards by defining excellence in CE. The 11 principles can be used as a rubric for schools and other institutions to use in planning, developing, and evaluating their SEL and CE programs.

Using Principles as a rubric allowed me to gather important feedback from EWC Building Mentors as to the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Upon assessing implied impacts of the program, I was able to determine opportunities for growth and improvement. It is important to note that District EW mentors completed the 11 principles survey based on the current state of their individual schools. This information, which was used as a formative assessment, is beneficial in terms of recognizing the strengths and identifying potential areas for growth both at the building and district level.

For this study, and to best gauge the level of fidelity to the 11 principles district-wide, the survey data from all four schools in D1234 have been combined. The 11 principles survey was completed by all 10 of our D1234 EWC Mentors. They were asked to rank each question based on a five-point scale (Strongly Agree=5 points; Agree=4 points; Neutral/Undecided=3 points; Disagree=2 points; and Strongly Disagree=1 point). There were 42 questions, including 39 multiple choice scale questions and three open-ended questions.

The 11 principles were used as guiding principles and between two and five sub-questions for each principle used to probe the depth of implementation of each principle. To determine a mean score for each principle, I averaged the number of questions for each principle. Using the 1-5-point scale, the numeric value for each principle reflects the EWC Mentor's perception of the top areas of strength and areas for improvement in D1234.

The limiting factor in analyzing this data on a district level was that each of the four schools in D1234 have their own unique strengths and challenges. Thus, some Mentors ranked their school proficient in one principle, whereas other Mentors ranked their school as needing improvement in that same area. For this study, I maintained a district perspective, analyzing the results to determine if the EWP in D1234 has been implemented with fidelity to the original program goals.

Using the survey as a benchmark scoring guide, I examined the current state of SEL and CE practices in each of the D1234 schools, as well as the entire district. With this information, I will work with school-based EW committees, building administrators and district administration to identify short-and long-term objectives for the EW program. We will develop a strategic plan for continuous improvement. After each school becomes familiar with its baseline data, we will continue to use the 11 principles scoring guide as an assessment of progress.

## ELEVEN PRINCIPLES OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

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### Effective character education:

- PRINCIPLE 1** Promotes core values.
  - PRINCIPLE 2** Defines "character" to include thinking, feeling, and doing.
  - PRINCIPLE 3** Uses a comprehensive approach.
  - PRINCIPLE 4** Creates a caring community.
  - PRINCIPLE 5** Provides students with opportunities for moral action.
  - PRINCIPLE 6** Offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum.
  - PRINCIPLE 7** Fosters students' self-motivation.
  - PRINCIPLE 8** Engages staff as a learning community.
  - PRINCIPLE 9** Fosters shared leadership.
  - PRINCIPLE 10** Engages families and community members as partners.
  - PRINCIPLE 11** Assesses the culture and climate of the school.
- 

*Figure 3.* Eleven principles of character education (Character.org).

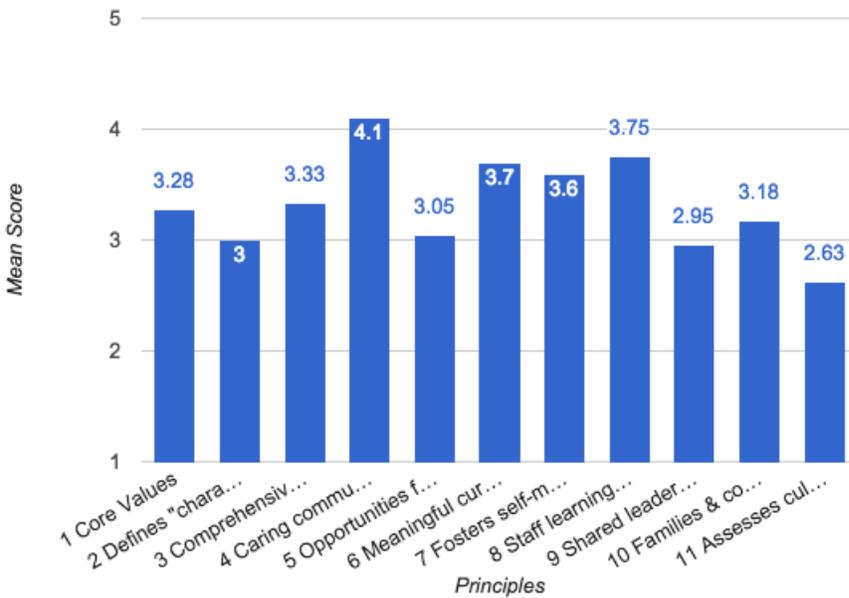
### D1234 11 Principles of Character Education Survey Results

As seen in Table 1, there was only one principle which all the mentors agreed is being implemented with fidelity to the original program goals. Eight principles scored within the "Neutral/Undecided" category; two principles are in the "Disagree" category. These results show that mentors are neutral and undecided or disagree that the 11 principles are being implemented with fidelity to original program goals. Overall, the average score of all 11 principles is 3.32, which would suggest that the mentors are neutral or undecided if the EWP in D1234 is being implemented with fidelity to the original program goals.

Principle 4, “Creating Caring Communities,” with a mean score of 4.1, demonstrated that mentors across the board agreed that D1234 schools are meeting this principle. In responding “Agree” to this principle, mentors agreed that the school makes it a high priority to foster caring attachments between students and staff, among adults within the school community, and helping students form caring attachments to each other. Also, by agreeing that this principle is in place, mentors agreed that the school takes steps to prevent peer cruelty and violence and deals with it effectively when it occurs (Character.org, 2015, p. 8).

Table 1.

*D1234 11 Principles of Character Education Survey Results*



Note. 5=Strongly Agree; 4=Agree; 3=Neutral/Undecided; 2=Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree

The second highest mean score was Principle 8, with a mean score of 3.75, “Schools Engage Staff as a Learning Community.” Mentors report that the school staff is an ethical

learning community that shares responsibility for CE and adheres to the same core values that guide the students. In saying that, Mentors are close to agreement that staff model the core values in their interactions with students and each other, and students and parents perceive that they do. Also embedded in Principle 8 is the notion that the school includes all staff in planning, receiving staff development for, and carrying out, the schoolwide CE initiative. Lastly, Principle 8 contends that the school makes time available for staff planning and reflection on CE (Character.org, 2015, p. 16).

Principle 6, “Schools Offer Meaningful and Challenging Curriculum,” was rated with a mean score of 3.70. Principle 6 states that the school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed. Again, Mentors are close to agreement that the academic curriculum provides meaningful and appropriate challenges to all students and that the school staff identifies, understands, and accommodates the diverse interests, cultures, and learning needs of all students. Principle 6 goes on to say that teachers promote the development of performance character traits that support students’ intellectual growth, academic performance, and capacity for both self-direction and teamwork (Character.org, 2015, p. 12).

Overall, according to the 11 principles survey, EWC mentors from across the district agree that schools are creating caring communities and they are close to agreeing that schools are making headway in engaging staff in learning and offering meaningful and challenging curriculum. That said, there is certainly room to grow in all three of these Principles. It is important to consider that the results from all four schools have been combined to gather a district perspective. There are individual schools whose Mentors scored certain Principles “Strongly Agree,” whereas another school might have scored that same Principle, “Strongly

Disagree.” Therefore, the district average would read as “Neutral/Undecided.” In analyzing the data from this survey, it was obvious that there were discrepancies in responses between schools.

As much as it is important to highlight the areas of strength, or the principles with the highest average mean score, it is equally as important to note the principles that were identified as areas of challenge, ranking the lowest in terms of average mean scores across the district. The principle with the lowest average mean score of 2.63, falling in the “Disagree” category, was Principle 11, “Assessment of Culture and Climate of the School.” This principle states that the school regularly assesses its culture and climate, the functioning of its staff as character educators, and the extent to which its students manifest good character. Principle 11 also states that, the school sets goals and regularly assesses (both quantitatively and qualitatively) its culture, climate, and functioning as an ethical learning community and that staff members reflect upon and report on their efforts to implement CE, as well as on their growth as character educators. Additionally, Principle Eleven contends that the school assesses student progress in developing an understanding of and a commitment to good character and the degree to which students act upon the core values (Character.org, 2015).

The second lowest average mean score of 2.95, also falling in the “Disagree” category, was Principle 9, “Fosters Shared Leadership.” Mentors disagreed that the school fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the CE initiative. Mentors also disagreed that the school’s CE initiative has leaders, including the school principal, who champion CE efforts, share leadership, and provide long-range support. Included in Principle 9 is that a leadership group or structure (several linked groups) inclusive of staff, students, and parents guide the ongoing planning and implementation of the CE initiative, encourages the involvement of the whole school in character-related activities, that students are explicitly involved in creating and

maintaining a sense of community and in other leadership roles that contribute to the CE effort (Character.org, 2015). D1234 does not have a district wide CE program in place. The EWC has selected the Character Traits of Teamwork, Responsibility, Respect, Honesty, Integrity, and Caring, that are to be promoted and taught throughout the district. However, due to the lack of consistency and the overarching academic priorities, as is obvious by the Mentors' responses, CE is not being implemented systemically in D1234.

Finally, with an average mean score of 3.0, was Principle 2, "Schools Define Character to Include Thinking, Feeling, and Doing." Here Mentors just barely hit the mark of "Neutral/Undecided" for Principle 2, reflecting that they are uncertain meets this goal. Principle 2 asks schools to help students acquire a developmentally appropriate understanding of what the core values mean in everyday behavior, grasp the reasons why some behaviors (e.g., doing your best and respecting others) represent good character and why their opposites do not. Included in Principle 2, the school helps students reflect upon the core values, appreciate them, desire to demonstrate them, and become committed to them (Character.org, 2015). Principle 2 encompasses the idea that the school helps students practice the core values so that they become habitual patterns of behavior. Again, it is my feeling that because there is no CE program in D1234, there is no evidence for the adequacy of Principle 2 in D1234.

From these data, it is evident that the EWC Mentors find a lack of D1234 assessment of the culture and climate of the schools and should perhaps place more resources and attention doing so. Additionally, Mentors noted the lack of an inclusive and equitable leadership effort to implement CE initiatives. Again, the lack of a universal CE program is clearly problematic, and I would conclude that this is something that should be considered. These areas will be discussed further in the Judgment and Recommendations section of this program evaluation.

## **School-Wide Behavior Support Survey**

To investigate my secondary research question, I compared the data results from culture and climate surveys completed by students and staff beginning in school year 2007-2008 when the EWP was just beginning, to when the program was gaining momentum in SY 2010-2013. I analyzed data from the SWBS and the school workplace satisfaction survey (SWSS) to determine if the responses show improvement in climate and culture over time. The SWBS was given annually from 2010-2013, and the SWSS was given only twice, once in 2010, and again in 2012. While the data sets cannot determine causation, I have noted the trends and suggest that the EWP may have been an influential factor.

I have examined the most important stakeholders in the educational arena, the students. To do so, I considered the results from the SWBS from 2010 to 2013. During those years the survey was completed by over 90% of District 1234 students enrolled in grades 2-8. They can be considered a representative sample of the population (Malin, J. & Leafman, R. 2013). Moreover, the results are highly consistent across the 4 years of administration, which is an indicator of strong validity (Malin, J. & Leafman, R. 2013). All items on the SWBS are positively phrased; therefore, a higher rating can be interpreted as more favorable.

The School SWBS, administered to second- to eighth-grade students each spring from 2008-2013, offered an important measure of student perceptions and experiences relating to their school environment. The survey contained 34 items, divided into four categories: Student-Adult Relationships, Student Sense of Safety, Student-Student Relationships, and Students Knowledge and Understanding of the School Rules. The items were consistent with a positive behavior support model, which is a proactive, team-based approach to creating safe and effective schools, and which formed a portion of the district's EW Initiative. The survey consisted of prompts,

using a 5-point scale (1= Not Much, 3= Neutral, 5= A Lot). Students rated each item according to their individual experience at the school. All surveys were administered electronically.

To provide further context before presenting the numeric data, I will give some sample questions from each of the four categories.

Understanding the rules:

- How much do you know how you are supposed to behave in the classroom?
- How much do you understand our school rules and expectations for behavior?
- How much do you think other students understand our school's rules?

Adults to students:

- How much do you think that the adults in our school are helpful to students?
- How much do you feel that the adults in our school make feel as if you want to do your best?
- How much do you think that the adults in our school are friendly to students?

Safety:

- How much do you feel safe in your classroom?
- How much do you feel safe in the hallways?
- How much do think that students treat other students in a friendly way?

Student treatment of others:

- How much do you think the students in our school treat each other with respect?
- How much do you think that the students in our school encourage one another?
- How much do you think that the students in our school treat other students in a helpful way?

Table 2 presents a comparative breakdown of the average SWBS mean scores by category, year, and overall mean score of all 34 questions. Note that the mean score for each of the four categories, understanding of rules, adults to students, safety, and student treatment of others, increases over time. All items on the SWBS are positively phrased, therefore, a higher rating can be interpreted as more favorable.

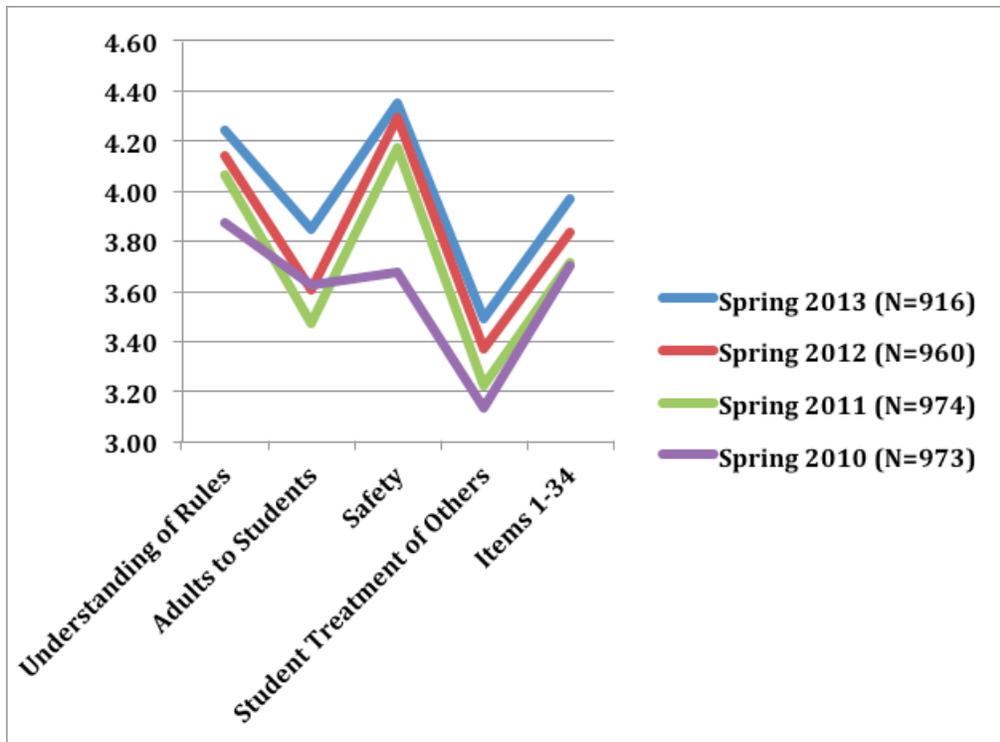
Table 2.

*District 1234 Grades 2-8 SWBS All Categories Mean/Overall Mean Score by Year*

	<u>Spring 2010</u> (N=973)	<u>Spring 2011</u> (N=974)	<u>Spring 2012</u> (N=960)	<u>Spring 2013</u> (N=916)
Understanding of Rules	3.87	4.06	4.14	4.24
Adults to Students	3.62	3.47	3.6	3.85
Safety	3.67	4.17	4.29	4.35
Student Treatment of Others	3.13	3.22	3.37	3.49
Average mean score of all questions 1-34	3.70	3.71	3.83	3.97

Table 3.

*District 1234 Grades 2-8 SWBS All Categories Mean/Overall Mean Score by year*



Note the increase in mean scores over time reflecting more favorable responses as the years progressed from 2010 to 2013. In 2010, the average mean score for students' responses in the category of Understanding the Rules was 3.87; by 2013, the average mean score for that same category was 4.24. In the Adult to Student category, the average mean score went from 3.62 in 2010, to 3.85 in 2013. In the category of Safety, we see the highest rise in mean scores, going from a 3.67 in 2010, to a 4.35 in 2013. Student Treatment of Others also saw an increase in mean scores from a 3.13 in 2010, to a 3.49 in 2013. Finally, the average mean of all categories, all 34 items, increased from a 3.70 in 2010 to a 3.97 in 2013.

These data demonstrate that student assessment of school culture and climate improved from 2010 to 2013 in all categories. Once again, while I cannot claim a direct cause and effect relationship between the EWP gaining momentum, and D1234 school's culture and climate improving, I can suggest that the EWP may be an influential factor. Note that as the EWP was taking shape, steadily growing, and developing each year, we see that the mean scores

incrementally increase each year. For example, in Table 2, the Safety category overall mean score increased from 2010 to 2013 in the following increments; 3.67, 4.17, 4.29, 4.35.

An increase in SWBS mean scores from 2010-2013 is a hopeful trend. However, it is important to note that while 2013 mean scores in the categories of Safety (4.35) and understanding of rules (4.24) were the categories with the highest scores, student treatment of others (3.49) and adults to students (3.85), were the categories with the lowest scores (Table 2). While it is important to celebrate the overall increase of mean scores, it is equally as important to identify areas for improvement. These data very clearly illustrate that interpersonal relationships between students and staff, and student to student, is a potential area for growth. Interpersonal relationships are at the very core of SE; I will be addressing this finding in more detail in the Judgment and Recommendations section.

As stated earlier, the comparisons of the results of the SWBS from 2010-2013, illustrated in Tables 2 and 3, raise the possibility that the increase seen may be related to the EWP gaining strength in organization and presence in the schools. In 2013, by way of survey results, the students of D1234 communicated that the school climate and culture was more favorable than it was in 2010.

### **School Workplace Satisfaction Survey (SWSS)**

The secondary research question, “How does the Emotional Wellness Program influence stakeholders in D1234, specifically, students and staff?” can also be answered by considering the results of the SWSS, developed by Educational Consultant, Nate Eklund, and administered in D1234 in 2010 and 2012. The primary function of this survey was to provide building leaders a gauge of their staff climate and culture. Eklund stressed the importance of teacher job satisfaction as it related to student experience. He pointed out in a blog post, “Look it’s pretty

simple. If schools aren't working really hard at teacher job satisfaction, students suffer. There are two versions of each individual teacher who can show up in the classroom: happy, energized teacher or defeated, exhausted teacher. Take your pick.” (Eklund, 2012, para. 14).

These data proved difficult in terms of analysis. Unfortunately, the Eklund Consulting Group changed the SWSS from 2010 to 2012. Further complicating the analysis, they were unable to locate building results from all four of D1234 schools. Thus, I had limited accessibility to data. Working with the information that was available, I compared these data from three of the four schools. I also analyzed the survey results using a small sample of five questions that remained consistent from 2010 to 2012, and were most relevant to EW. Following are the five questions from the 2010 and 2012 SWSS used:

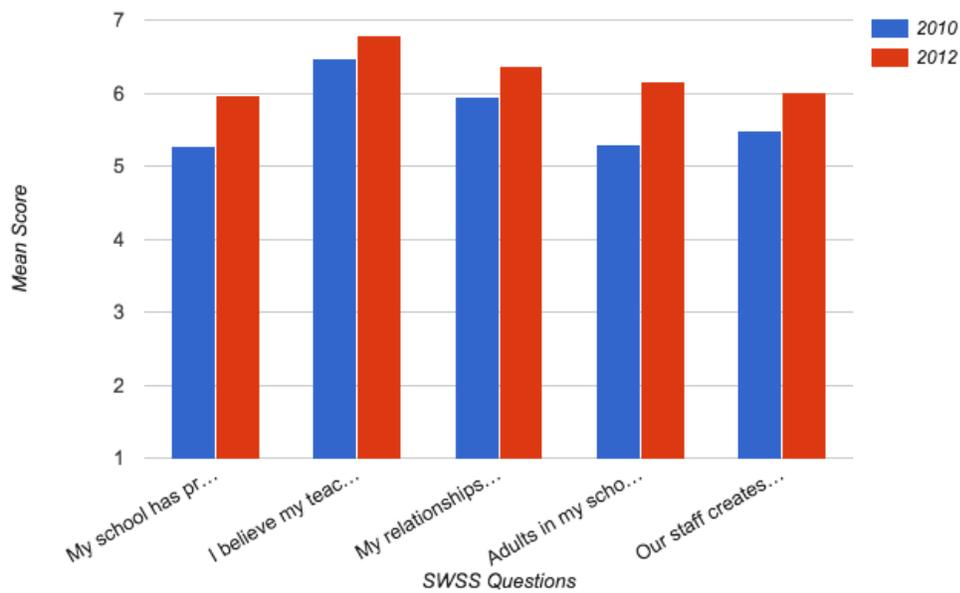
1. My school has practices and procedures that foster a sense of community in our teachers.
2. I believe my teaching makes a positive difference in the lives of my students.
3. My relationships with other adults in the school make a positive contribution to my teaching.
4. Adults in my school, regardless of position, establish good relationships.
5. Our staff creates and maintains traditions that support a positive workplace.

The 2012 SWSS was arranged in asset categories which contain a selection of survey questions. The 2012 version of the SWSS had nine categories of survey questions including: Support, Empowerment, Boundaries & Expectations; Constructive Use of Time; Commitment to Teaching and Learning; Professional Identity; Social Competencies; Positive Values; and Job Satisfaction. While a comparative analysis of the results by asset category would have been preferable, with the change in survey between 2010 and 2012, this was not a possibility. What was possible, was to see the change in responses over time. Each question was scored on a scale

of 1-7 (1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Somewhat Disagree, 4=Neither Agree or Disagree, 5=Somewhat Agree, 6=Agree, 7=Strongly Agree). All questions were phrased positively, therefore, an increase in score over time is favorable.

Table 4.

*SWSS Comparison of D1234 Staff Responses from 2010 to 2012*



*Note.* 2010-2012 SWSS Results from D1234 Schools (Eklund Consulting Group) (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Disagree, 4= Neither Agree or Disagree, 5= Somewhat Agree, 6= Agree, 7= Strongly Agree).

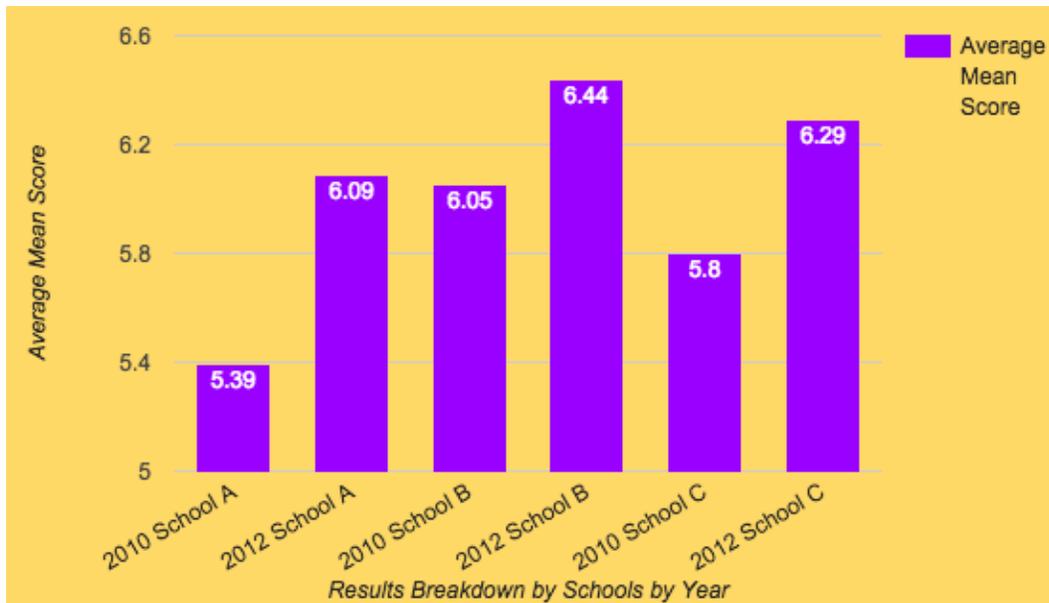
Once again, items on the SWSS were positively phrased. Therefore, a higher rating can be interpreted as more favorable. In looking at the data from the five questions that appeared on both the 2010 and 2012 versions of the SWSS, we can see an increase in average mean score for each item. Again, we cannot infer a cause and effect relationship between the EWP and the increase in staff responses demonstrating a more favorable school climate and culture. However,

it can be suggested that the EWP's hyper focus on staff programming and relationship building may have been an influential factor in the growth seen in Tables 4 and 5.

Let us take a closer look at the growth, per statement, by comparing the response mean scores from 2010 to 2012. The first statement, "My school has practices and procedures that foster a sense of community in our teachers," went from a 5.27 in 2010, to a 5.96 in 2012. This, according to the Likert scale, is almost at the level of "Agree." In statement number two, "I believe my teaching makes a positive difference in the lives of my students," staff responses went from a 6.48 in 2010 to a 6.78 in 2012. This statement proved to be important in the arena of teaching and learning because it speaks to the altruism and self-efficacy of the teaching profession. Statement number three, "my relationships with other adults in the school make a positive contribution to my teaching," directly relates to teacher efficacy. It was scored at a 5.94 in 2010 and a 6.37 in 2012. This statement speaks directly to how culture and interpersonal relationships affect climate and impact teaching and learning. Statement number four, "adults in my school, regardless of position, establish good relationships," increased nearly a whole percentage point, going from a 5.29 in 2010 to 6.15 in 2012. I would suggest that as we look at this statement and others, we keep in mind that the EWP, along with the support and guidance of the Charrm'd Foundation, specifically focused all of their efforts on the emotional well-being of staff. The increase of average mean score of nearly one point could be a result of this effort. Lastly, statement five, "our staff creates and maintains traditions that support a positive workplace," went from a 5.48 in 2010 to a 6.02 in 2012. Again, I would suggest that the EWP's hyper focus on staff programming and relationship building could be seen as an influential factor for this positive growth in school culture and climate.

Table 5.

*SWSS Mean Score from School A, B, and C from SY 2010-2012*



*Note.* 2010-2012 SWSS Results from D1234 Schools (Eklund Consulting Group) (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Somewhat Disagree, 4= Neither Agree or Disagree, 5= Somewhat Agree, 6= Agree, 7= Strongly Agree).

The next data to be considered is illustrated in Table 5. It shows the SWSS mean scores, broken down by individual schools by year. This graph depicts how the mean scores from each school, based on the same five statements, improved from 2010 to 2012. School A showed the largest percentage of growth in the mean score, going from a 5.39 in 2010 to a 6.09 in 2012 for an increase of .7. School B had an average mean score of 6.05 in 2010 and reached 6.44, the highest mean score reported among all data, in 2012 demonstrating an increase of .39. Finally, School C had an average mean score of 5.8 in 2010 and reported a 6.29 in 2012 with an increase of .49. The average growth in the district on the SWSS, between 2010 and 2012, was .53. This reported increase from the perspective of D1234 staff regarding the climate and culture of their

schools is an upswing that is noteworthy for this research. The sole focus of the EWP during this period was staff emotional well-being and positive relationship building, thus one conclusion to draw is that the EWP influenced this growth.

## **Section Five: Judgment and Recommendations**

The primary research question for this study was, “Has the Emotional Wellness Program been implemented with fidelity to the 11 Principles by which was designed?” Based on the findings of my research, the average score of all 11 principles from the 11 principles survey was 3.32. As such, I have determined that the EWP is not being implemented with fidelity to the 11 principles of CE upon which it was designed. This average score registers as neutral or undecided using the Likert Scale. According to the data, only one principle, Principle 4, “The School Creates a Caring Community,” received an average rating of 4.1 from EWC Mentors, suggesting that Mentors “Agree” that schools are creating caring communities. A large part of the 11 principles framework is to implement a CE program that incorporates both direct teaching of SEL as well as embedding SEL into existing curriculum. As of now, D1234 does not have a set CE program, nor is there evidence of consistent SEL curriculum being implemented at a district level.

Regarding the 11 principles of CE, and the potential influence in improving overall school culture and climate, I recommend that D1234 adopt a CE program and implement it district-wide for the sake of consistency, common language, and common expectations. I also recommend that District 1234 conduct an audit of the current state of SEL to gather evidence of implementation of the state mandated SEL Learning Standards. This audit should collect a wide variety of data, entailing who is embedding SEL into existing curriculum, how this is being done, what specific SEL content and curriculum is being taught at each grade level, when the curriculum is being delivered, and where this is taking place.

It is important to note that the EW program in D1234 has branched out in the last year in a positive direction. After taking the position of Emotional Wellness Coordinator in SY 2014-2015, it was evident that the majority of EWC programming was geared toward staff. This was the result grant received from Charmm'd, which encouraged staff-centric programming. I decided that being in year eight of a ten-year agreement, it was time to adjust our course and increase student and the parent participation and programming. As a result, this year, SY 2015-2016, the district-wide EWC has broadened our reach of the program to stress the importance of incorporating all stakeholders in our EWC mission, vision, and planning, as opposed to the past hyper-focus on staff well-being. Being that this is a slightly new direction, the program is undergoing a transition while implementing new policies and procedures that support the EW of the students, staff, and parent community in D1234.

My recommendation is that District 1234 take a bold step in the prioritization of SEL in the schools. With the district support and advocacy of SEL, the EWP will continue to expand its focus, continue to plan EW programming that is inclusive of all District 1234 stakeholders, and implement appropriate measures and structures allowing for the greatest potential program growth and development. One such measure is to propose written policy on program budget to ensure sustenance and promulgation of the program. Another measure is to increase the EW Coordinator position from a.5 position to a full-time position. A third measure is to increase the Mentor Stipend from the current one Mentor stipend (\$1,200) per building at the elementary schools, and two Mentors at the middle school level, to two Mentors at the elementary school level, and four Mentors at the middle school level. Currently each elementary school has two Mentors who split the stipend, resulting in a \$600 annual stipend for each. The middle school has

four Mentors splitting two full stipends. Given the amount of work that mentors do, I believe they deserve more than \$600 per year, half of a full stipend.

My secondary research question was, “How is the Emotional Wellness Program impacting stakeholders in D1234, specifically, students and staff?” Based on the data from the SWBS, I find that there is a possibility that the EWP has been an influential factor in the improvement of school climate and culture for students. Referring to Table 2 and Table 3, the mean score in each of the four categories surveyed, “Understanding of Rules,” “Adults to Students, Safety, and Student Treatment of Others,” increased over time. Additionally, the overall mean score of all 34 items went from a 3.70 in 2010 to a 3.97 in 2012, resulting in an overall increase of 0.27. As mentioned earlier, all items on the SWBS are positively phrased therefore, a higher rating can be interpreted as more favorable. Although a 0.27 increase may seem small, I am inclined to point out that the EWP focus during these years was solely based on staff wellbeing and positive relationship building. With that said, it is encouraging to see that, albeit small, there was positive growth in school climate and culture spanning this timeframe.

The second body of research used to determine the answer to my secondary research question, “how is the EWP influencing stakeholders in D1234, specifically, students and staff?” was the SWSS. My findings, based upon these data, was that it is very possible that the EWP has positively influenced staff responses on the survey used to gauge culture and climate. Based on the five statements that were consistent between 2010 and 2012, the data clearly illustrate an increase from 2010 to 2012. This suggests that the climate and the culture of the schools had improved. In fact, as of 2012, the average mean scores for all five statements, were at or above a 6 on the Likert scale. This means that staff “agree,” the favorable conditions in the statement are present in each school from which the data had been collected. Again, because the EWP was

solely focused on staff well-being and programming during this period, so this should be taken into consideration as an influential factor for the improvement we see across the board.

My recommendation is for the EWP to continue its focus on staff wellbeing and building positive relationships, while diversifying its efforts to include all stakeholders of D1234 including students, and parent community. I believe that district-wide implementation of a CE program and embedding SEL into existing curriculum would enhance the culture and climate of all the schools. Therefore, all stakeholders, including the students, staff, parents, and community, would benefit. I would like to be very clear and direct in my next recommendation: D1234 should provide PD opportunities for staff to develop their skills and comfort levels in direct teaching of SEL and in embedding SEL into the existing curriculum. Further, I recommend doing as other districts are beginning to do, that is to hire a full time SEL coordinator, or Associate Superintendent of SEL. Having someone who is passionate about the field of SEL, fully committed to best practices, involved in planning SEL programming for the students, staff, and parent community, and who keeps abreast of the most current research, to be the in-house specialist in SEL, would benefit all stakeholders in D1234. If teaching is the best way of learning, it would be of great benefit for D1234 staff to explore, experience, and emulate the basic tenets of SEL through district sponsored PD.

Given these findings, and the research highlighted in this report illuminating the many benefits of SEL, including increased academic achievement, there is sufficient ground to recommend that D1234 continue to fuel and refine its EWP. It must become a priority; a non-negotiable part of what teachers do on a day to day basis. I hope that the top universities nationally and internationally continue to research and advocate for nation-wide education policy and practice to ensure that schools teach the whole child by developing SEL skills alongside

their academic skills. The sooner coherent educational policies and practices are developed, and we begin to assess SEL skills and competencies throughout K–12 schools, the sooner schools will be able to focus on investing in approaches that show the most promise for building students' SEL skills and competencies helping all students reach their full human potential (Gabrieli, Ansel, & Krachman, 2015). We owe it to our children to focus on their whole learning experience, including academic and SEL. We are doing a terrible disservice to our youth if we are only communicating academics as our main priority. Emotional health and wellbeing are essential if we are truly preparing our youth for successful, fulfilling lives.

As the program evaluator, I have gained the skills of systematic inquiry, including knowledge of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodology, as well as skills in professional practice, situational analysis, project management, reflective practice, and interpersonal competence, such as communication skills (Patton, 2008). This research provided me with an in-depth understanding of the EWP in D1234 and reinforced the importance of EW programming in our schools. There are important questions that surfaced along the way that I would recommend for further research. These include: how can SEL be assessed in reliable ways? Do we need to assess SEL skills and competencies? How can we continue to measure program impact, and improve current SEL and EW programs and efforts? How can we ensure/monitor that SEL standards set forth by the state of Illinois are being taught in D1234 schools? How are schools across the nation implementing SEL, and what is the evidence of positive influence?

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## Appendix A

### Principles of Character Education (Character.org):

- The school community promotes core ethical and performance values as the foundation of good character.
- Stakeholders in the school community select or assent to a set of core values.
- Core ethical and performance values actively guide every aspect of life in the school.
- The school community articulates its character-related goals and expectations through visible statements of its core ethical and performance values.
- The school defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and doing.
- The school helps students acquire a developmentally appropriate understanding of what the core values mean in everyday behavior and grasp the reasons why some behaviors (e.g., doing your best and respecting others) represent good character and their opposites do not).
- The school helps students reflect upon the core values, appreciate them, desire to demonstrate them, and become committed to them.
- The school helps students practice the core values so that they become habitual patterns of behavior.
- The school uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development.
- The school is intentional and proactive in addressing character at all grade levels.
- Character education is integrated into academic content and instruction.
- Character education is a priority in how teachers conduct their classes.
- Character education is infused throughout the school day in classes, sports, meetings, and co-curricular activities.
- The school creates a caring community
- The school makes it a high priority to foster caring attachments between students and staff.
- The school makes it a high priority to help students form caring attachments to each other.
- The school takes steps to prevent peer cruelty and violence and deals with it effectively when it occurs.
- The school makes it a high priority to foster caring attachments among adults within the school community.
- The school provides students with opportunities for moral action.
- The school sets clear expectations for students to engage in actions that develop and demonstrate good character.
- The school provides all students with varied opportunities for engaging in positive, responsible action within the school, and students engage in these opportunities and reflect on them.
- The school provides all students with repeated and varied opportunities for making contributions to the larger community, and students engage in these opportunities and reflect on them.

- The school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed.
- The academic curriculum provides meaningful and appropriate challenges to all students.
- The school staff identifies, understands, and accommodates the diverse interests, cultures, and learning needs of all students.
- Teachers promote the development of performance character traits that support students' intellectual growth, academic performance, and capacity for both self-direction and teamwork.
- The school fosters students' self-motivation.
- Staff and students recognize and celebrate the natural, beneficial consequences of acts of character rather than rewarding students with material recognition or rewards.
- The school's approach to student conduct uses all aspects of behavior management—including rule-setting and rule-enforcement—as opportunities to foster students' character development, especially their understanding of and commitment to core values.
- The school staff is an ethical learning community that shares responsibility for character education and adheres to the same core values that guide the students.
- Staff model the core values in their interactions with students and each other, and students and parents perceive that they do.
- The school includes all staff in planning, receiving staff development for, and carrying out the schoolwide character education initiative.
- The school makes time available for staff planning and reflection in regard to character education.
- The school fosters shared leadership and long range support of the character education initiative.
- The school's character education initiative has leaders, including the school principal, who champion character education efforts, share leadership, and provide long-range support
- A leadership group or structure (several linked groups) inclusive of staff, students, and parents guides the ongoing planning and implementation of the character education initiative and encourages the involvement of the whole school in character-related activities
- Students are explicitly involved in creating and maintaining a sense of community and in other leadership roles that contribute to the character education effort.
- The school engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.
- The school engages families in the character education initiative.
- The administration and faculty regularly communicate with parents and guardians, providing suggestions and activities that help them reinforce the core values, and they survey parents, both formally and informally, on the effectiveness of the school's character education efforts.
- The school recruits the help of the wider community.
- The school regularly assesses its culture and climate, the functioning of its staff as character educators, and the extent to which its students manifest good character.
- The school sets goals and regularly assesses (both quantitatively and qualitatively) its culture, climate, and functioning as an ethical learning community.

- Staff members reflect upon and report on their efforts to implement character education, as well as on their growth as character educators.
- The school assesses student progress in developing an understanding of and a commitment to good character and the degree to which students act upon the core values.

(Character.org, 2016)

## Appendix B



### Emotional Wellness Committee RFS/SMART Goal Setting SAMPLE FORM

Goal:

By when you will do what....

Outcomes:

What are the specific outcomes that will result from this goal?

Deliverables:

By January, share....

By June share....

Evaluation:

How will the goal/outcomes be evaluated?

How can you use a pre and post assessment to evaluate what change occurred during the year?

Emotional Wellness Coordinator's Role:

Provide guidance to EWC in creating a plan that addresses the goal.

Provide input on the steps that are necessary to accomplish the goal, including brainstorming ideas and selecting processes and activities to be implemented that address the goal.

## Appendix C

### Emotional Wellness, Building Relational Capacity



### Reflection Checklist

Question	Response
<p>Was I effective in facilitating the meeting? How?</p>	<p>Meeting start time:  <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <p>Meeting end time:  <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <p>Warm-up Activity: (describe activity and how much time was spent on the activity)  <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <p>How did this activity enhance committee member relationships/familiarity/connections?  <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <p>Followed agenda time lines (y/n)  <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <p>Did all committee members actively participate during the meeting (y/n)  <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <p>Respectful listening:                      Were there sidebar conversations?</p>

	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>
<p>Reflection for Improvement</p>	<p>What would you like to do differently next time?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <p>Additional support needed?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px;"></div>
<p>Goals – Action Plan:</p>	<p>EW goals:</p> <p>Student Goals Targeted:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <p>Staff Goals Targeted:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <p>Parents Goals Targeted:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <p>Did subcommittees have time to meet? (y/n)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <p>Were subcommittee goal sheets updated? (y/n)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <p>Are there clearly defined next steps? Who is doing what, by when?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <p>Additional thoughts/Notes:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 20px;"></div>



## Appendix D



### Emotional Wellness Program Eleven Principles Survey Questions

Questions 1-39 will be answered using a 5-point scale:

5 = Strongly Agree

4 = Agree

3 = Undecided / Neutral

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly Disagree

Questions 40-42 are open ended/short response questions.

1. Core ethical and performance values have been defined and implemented in my school.
2. Stakeholders select or agree to core values.
3. Visible reminders and statements about core values are visible throughout the school.
4. School defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and doing.
5. Students understand core values and how they apply to life.
6. Students have time to practice and reflect upon core values so that they become habitual.
7. Character development is comprehensive, intentional and proactive.
8. Character is addressed at all grade levels.
9. Character is integrated into academic content and instruction.
10. Character is evident in how teachers conduct their classes.
11. The school creates a caring community.
12. There are caring relationships between students and staff.
13. There are caring relationships between students.
14. There is no tolerance for bullying or peer cruelty.
15. There are caring relationships between adults.
16. The school provides students with opportunities for moral action.
17. Students engage in character building activities.
18. The school provides students with character building opportunities within the school.
19. The school provides students with character building opportunities outside of the school.
20. The school provides a curriculum that respects students, develops character, and success.
21. Staff understands and accommodates the diverse needs of all students.
22. The school fosters students’ self-motivation.

23. Extrinsic rewards are limited.
24. Student behavior “issues” are used as opportunities to teach and reinforce character.
25. All staff shares the responsibility for character education
26. All Staff adheres to and model the school’s core values.
27. All Staff are involved in planning and implementing character education.
28. Staff is given time to plan for and reflect on character education.
29. There is shared leadership and long-range support for character education.
30. The principal and other leaders champion the character education initiative.
31. There is a character education leadership team.
32. Students are involved in leading, planning, and implementing character education.
33. School engages families and community partners in character building effort.
34. Families are involved in character education efforts.
35. School gives suggestions for core value work at home and seeks parent feedback.
36. School seeks help and involvement from the wider community.
37. School assesses culture and climate as well as student and staff character growth on a regular basis.
38. School sets and measures character goals.
39. Staff reflect and discuss character implementation and individual growth.

Please take a moment to respond to the following open questions:

40. The greatest strengths of the Emotional Wellness Program are:
41. The greatest challenges faced by the Emotional Wellness Program are:
42. Suggestion(s) for improvement of the Emotional Wellness Program: