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The Effectiveness of the Implementation of Social and Emotional Learning Programs Program Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

Students today are faced with more challenges due to the nature of the society in which they are growing up. Children are experiencing more depression, anxiety, fear, and hopelessness—which impacts their ability to be successful academically. Social and emotional learning programs have proven to positively provide students with the necessary social and emotional skills. This study found that implementation of programming can have a direct impact on students' social and emotional skills, as well as their academic success, when it is effectively implemented and adults have a strong awareness of their own social and emotional competency level. This must be addressed through ongoing professional learning and support that can deepen their knowledge and understanding.

PREFACE

Schools have changed so much over the last few decades; what educators are responsible for on a daily basis has created a major challenge. In previous years, students simply came to school to learn basic arithmetic and reading. In some rare cases, students would learn a vocational trade or other skill(s) that helped them when as an adult. All of that has changed tremendously and schools now have to ensure they are providing students with other skills in addition to their academic needs that help them prepare for college, career, and beyond. This poses a great challenge because many postsecondary institutions do not prepare educators for the type of students that we see in schools today. I believe we are responsible for teaching the whole child, including their social and emotional needs.

When I began my career as a teacher, I was responsible for teaching basic academic content. My school principal did not require me to focus on teaching social and emotional learning. There was not a schoolwide focus or expectation for me to follow. While it was not mandatory, I knew it was important for me to teach character education to my students to teach them skills that would help them collaborate with their peers and interact positively with one another. There was no set curriculum, timeline, or schedule to follow.

Over the course of my career and the various roles I have fulfilled, I learned that it is essential to implement a social and emotional learning program for students and to provide support for all stakeholders involved in the process. My personal experience in implementing a social and emotional learning program led me to research the effectiveness of implementing social and emotional learning programs.

This program evaluation supported my belief that to effectively implement any program, there must be ongoing professional development that supports the needs of adults. Adults who are effectively supported are able to work efficiently, willing to learn new things, and consider new ideas. Implementation plans must take into account how adults learn best and provide the necessary resources and tools to ensure that any barriers are managed appropriately. This consideration will ultimately have a positive impact on student achievement and academic success.

DEDICATION

To my husband Jason and our children, Lauryn and Lance. You have been my rock and support along this journey and without you this would not have been possible. I am so grateful for you all pushing and encouraging me, even when moments were challenging. I could not have completed this without you.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The term social and emotional learning (SEL) has been circulating since the early 1990s and became a real conversation point when researchers from the formerly known Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) coined the term. Even years prior to this research, when Plato wrote about education in, *The Republic*, he proposed a holistic curriculum requiring a balance of training in physical education, the arts, math, science, character, and moral judgment. Plato explained, "By maintaining a sound system of education and upbringing, you produce citizens of good character" (Edutopia, 2011, para. 1). For many years, researchers have analyzed the direct correlation between a students' social and emotional competencies (SECs) to their academic success in school and beyond. Young people who succeed academically and in their personal lives are socially and emotionally competent (c, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2003). In recent decades, numerous national reports have concluded that SEC is part of the foundation of academic learning.

According to the CASEL (2019), SEL is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Social and emotional learning not only is an important idea for students, but SEL is essential for adults as well. Social and emotional learning educators and researchers believe that by integrating SEL in schools, students can be taught critical life skills that will not only help their personal development but also their academic performance. When educators foster a caring school environment and teach core social

skills, a virtuous cycle develops where positive interactions beget more positive interactions. All of this creates a culture where students and teachers respect each other and enjoy being together—further strengthening relationships and motivating both students and teachers to do their best (Edutopia, 2011).

According to the Committee for Children (n.d.), people with strong social-emotional skills are better able to cope with everyday challenges and benefit academically, professionally, and socially. From effective problem-solving to self-discipline, from impulse control to emotion management and more, SEL provides a foundation for positive, long-term effects on children and adults.

Over the last decade, school districts across the nation, many of them urban, have placed a major focus and emphasis on schools implementing various SEL programs to improve the culture and climate of the school. In Phi Delta Kappan (2018), Mahoney, Durlak, and Weissberg (2018) stated that in recent years, it was commonplace among American educators to argue that if schools aim to prepare young people for life in today's complex and diverse world, then they must provide instruction in more than just academic content and skills.

The Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards for students in grades K–12 were adopted as a result of the Children's Mental Health Act of 2003. This made Illinois one of the first states to adopt SEL standards. The 10 SEL standards (see Appendix A), along with state specific goals, age-appropriate benchmarks, and performance descriptors, consist of collaborative efforts between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership, with technical support from the CASEL (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d.).

Chicago public school (CPS) is a district within Illinois and is the third largest urban school district in the nation. Chicago public schools is a major partner with CASEL through the Collaborating Districts Initiative (CDI). According to Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2017):

> The goal of the CDI was to create a comprehensive shift in how superintendents and entire school districts approach education. We knew we had to help redefine quality education (beyond test scores alone), and to prioritize the practices in classrooms, schools, and communities for promoting the social and emotional development of children. (p. 3)

According to a 2015 CASEL case study, CPS identified three pillars for the infusion of SEL into the fabric of its schools. These pillars were outlined by then CPS CEO, Barbara Byrd-Bennett, in her 5-year action plan for the district:

1. Create a positive and proactive school climate in which SEL is present in all practices and procedures.

2. Adult awareness, modeling, and integration of SECs in teaching practices.

3. Explicit and integrated student instruction in SECs. (CASEL Social and Emotional Learning: Planning for Financial Sustainability; p. 1, para. 1)

As CEO for CPS, Byrd-Bennett established a 5-year action plan that included a focus on SEL. Under the umbrella of the pillar for providing a system of support that meets the needs of students, Byrd-Bennett identified eight objectives; however, the following are those that further elaborated her focus on SEL:

1. Ensure a safe, secure, orderly, drug-free environment for learning.

2. Establish a universal standard for a positive learning climate that makes students feel valued, challenged, and supported.

3. Promote good attendance.

4. Provide students with the academic and behavior supports needed to achieve their full potential. (Chicago Public Schools, n.d.-b)

These four objectives support the need for schools to ensure there is a direct focus on promoting SEL within schools to aid in overall student success. Schools with positive relationships, clear expectations, collective responsibility, and learning-focused interactions have better student attendance, behavior, and grades. Chicago public schools stated the following about socially emotionally strong schools:

Students learn best when they feel safe, both physically and emotionally. We must ensure that every student feels welcomed, supported, and respected in school by both peers and adults. Students also learn more when they have the opportunity to develop social and emotional skills, such as managing frustration, building relationships and making responsible decisions. Those skills are needed to persist with a tough math problem, collaborate on a group project, and to set goals for college and career. (Chicago Public School, n.d.-a)

One of the strategies identified by CPS to support socially emotionally strong schools was that schools would integrate SEL skills in all subject areas. In an effort to ensure that every school across the district focused on establishing a safe and supportive school, schools were expected to implement various district-mandated SEL programs such as Second Step (grades preK–8), which was recommended by the Office of Social Emotional Learning (OSEL). This office helps support the district's implementation plan

for SEL. Along with Second Step, the OSEL identified a variety of research-based programs to help with this initiative, such as Calm Classroom, Anger Coping, and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS). The OSEL within CPS had three strategic priorities:

1. Develop supportive school communities and relationships.
2. Promote students' social and emotional development through Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).
3. Foster staff mindsets and skills to respond to student behaviors compassionately, restoratively, and equitably.

The OSEL department prepares students to succeed in college, career, and life with equal parts being academic and social emotional in nature. The school district clearly articulates the need for a clear focus on MTSS, and SEL falls under this umbrella of support. Multi-tiered system of supports would encompass three levels of access points for students, based on their social and emotional needs.

- Tier I—All students (e.g., Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports [PBIS], Talking Circles, Foundations)
- Tier II—Some students (e.g., Peer Jury, Check In/Check Out)
- Tier III—Few students (e.g., individualized counseling)

It was not enough to only focus on those students with identified areas of need based on the MTSS criteria, but a strong need also exists for strategic systems and supports that consider all students equally across the district and allows all students to be successful in any school setting.

Schools across the district were expected to implement these programs to aid in establishing and/or creating a calm culture and climate that supported students in feeling safe as they learned the skills within one of the identified social and emotional programs. Each SEL program focused on specific skills, but most had similar goals—with the overall goal being to improve the academic and social outcomes for students. The OSEL department was expected to provide ongoing professional development, training, and assistance for school staff to improve their positive behavior systems or structures and/or to integrate SEL into their instructional planning and practice (OSEL, 2013).

Purpose

Social and emotional learning is not a new idea or concept. As early as 1911, Maria Montessori opened the first Montessori school focused on a child-centered approach—developing the whole child cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically. Years later, John Dewey introduced the idea of social responsibility. The core of this work was that you cannot perform activities without taking into account the activities of others. In 1966, Vygotsky furthered this concept by arguing that children need social interaction prior to focusing on cognition. This belief paved the way for SEL. Focusing on the whole child is a critical piece of the puzzle; however, there must also be an intentional focus on establishing a school climate that supports SEL. According to Lewallen, Hunt, Potts-Datema, Zaza, and Giles (2015):

Social and Emotional School Climate refers to the psychosocial aspects of students' educational experience that influence their social and emotional development. The social and emotional climate of a school can impact student

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engagement in school activities, relationships with other students, staff, family

and community, and academic performance. (p. 733)

Establishing a strong culture and climate is not an easy task; however, it must be a major

priority of the school leader and every stakeholder.

Social and emotional learning programs are not new to school districts. In the late

1960s, James Comer piloted a program called the Comer School Development Program,

which focused on two poor, low-achieving, predominantly African American elementary

schools in New Haven, Connecticut that had the worst attendance and the lowest

academic achievement in the city (Edutopia, 2011). Research shows that schools in high-

poverty areas have a greater need for SEL programs because students within certain

communities often come to school with more social emotional deficits requiring in-depth

counseling support from the school-based counselor, along with effectively trained

school staff and other resources. "Studies of urban schools find that economically

disadvantaged students of color perform better when teachers match high expectations

with warm and safe environments and social support" (Edutopia, 2011, para. 11).

When I began my career as a classroom teacher, we did not discuss the social and

emotional needs of students; however, we taught students character education, which is

quite different. According to Siska, Yufiarti, and Japar (2020), character education in

schools is directed at values considered relevant for student development—such as

attitudes and behaviors of discipline, honesty, responsibility, respect, fairness, tolerance,

and others. The premise for character education is that people, especially young people,

can be taught value and live by high ethical principles and standards in spite of the

negative influences around them. It is preventive in nature rather than a reactionary

response to a crisis. According to the AEGIS Character Education Company (2011), effective character education targets a manageable set of character qualities that have universal relevance and contributes substantially to the development of ethical character and the critical sense of identity that emerges from its acquisition.

Oddly enough, I only became aware and learned of the term social and emotional learning after being in education for over a decade. My early college experiences did not necessarily expose me to this notion or provide coursework that prepared me for the education workforce I was entering. Twenty-first century schools serve socioculturally diverse students with varied abilities and motivations for learning (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). To meet the needs of these varied abilities, researchers are advocating for the implementation of SEL programs to better prepare the students for academic success. Social and emotional learning programs became prevalent in the schools I worked in to help educators support the vast needs of the students. The daily school schedule no longer focused only on academics, but now included SEL programs. In my opinion, the students presented challenges that character education did not necessarily address.

Historically, research has further supported the idea that there is a significant need for the implementation of SEL standards. Extensive research indicates that effective mastery of SECs is associated with greater well-being and better school performance; whereas, the lack of competency in these areas can lead to a variety of personal, social, and academic difficulties (Durlak et al., 2011). Additionally, the implementation of SEL has shown a positive increase in student achievement and behavioral outcomes. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning shared early research data

from 2011 showing an 11 percent gain in academic achievement and increased improved behavior (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, n.d.-d).

The purpose of this program evaluation is to take a deeper look at the effectiveness of the implementation of SEL programs. The study is intended to determine the impact of SEL programs to a school's culture and climate, student behaviors, and academic achievement outcomes. One such program, Second Step, provides SEL instruction to students, grades preK–8, with units on skills for learning empathy, emotion management, friendship, and problem solving (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, n.d.-e). Evaluating these types of programs will help to better understand the correlation between student social skills and a student's ability to succeed academically.

Students need to be exposed to academic as well as social and emotional content in schools. Both are extremely beneficial to the success of a student. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (n.d.-b),

> More than two decades of research exists that demonstrate that educators and educational institutions who promote SEL improves results for students and school communities. The findings come from multiple fields and sources—including student achievement, neuroscience, health, employment, psychology, classroom management, learning theory, economics, and the prevention of youth problem behaviors. (para. 1)

To prepare students for college, career, and beyond means ensure that students are provided with the necessary skills in order to be a successful, productive member of society. To this end, SEL seems to also fit into the formula for success.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning's (2019) integrated framework promotes intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence. The following five core competencies can be taught in many ways across many settings (see Appendix B):

1. Self-awareness

2. Self-management

3. Social awareness

4. Relationship skills

5. Responsible decision making

Self-awareness refers to being aware of one's emotional triggers, feelings, and impact on others, and having a growth mindset. This includes learning to stop, notice, and articulate feelings, mood, or energy level in order to proactively preempt escalating into destructive or disruptive behaviors. Self-awareness can improve the ability to manage oneself.

Self-management is the ability to successfully regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations. It means the learner seeks patterns and identifies strategies that increases his or her level of self-control demonstrated in stressful or distracting situations.

Social awareness is recognizing that each of us comes from a variety of backgrounds and being different from one another requires the ability to empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Social awareness also allows the learner to develop and demonstrate respect for others and to appreciate diverse perspectives.

Relationship skills represent the ability to establish and keep healthy relationships with individuals—whether from similar or diverse backgrounds. Key aspects of

managing and maintaining these relationships are the ability to listen carefully and communicate clearly with others.

Responsible decision making is the ability to make constructive choices in personal behavior and social interactions based on social norms, ethical standards, and safety concerns.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning partners with several districts across multiple states and remains a major research contributor to the SEL work at large.

The goal of this study is for school districts to be better supported to effectively implement SEL programs. To do this effectively and to truly move schools forward, educators need to ensure legislation is extended to provide adequate funding to school districts to support ongoing professional development for teachers and staff, coaching support, and adequate resources.

Rationale

Chicago public schools has a long-standing history of overusing out of school suspensions (OSS)—especially for students of color, students in high violence and trauma areas, and schools with a poor culture and climate. Schools did not provide students with any type of social, emotional, and behavioral support or provide teachers with support to assist students who display behavioral challenges. In my experience, if a student had behavioral issues, he or she generally received a punitive consequence that had him or her out of school for a period of time. Upon returning to school, there was no intentional support around building the capacity of the student to prevent this behavior(s)

from occurring again. In most cases, the behavior(s) would continue and inadvertently, the student would be suspended again.

According to an article written by Matt Masterson, CPS recorded 55,270 total suspensions during the school year (WTTW News, 2016, para. 3). African American students within the district were suspended more than 76,000 times in the 2012–2013 school year (WTTW News, 2016, para. 3); that total fell to 39,000 in the 2015–2016 school year (WTTW News, 2016, para. 3). The number of Hispanic students receiving suspensions also fell from more than 25,000 down to 13,800 between the 2011–2012 and 2015–2016 school years (WTTW News, 2016, para. 3). Table 1 captures some of this data.

Table 1

CPS Behavior and Suspensions Data

CPS Behavior Data			Suspensions (includes ISS & OSS)	
Category	School Year	Time Period[1]	# of Suspensions[6]	% of Misconducts Resulting in a Suspension
District Wide	2015-2016	EOY	55270	45.9
African American	2015-2016	EOY	39288	51
Male	2015-2016	EOY	35878	45.1
Female	2015-2016	EOY	19392	47.5
Hispanic	2015-2016	EOY	13828	37.6
White	2015-2016	EOY	1428	31.3
Multiracial	2015-2016	EOY	344	39.9
Asian	2015-2016	EOY	224	33.9
Native American / Alaskan	2015-2016	EOY	127	41.1
Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	2015-2016	EOY	27	35.1

(Chicago Public Schools)

For years, students with behavioral concerns went unaddressed. Students were suspended, which impacted school culture in negative ways. Oftentimes, the culture and climate of a school has a direct impact on the social and emotional climate of the school

as a whole. Over the course of my educational career, I have worked in several predominantly African American schools within CPS and noticed this notion to ring true regarding the suspension of boys—specifically, African American boys. I also noticed that each school administrator I worked under did not have clear direction on how to establish a culture and climate conducive for learning in every classroom. It was the responsibility of each teacher to establish the importance of character education, classroom expectations, and manage the wide range of student behaviors. To this end, there were some classrooms where students were valued and respected and other classrooms where it was evident the teacher did not know how to establish this, and there was no direct support provided for the teacher. Additionally, the culture and climate in these schools were extremely toxic. Staff and students were in vulnerable environments from internal issues such as poor student-to-student relationships, unstable student-to-teacher relationships, quarreling, fighting, lack of clear schoolwide expectations, and a host of other school dysfunctions. I have heard and seen poor relational skills from teachers to students and vice versa. Students did not feel safe and often displayed the flight or fight syndrome.

I have come to the understanding that the culture and climate of the school is anchored in the beliefs of its instructional leader and building staff. The core values, academic success, and social experience for students is the responsibility of every adult in the building. I personally believe that when people are not clear about what must be done, they create their own way of doing things and it is not always the most successful or consistent. As a teacher and an instructional leader, my school experiences have cultivated a deep desire to deepen my understanding through this study, to identify what

makes an effective program implementation that produces positive academic and social outcomes for students, and uncover critical barriers that hinder schools from the ability to make the necessary impacts that improves the SEL of students positively.

Schools must create a culture and climate where students feel valued and safe. Key aspects of school climate—conditions for learning (e.g., physical and emotional safety, connectedness and support, engaging and challenging opportunities to learn, interactions with and modeling from socially and emotionally competent adults and peers)—and SEL are interconnected. Social and emotional learning cannot flourish in a school independent of positive and supportive school and classroom climates, just as systematic efforts to build student and adult SECs contribute to nurturing classroom and school climates (Berg, Osher, Moroney, & Yoder, 2017). There must be strong behavior systems and supports in place so that students are clear about what they are expected to do.

It is also imperative that all staff members are in alignment and implement the same type of strategies to prevent any gaps in the school culture. Social and emotional learning strives to create such an environment where everyone is using consistent language alongside an explicit curriculum that provides a clear roadmap of research-proven instructional practices that promote social and emotional development. A supportive SEL climate sets the stage for productive learning by establishing positive behaviors that are the norm.

In evaluating the effectiveness of SEL program implementation, it is my hope to identify what constitutes an effective implementation, the potential roadblocks and hindrances, and the critical roles of every stakeholder in ensuring the effectiveness of the

implementation. According to Merriam-Webster, effectiveness means producing a decided, decisive, or desired effect (Effectiveness, n.d.).

Implementing SEL with fidelity supports school stakeholders with establishing a school environment where a major emphasis is on supporting students socially and academically and allowing schools to truly begin closing the achievement gap. Social and emotional learning allows students to build positive and strong relationships—not only with their peers, but also with the adults in the building. These types of relationships can have lasting effects on the school and its surrounding communities as well. Moreover, these skills predict such important life outcomes as completing high school on time, obtaining a college degree, and securing stable employment (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Goals

The Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago conducts a yearly survey where teachers, parents, and students are given the opportunity to provide feedback; it is known as the *5Essentials School* survey. The survey measures school success based on five essential areas:

- Effective Leaders

- Collaborative Teachers

- Ambitious Instruction

- Supportive Environment

- Involved Families (The Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago, n.d.)

While each of these areas is essential to the success of a school, the supportive

environment component supports the ideology and SEL focus. In schools with a

supportive environment, the school is safe, demanding, and supportive. In such schools:

- Students feel safe in and around the school.

- Students find teachers trustworthy and responsive to their academic needs.

- All students value hard work.

- Teachers push all students toward high academic performance. (The

  Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago, n.d.)

Within the supportive environment component of the survey, each section solicits

responses from students regarding their viewpoint on the supportiveness of the school in

meeting their social and emotional needs. Survey data helps school leaders and

stakeholders analyze how well the school culture effectively establishes a supportive

environment, which is supported through the implementation of SEL.

This program evaluation has three goals. One, to determine the effectiveness of

the implementation of the SEL curriculum identified by school districts, and the effects it

has on creating an overall supportive environment that aids in improving the social,

emotional, and academic outcomes for all students.

Social and emotional learning programs have been linked to increasing student

academic outcomes. According to Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional

Learning (n.d.-d), "SEL interventions that address CASEL's five core competencies

increased students' academic performance by 11 percentile points, compared to students

who did not participate in such SEL programs" (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and

Emotional Learning, para 1). In looking deeply at the effectiveness of SEL on students, a

second goal of this program evaluation involves the desire to challenge educators on a broader scale to put a major emphasis on ensuring that SEL is considered critical content in connection to overall student success, and that school districts at large are mandated to implement this programming.

A final goal of this program evaluation entails establishing advocacy for legislation supporting the need to provide adequate financial and human capital resources, ongoing professional development, and classroom-embedded coaching that enables schools to effectively implement social and emotional programs that have lasting positive impacts on students at large.

Research Questions

The primary research question guiding this study is:

1. How does the implementation of social and emotional learning programs improve the social and academic outcomes of students?

Secondary questions include:

2. What additional supports are provided to aid schools in the implementation of social and emotional learning programs?

3. How are schools that need additional support and guidance identified and supported?

4. What external and internal barriers are present that prevent schools from a successful implementation?

5. How does the current policy for social and emotional learning need to be modified to support the incorporation of ongoing professional learning for effective implementation?

As mentioned previously, students' successes in school and beyond are predicated on a school's ability to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment able to prepare the students socially, emotionally, and academically. It is critical to the success of students that school districts and schools ensure that every stakeholder that supports students has an understanding of the importance of SEL so that the whole child is impacted positively. The research is clear. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (n.d.-b), "Students participating in SEL programs show improved classroom behavior; an increased ability to manage stress and depression; and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school" (para. 1).

Conclusion

Schools are complex organizations that are challenged with supporting students to grow and develop academically and socially. Educators do not get to decide who shows up at the school and the issues he or she may bring. There is a growing need for educators to strengthen their support for students, both socially and emotionally, in conjunction with academics. This glaring need can no longer be ignored; therefore, to this end, the educator's capacity to do the work successfully must be developed.

It is important to create the type of schools where students can thrive and develop in all aspects of their educational journey. Jones and Kahn (2017) support this idea when they stated the following:

> Students who have a sense of belonging and purpose, who can work well with classmates and peers to solve problems, who can plan and set goals, and who can persevere through challenges—in addition to being literate, numerate, and versed in scientific concepts and ideas—are more likely to maximize their opportunities

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and reach their full potential. . . . Educators, too, understand the benefits of

educating the whole child, and have been calling for more support and fewer

barriers in making this vision a reality. (p. 4)

Educators have to move to action and make the necessary adjustments to how academic,

social, and emotional supports are provided within school communities. It is imperative

educators support the whole child in their educational experience.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

As a school leader, I have developed a strong advocacy in support of the implementation of SEL programs within schools. Students come to school with vast social and emotional gaps that often impede their ability to learn and be successful in school. Students who exhibit a lack of social and emotional skills are often unsuccessful with managing their emotions, establishing healthy relationships, and demonstrating high academic gains. Furthermore, these students negatively impact a teachers' ability to provide high-quality instruction to all students in a classroom. The social and emotional capacity of teachers and school personnel have a direct impact on the success or failure of program implementation within a school community. Teachers' belief systems also play a major role in the success or failure of an SEL program implementation—based on level of understanding (regarding SEL) or personal SEC levels.

The literature reviewed for this program evaluation was compiled to deepen the understanding of the impact of adult SECs, the importance of creating a safe and supportive school environment, and SEL and student behavioral outcomes. In addition, the literature reviewed aims to identify the elements of effective program implementation.

The Impact of Adult Social Emotional Competencies

Over the past decade, multiple surveys indicate that educators, parents, and the public recognize the need for a broad educational agenda to not only improve academic

performance, but also to enhance students' SEC, character, health, and civic engagement (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). The educator's role has taken on a broader contextual change. Previously, a teacher's sole responsibility was to provide high-quality academic support to the students they served. Teachers taught character education alongside curriculum, but there was not a direct focus on developing specific social emotional skills.

Aside from basic child psychology coursework focusing on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, postsecondary institutions do not put major emphasis on any topic beyond academics. Postsecondary programs (at large) have not provided teachers and staff members with support around the concept of social emotional skills. A national scan of the United States teacher preparation programs found that these programs pay limited attention to SEL and when they do, they address only some dimensions of this complex area (Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, & Hanson-Peterson, 2017).

In a school context, there is an unspoken understanding that teachers come to the school setting with certain abilities and skill sets that allow them to successfully teach students with various learning abilities. Once a teacher has graduated from a 4-year university with the proper educational credentials, he or she is expected to be able to enter into *any* school setting and create an optimal classroom environment suitable for students to thrive in— socially, behaviorally, and academically. According to Jennings and Greenberg (2009), "To our knowledge, there are no preservice or in-service training programs that focus on improving teachers' knowledge and skills regarding students' social and emotional development that have been carefully evaluated to examine their effects on teacher and classroom functioning" (p. 512).

According to Jennings and Greenberg (2009), an optimal classroom climate is characterized by the following:

- Low levels of conflict and disruptive behavior.

- Smooth transitions from one type of activity to another.

- Appropriate expressions of emotion.

- Respectful communication and problem solving.

- Strong interest and focus on task and supportiveness.

- Responsiveness to individual differences and student needs.

When teachers lack the resources to effectively manage the social and emotional challenges within the particular context of their school and classroom, children show lower levels of on-task behavior and performance (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009, p. 492).

Socially and emotionally competent teachers set the tone of the classroom by developing supportive and encouraging relationships with their students, designing lessons that build on student strengths and abilities, establishing and implementing behavioral guidelines in ways that promote intrinsic motivation, coaching students through conflict situations, encouraging cooperation among students, and acting as a role model for respectful and appropriate communication and exhibitions (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009, p. 492).

In many school districts that implement SEL for students, there is little to no consideration for the SEC levels of those responsible for the implementation. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) submitted the idea that teachers' SEC and well-being strongly influence the learning context and the infusion of SEL into classrooms and schools.

According to Greenberg, Brown, and Abenavoli (2016), school teachers are more stressed today than ever before—even with a strong focus on the implementation of social emotional programs. Stress is affecting teacher health and well-being; causing burnout; bringing about a lack of engagement; and producing low job satisfaction, poor performance, and some of the highest turnover rates ever (Greenberg et al., 2016). Greenberg et al. (2016) discussed four main sources of teacher stress and teacher social and emotional competence:

1. School organizations that lack strong principal leadership; a healthy school climate; and a collegial, supportive environment.

2. Job demands that are escalating with high-stakes testing, student behavioral problems, and difficult parents.

3. Work resources that limit a teacher's sense of autonomy and decision-making power.

4. Teacher social and emotional competence to manage stress and nurture a healthy classroom. (p. 2, para. 4)

When high, job demands and stress are combined with low SEC and classroom management skills, poor teacher performance and attrition increase. A teacher's own SECs and well-being are key factors influencing student and classroom outcomes. Teachers' SEC and well-being strongly influence learning content and the infusion of SEL into classrooms and schools (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Jones and Kahn (2017) suggested that interventions addressing teacher-specific SECs result in improvements in a variety of indicators of teacher well-being—including reduction in stress and burnout, which can reduce rates of teacher and administrator turnover.

Classrooms where teachers are unable to manage their own SEC often represent poor teacher-student relationships, low academics, behavioral issues, and a host of other issues that do not promote student success. According to Schonert-Reichl (2017), when teachers poorly manage the social and emotional demands of teaching, students demonstrate lower performance and on-task behavior. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) stated that teachers with high SECs are self-aware and teachers need to have high SECs as well as "right beliefs" and perceptions to make a difference in their students' learning (p. 495). Ee and Cheng (2013) believe that all teachers should go through a screening test before entry into the teaching profession and be given SEC training, even if they are merely classroom relief teachers (p. 68). The educational profession requires teachers who are self-aware and can manage multiple tasks effectively. Students today require more, which in turn challenges teachers even more.

Creating Safe and Supportive Learning Environments

School districts such as CPS have a long standing history of high numbers of out of school suspensions along with school environments that are often unsafe and unproductive for learning. The learning environments (or the school climate) where students are expected to learn are described as chaotic, violent, and unsafe for a myriad of reasons. For example, students' conflicts often elicit aggressive, oppositional behaviors toward peers and adults—behaviors that compromise the learning environment and are associated with later conduct problems, substance abuse, and school failure (Frey, Nolen, Van Schoiack Edstrom & Hirschstein, 2005). The National School Climate Council (NSCC) defines school climate as, "patterns of school life experiences and reflects

norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership

practices, and organizational structures" (NSCC, 2007, p. 4).

According to the 5Essentials survey administered by the University of Chicago to

schools across Illinois, a supportive environment is defined as one that is safe and orderly

(The Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago, n.d.). A safe

and supportive environment is conducive to learning and sets up students for academic

success. Classrooms where teachers have high expectations for students and are able to

provide support helps to promote a student's ability to reach their goals. In supportive

environments, classmates not only support one another, but also are willing to participate

in the overall function of the classroom. Schools that develop safe and supportive

environments help nurture and support students, both socially and academically. To learn,

children and adolescents need to feel safe and supported. Conditions for learning and

social and emotional development are intertwined, interdependent, and mutually

beneficial. Students and staff in a school need to have SECs to create positive social

environments, and positive school climates create conditions that help students develop

SECs (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Without these conditions, the mind reverts to a

focus on survival. Educators in high-performing, high-poverty schools have long

recognized the critical importance of providing a healthy, safe, and supportive classroom

and school environment (Parrett & Budge, 2011).

A safe and supportive learning environment does not occur by happenstance. The

school leader is the visionary that establishes how the school is going to function; how

adults interact with students, families and the community; and the overall social and

academic priorities. According to the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning

Environments (n.d.), schools with the right resources and support can provide all students with access to a well-rounded education, improve school conditions for student learning, and improve the use of technology so all students have the opportunity to realize academic success and digital literacy in safe and supportive learning environments. Classrooms with warm, teacher-child relationships promote deep learning among students. Children who feel comfortable with their teachers and peers are more willing to grapple with challenging material and persist at difficult learning tasks (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Additionally, the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (2014) defined a safe and supportive environment in the following way:

> . . . Schools that foster a safe, positive, healthy and inclusive whole-school learning environment that (i) enables students to develop positive relationships with adults and peers, regulate their emotions and behavior, achieve academic and non-academic success in school and maintain physical and psychological health and well-being and (ii) integrates services and aligns initiatives that promote students' behavioral health, including social and emotional learning, bullying prevention, trauma sensitivity, dropout prevention, truancy reduction, children's mental health, foster care and homeless youth education, inclusion of students with disabilities, positive behavioral approaches that reduce suspensions and expulsions and other similar initiatives. (para. 2)

Creating safe and supportive schools require school leaders to articulate a clear vision to all stakeholders about what is expected of each community member and how those expectations impact student academic outcomes and overall success. Parrett and Budge

(2011) stated that a healthy, safe, and supportive learning environment enables students, adults, and the school system to learn in powerful ways. Such an environment promotes innovation, inquiry, and risk taking. Moreover, such an environment reinforces and enhances the leadership capacity in the school because competent, excellent, and dedicated educators want to work under such conditions. This work is very intentional and requires a systematic approach and focus.

The Impact of Social Emotional Learning and Student Behavioral Outcomes

Healthy schools are characterized by positive school climates that support student learning, development, and well-being by providing safety, support and connectedness, academic challenge and engagement, cultural responsiveness, healthy food, time and space to be active, and SEL (Berg & Osher, 2018). School learning environments are inundated with stakeholders of all ages, backgrounds, and beliefs who have experienced life from various perspectives and understandings. These perspectives and understandings can make a school community challenging.

Students come to school with a myriad of issues and traumas that impact their ability to behave socially appropriate, which can ultimately affect their academic success. Student misbehaviors plague school communities, and a lack of resources and adequate support often cause students to be suspended for behaviors such as talking back, being disrespectful, or lack of engagement. These misbehaviors were viewed as problematic to the school culture and climate based on a fundamentally erroneous belief system and student code of conduct that allowed students to be suspended with no real consideration for the core issue surrounding the behavior displayed.

School districts, such as CPS, struggled with adequately analyzing behavioral issues and often used out of school suspensions as a means of dealing with student misbehavior. Chicago public schools governed student behaviors using a universal student code of conduct that outlined specific behavior infractions and the consequences that students could receive. Within CPS, misconducts were categorized into various infraction groups with group 1 being minor infractions (such as running in the hallway) to group 6, with very serious infractions (such as attempted murder). In the 2011–2012 school year, according to misconduct data from CPS (Chicago Public School, 2020), there were 131,281 misconducts identified and 101,171 resulted in out of school suspensions. Since 2011, CPS has seen a significant decrease in the number of out of school suspensions. During the 2017–2018 school year, CPS reported 97,647 misconducts with only 13,562 resulting in out of school suspensions. Chicago public schools attributes the decrease the district is experiencing to the strategic focus on the implementation of SEL skills across the district. Identified suspensions are in response to the variety of behavioral challenges faced by school leaders and educators ranging from minor infractions (such as leaving the classroom without permission) to very severe incidents (such as aggravated assault). Chicago public schools used suspensions as one of its major discipline outcomes—even though the suspensions did not show a positive change in the behavior of the students once students returned to school.

While it is imperative for school communities to appropriately handle student misbehavior, it is critically crucial for schools to ensure that school communities are created that help students learn and foster strong social and emotional skills that positively impact their behavioral outcomes. Schools that experience socially challenging

environments have an even greater demand on the importance of effectively implementing SEL programming. Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan (2013) argued that poor student behavior represents a bigger problem in schools with limited focus on SEL. According to Jones and Kahn (2017), evidence showed that high-quality programming focused on SEL made a positive difference for children's academic achievement and behavior. School leaders have to articulate a clear vision for every stakeholder that supports an environment conducive for positive social and learning outcomes.

Elements of Effective Program Implementation

Program implementation requires a strategic plan of action as it can be a daunting task with so many things to take into consideration. Social and emotional learning programming is no different. When I think about the rollout of SEL within CPS, it is not surprising that there are some schools implementing it very well and others struggling to grasp a basic understanding. Chicago public schools has been pioneering this rollout since 2012; however, colleagues from various schools noted some school leaders are just beginning to implement SEL in their school context. This was a districtwide initiative so the lack of implementation is puzzling as the implementation process is crucial to the success of the program. This definitely impacts the implementation of programming and its effectiveness. "A growing body of research emphasizes the importance of effective implementation. Even among the highest-quality, evidence-based approaches to SEL, implementation plays a critical role in shaping outcomes" (Jones, Bailey, Brush, & Kahn, 2018, p. 1, Introduction, para. 1).

Often times in schools, new programs are selected, professional development is provided, and the adults responsible for the implementation simply *get started*. In my

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experience, there is not a clear implementation process articulated, which hinders the implementation process. LaTurner and Lewis (2013) stated,

> The push for college and career readiness for all students, educator evaluations tied to student growth, and the turnaround of our lowest performing schools has resulted in a myriad of new programs and practices aimed at improving student achievement. Many of these efforts will fail to produce the desired results. This failure is not necessarily because the program or practice was inherently flawed, although there are plenty of programs with scant evidence of effectiveness, but because those charged with overseeing the improvement effort were unable to effectively manage the implementation process. (p. 1, para. 1)

Every stakeholder involved is important to the effectiveness of the implementation process. Everyone must have buy-in and be actively engaged throughout the entire process. Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning has created an online suite of tools districts can use to support their implementation plans. Within the implementation guide, CASEL provides a complete timeline with specific tasks for completion. According to CASEL: Guide to Schoolwide SEL (n.d.-d), "Schoolwide SEL implementation is an ongoing process. In CASEL's experience, full implementation of schoolwide SEL often takes three to five years but will depend on each school's individual circumstances and goals" (para. 1). The implementation guide is extremely detailed and provides school districts with the tools and resources needed to be effective.

According to Jones et al. (2018), there are several recommendations for effective implementation:

- Allot the time required to implement the program sufficiently and effectively.

- Extend SEL beyond the classroom.

- Apply SEL strategies and skills in real time.

- Ensure sufficient staff support and training.

- Facilitate program ownership and buy-in.

- Use data to inform decision making. (Recommendations for Effective

  Implementation, pp. 3–5)

The effectiveness of implementation is contingent upon a successful plan that includes

more than just identifying a program. According to LaTurner and Lewis (2013):

Managing the implantation of a school improvement initiative requires leaders to

do more than adopt a new program and train staff. By considering how staff may

experience the change, clearly defining how the initiative should look when

implemented, collecting and analyzing data to measure success and provide

support, and committing to support the initiative beyond adoption, leaders

increase the change that school improvement initiatives will have a positive

impact on student achievement. (p. 5)

Many considerations exist that must be taken into account when rolling out an effective

SEL implementation plan. This process must be intentional and requires the school leader

to create a plan that engages all stakeholders at various levels of understanding,

experience, and expertise.

Conclusion

The education field represents a demanding workforce requiring high levels of endurance from those who are a part of it. It is imperative that educators strengthen their school communities by helping to unravel the impact of adult SECs and how it directly affects their students. Schools must be diligent in creating safe and supportive school environments that encourage student academic and behavioral success through the impact of the implementation of SEL programs.

Teachers are now expected to come to the educational arena with their own social skills intact and effectively impact the students they instruct daily. It is not easy; however, it is an educator's moral responsibility to ensure that he or she is preparing students for life beyond the classroom—this includes ensuring that students are socially and emotionally competent.

The research focused on SEL is very clear. Schools have the potential to serve as powerful protective factors in students' development. Additionally, schools are relatively self-contained environments and can be safe spaces for children and their families (Berg & Osher, 2013). Educators, as a whole, can make positive impacts in the lives of students through social and emotional programming.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

This program evaluation utilizes publicly available data and research provided by the CASEL. This type of data is most useful as it provides a broader context and understanding of the effectiveness of SEL beyond the limited data available from CPS. In this research design, Patton's (2008), *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* was the framework used to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of SEL programs.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning history is an essential component to understanding this study appropriately. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning was formed in 1994 with the goal of establishing high-quality, evidence-based SEL as an essential part of preschool through high school education (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning 2019). The work of CASEL was imperative as schools were being saturated with students with various social and emotional needs and programming that did not always support those needs. Analyzing the work that CASEL has done to bring attention to programs such as social emotional learning (SEL) is critical to determining if the desired impact, outcome, and goals are measured accurately.

Program evaluations are critical to any organization when determining if the intended outcome of the program was implemented with fidelity and reached its intended target. According to Patton (2008), program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs to make

judgments about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and/or increase understanding (p. 39). Utilization-focused evaluation involves evaluation performed for and with specific intended primary users for specific, intended uses (Patton, 2008, p. 37).

The research draws from publicly available data and reports conducted by the CASEL to inform the program evaluation of supports needed in the district. Additionally, other available public data identified from CPS (such as academic, behavioral, and overall school effectiveness data) will provide additional understanding and allow the opportunity to determine the effectiveness of programming.

Participants

This research consisted of analyzing publicly available and archival data. To that end, there were no participants in which the researcher directly connected with. However, participants included in the publicly available and archival data were from various representative groups. The research consisted of teachers and students from various schools, from various socioeconomic status, from various ethnicities, and within several districts that include students from grades preK–12. The qualitative research reviewed included data about teachers' beliefs from focus groups. The groups consisted of preschool teachers from 10 centers in Northern Virginia. Additionally, this research included a quantitative component that focused specifically on the teachers, but only focused on their classroom emotional environments to determine if there was a direct correlation to the data that was previously collected.

The quantitative research included data collected from teacher surveys, assessments, and other data findings identified in each meta-analysis reviewed. The following primary research question guided this study:

- How does the implementation of social and emotional learning programs improve the social and academic outcomes of students?

The primary use of the research findings involved identifying if the implementation of programming would be enough to alter the culture and climate of a school community and improve the social and academic outcomes for students. The following secondary questions guided this study:

- How is additional support provided to aid schools in the implementation of social and emotional learning programs?

- How are schools that need additional support and guidance identified and supported?

- What external and internal barriers are present that prevent schools from a successful implementation?

- How does the current policy for social and emotional learning need to be modified to support the incorporation of ongoing professional learning for effective implementation?

In reviewing the research gathered on the implementation of SEL programs, it was determined that a mixed methodology was the most advantageous method of data gathering that supported this program evaluation.

Data Gathering Techniques

The research analyzed used a meta-analysis approach to combine the results from multiple studies collected over the course of several years. The research that was gathered focused on published or unpublished studies that were available by December 2007. Each of the identified programs had to incorporate the four SAFE program features (outlined next) for SEL interventions (Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissburg, 2017):

- *Sequenced:* Coordinated progression of activities or practices to build competencies.

- *Active:* Participatory elements such as role plays that involve students in active learning of SEL competencies.

- *Focused:* Dedicated time or specific program elements focused on developing SEL competencies.

- *Explicit:* The program identified specific SEL competencies it was trying to develop within the intervention.

The meta-analysis combined research that was analyzed over the course of several years. The research criteria were specifically outlined in alignment with the identified outcomes for each case study. The goal of each meta-analysis reviewed was to determine if the social emotional interventions used were effective and if those interventions positively impacted students based on several predetermined outcomes. The research was retrieved from multiple studies using various social emotional interventions and programs. It did not focus on any one SEL program but on the outcome of the programs. In reviewing the research, data and conclusions were analyzed to identify overall themes that could be extracted collectively.

One of the meta-analysis studies reviewed 82 school-based, universal, social, and emotional learning interventions. The study identified several social skills that were outlined based on the Positive Youth Development (PYD) intervention, which focused on enhancing young people's strengths; establishing engaging and supportive contexts; and providing opportunities for bidirectional, constructive youth context interactions. Interventions that were grounded in the PYD framework were successful in improving young people's self-control, interpersonal skills, problem solving skills, the quality of peer and adult relationships, commitment to schooling, and academic achievement (Taylor et al., 2017). The purpose of looking at these interventions through the lens of the PYD framework was to look at the similarities in PYD and SEL and how both programs goals align with positive outcomes for students.

The study identified similarities between the PYD interventions and the SEL practices that also emphasized practices and policies that encouraged the development of skills—as well as attitudes that enhanced personal development, social relationships, ethical behavior, and effective, productive work.

A major proponent of the studies analyzed was as specific search criteria themes were identified, the themes had to populate a criterion focused on school-based universal SEL programs for grades K–12 students that collected follow-up data from intervention and control groups or more postintervention. The programs that were implemented had to focus on at least one of the five SEL competency domains identified, according to the CASEL, which are: self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making, and self-management.

The other meta-analysis study reviewed identified studies that were published or unpublished by an identified timeframe, emphasized the development of one or more SEL skills, targeted students between the ages of 5 and 18 without any identified adjustment or learning problem, included a control group, and reported sufficient information so that effect sizes (ES) could be calculated at post—and if follow-up data were collected—at least 6 months following the end of the intervention. This study's goal involved examining the effects of school-based SEL programming on children's behaviors and academic performance, and discussing the implications of these findings for educational policies and practices.

Ethical Considerations

Given the nature of this research, there will be a few obvious risks to participants. The benefits of this study will highlight the positive effects that SEL programs have on students and schools when there is program adherence and implementation fidelity. In addition, this study will provide substantial data highlighting factors that expose hindrances to program success and effectiveness.

Data Analysis Techniques

Meta-analysis studies reviewed for the purpose of this research identified several outcomes to assist with determining the effectiveness of the identified SEL programs. The program evaluation sought to better understand best practices, as it relates to SEL, juxtaposed with the efforts of CPS, which resulted in the ability to utilize Wagner et al's (2006) diagnostic framework to assess the district's effectiveness and ability to provide strategies and actions and to identify political implications. The study by Taylor et al.

(2017) sorted the outcomes into seven distinct categories assessing positive social and emotional assets and positive and negative indicators of well-being for students:

1. Social and emotional learning skills

2. Attitudes

3. Positive social behavior

4. Academic performance

5. Conduct problems

6. Emotional distress

7. Drug use (p. 1163)

The study conducted by Durlak et al. (2011) identified six different student outcomes:

1. Social and emotional skills.

2. Attitudes toward self and others.

3. Positive social behaviors.

4. Conduct problems.

5. Emotional distress.

6. Academic performance. (p. 10)

In both instances, the data collected from the postassessments was used to determine if the implemented SEL programs either negatively or positively impacted the outcomes for the students involved.

Conclusion

As a school principal who has also implemented SEL programs in my school over the past few years, I also collected data through my observations. I have been able to see the favorable outcomes and those that have a direct impact on the academic and social

emotional success of students. Social and emotional learning programs can have a

positive impact on the school community, students, families, and every stakeholder. It is

the responsibility of educators to ensure there is a focus to place value on ensuring that

stakeholders are provided every opportunity to be engaged in these types of programs,

provide adequate resources, and any support that may be needed. This study will help

highlight the importance of these types of programs and what is needed to promote

effective outcomes.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This section addresses the results, judgments, and recommendations based on the analysis of publically available data as outlined in Section Three's methodology. In each selected study, the research goal was to determine if the SEL interventions implemented through using various identified programs over the course of a set period of time had a significant impact on students of all ages and from various backgrounds aligned to various predetermined outcomes. The quantitative studies that were reviewed observed the follow-up effects of school-based universal SEL interventions according to the follow-up assessments that were administered at least 6 months or more postintervention. The research data used had to meet a very specific criterion in order to be included in the meta-analysis. The quantitative studies had to describe a school based universal SEL program for grades K–12 that collected follow-up data from intervention and control groups. As a result of this data, there were various organizational changes that were identified to ensure that program implementation was done effectively and that it impacted students positively. The data analyzed from CPS was specific to the school that I lead as a school principal. This data provided insight into the change in behavioral data for the school community at large and the academic outcomes of the students.

To gain a better understanding of the changes that needed to be adopted in the implementation of SEL programs, the 4 C's framework, which outlines a systematic approach at looking at change, was applied. The framework presents a platform for school leaders to sift through that focuses on context, culture, conditions, and

competencies, as described in *Change Leadership: A Practical Guide to Transforming Our Schools* (Wagner et al., 2006). Wagner et al's framework was used to analyze the effectiveness of the implementation of SEL programs through the *As Is* state to the *To Be* framework.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning has been a trailblazer in research and in unpacking the understanding of SEL for districts across the nation for quite some time. There are over two decades of research promoting a direct connection to the implementation of SEL, and positive student behavioral and academic outcomes. Chicago public schools is one of the school districts the CASEL has worked in partnership with for over 20 years in implementing SEL within its schools. Prior to beginning the partnership with the CASEL, CPS was a school district with extremely high suspension rates of its black and brown students. In my opinion and based on my limited experience, school cultures and climates were chaotic in nature and stakeholders did not have an understanding of the importance of SEL and the impact it could have on students. Chicago public schools began working with CASEL to make some of the necessary changes to its schools for students and all other stakeholders. The 4 C's will be applied specifically to CPS (see Appendix C).

Context

Context, as defined by Wagner et al. (2006) are, "skill demands" all students must meet to succeed as providers, learners, and citizens, and the particular aspirations, needs, and concerns of the families and community the school district serves (p. 104). Looking at SEL through the lens of the work that has been done in the CPS been a major adjustment to the fabric of this large, urban school district. The OSEL is responsible for

the implementation and oversight of SEL across the district in all of its schools. The

OSEL department has a vision: To ensure that every child within the district is able to

demonstrate successful behaviors (such as self-management, reflection, persistence, and

study skills) in order to help him or her to become a successful student with college

(specifically career ready skills and knowledge). Social emotional skills are crucial to the

success of the student and the school.

Each school within the district is expected to implement a SEL program such as

Second Step. Second Step is designed with specific learning standards, follows a specific

scope and sequence, and is implemented on a weekly basis over the course of 28 weeks.

To ensure each school implements one of the identified SEL programs, CPS has placed

the responsibility of the implementation on the classroom teacher or counselor. At the

onset of the implementation, schools are provided a one-day professional development by

a district representative. The professional development covers a detailed program

overview and the expectations for implementation. Once professional development is

implemented, teachers are expected to provide the instruction to the students they teach.

The district has a social emotional lead who visits schools periodically to provide

feedback on various aspects of SEL.

Culture

"Culture is defined as the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and

behaviors related to students and learning, teachers and teaching, instructional leadership,

and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school" (Wagner et al., 2006, p.

102). School culture is deeply affected by the beliefs of every adult and student in the

building. In my opinion, some beliefs are silent and others are very boisterous, and they

cannot be ignored. Also, implementing SEL is viewed as just *another* initiative that

schools are expected to do with no consistent follow up or follow through. There is no

real, clear direction or alignment. In addition, there is a disconnect between what the

district expects and what is rolled out in the schools. Every school has complete

autonomy on what they do, when they do it, and to what extent. This leaves schools

feeling unsupported and uncertain about how well they are doing. School leaders are

expected to support teachers' developmental levels and their understanding; and there is

no real outside support provided beyond the initial professional development. If schools

want additional assistance, they are responsible for identifying such support and paying

for it.

In many schools across the district, there are certain data sets (such as the

behavior data), that often tells the story of the type of culture and climate that is in

operation. In most cases, by reviewing the suspension data, attendance data, and

academic data, they can provide a unique picture of what is happening in each school.

The district encourages schools to have a low behavior metric dashboard, but limits the

appropriate tools and resources that assist schools in teaching students how to positively

interact within a school setting. In some cases, I have experienced teachers that simply

focus on teaching without addressing the social skills impacting learning. Teachers

struggle with adequately providing social skills to students when the demand for

academics is far greater. Even more alarming, teachers express not feeling capable of

teaching these social skills due to being inadequately prepared during their teacher

preparation programs to teach SEL. According to a national teacher survey, 73 percent of

the teachers surveyed indicated that a lack of training and knowledge on how to teach

social and emotional skills as at least somewhat of a challenge to implementing SEL in their classrooms (Bridgeland et al., 2013, p. 33).

Conditions

Effectively implementing SEL in schools is often impacted by various barriers and hindrances—such as strained school schedules and academic instructional requirements. The daily schedules for teachers can be inundated with many variables that can include parent conferences, grading papers, managing students, managing student behaviors, providing instruction, and a host of other tasks part of a regular school day. A typical school day for CPS teachers is 6.25 hours. There is no specifically-identified time for SEL; however, there is an expectation that it be a part of the daily schedule. Teachers are charged with being able to provide academic instruction in core subject areas such as Reading, Math, Science, Social Science, and Writing. In addition to this academic content, teachers are expected to implement a SEL program such as Second Step.

At the onset of implementation, every stakeholder within the building is provided with a day of professional development of the program that the school chooses to implement. This professional development consists mostly of a general overview of the program and provides a basic understanding of the SEL purpose. At its conclusion, teachers are expected to fully implement the program with fidelity and with little to no additional support. In some schools, the school counselor is solely responsible to provide SEL instruction to the students. The other staff members within the building (social worker, music teacher, or other ancillary staff members) are not required to implement the program. The SEL program requires that it be implemented weekly for a minimum of 30 minutes, according to the scope and sequence provided. Even though the program is

scripted and provides lesson plans for teachers at each grade level, it does not take into account the other mandatory-scheduled content areas. This poses a great challenge for teachers and staff members and directly impacts the program's effectiveness.

Competencies

The skill level of teachers in every school varies greatly. Some teachers have the necessary skill set to address a student's social needs while others do not. Teachers have expressed they do not necessarily feel adequately prepared to teach the SEL skills. The academic skill set and SEC of teachers are often impacted based on the college or university they may have attended and the length of time they have been in the education field. The district does not necessarily focus on the development of SEL competencies of the adults nor does the program provide support for teachers. Teachers have the daunting task of managing all of the district mandates and requirements of the job, which can be very stressful and taxing. Often times, the lack of adequate classroom management skills and positive relationships hinders a teacher's ability to effectively provide instruction to the students. There is a strong need to develop the capacity of every adult who interacts with students. Without the proper support, staff members are not equipped to teach SEL skills or support students in developing these skills. Postsecondary institutions do not focus on developing these skills in teachers. Simply providing teachers with a one-day professional development greatly impacts the success of the outcomes. According to Wagner et al. (2006), competencies are most effectively built when professional development is focused, job-embedded, continuous, constructed, and collaborative.

Findings

The analysis of each study has outlined several themes that are consistently extracted and discussed in each case study. Students who participate in or are exposed to SEL programs learn key skills that help assist them in being successful and positive contributors to their school communities. Additionally, there has been a direct correlation to the academic gains of students who become more socially adept. Many factors identified as potential roadblocks or hindrances did not directly or indirectly limit students from being able to gain the skills or experience intended by a SEL program.

The data analysis will be shared through various graph depictions provided within each study, followed by my understanding of the implications to the work and my perspective and personal reflection based on the public data and my professional experiences as an educator who has been deeply entrenched in this work. Additionally, the discussion will take a deep look into the various outcomes extracted from the meta-analysis and the other reviewed research.

Meta-Analysis 2011

The participants within this meta-analysis consisted of 213 studies that involved 270,034 students. The purpose of this study involved examining the effects of school-based SEL programming on children's behaviors and academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011). The researchers identified several hypotheses regarding the meta-analysis:

1. The school-based SEL programs would yield significant positive mean effects across a variety of skill, attitudinal, behavioral, and academic outcomes.

2. Programs conducted by classroom teachers and other staff would produce significant outcomes.

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3. Interventions that combined components within and outside of the daily classroom routines would yield stronger effects than those that were only classroom based.

4. Staff using all four SAFE* practices would be more successful than those who did not.

Relevant studies were identified using several key words or terms within the search. Also, the research had to produce studies from 1970–2007. Additionally, the search consisted of websites promoting youth development and SEL. Each study reviewed specific SEL skills, target students between the ages of 5–18, and review potential follow-up data that was collected at least 6 months following the end of the intervention. This is represented in Figure 1.

* SAFE program features are utilized as best practices for SEL interventions. Sequenced (coordinated progression of activities or practices to build competencies), Active (participatory elements that involve students in active learning of SEL competencies), Focused (dedicated time or specific program element that was focused SEL), Explicit (specific SEL competencies; Durlak et al., 2011, p. 410).

Figure 1. 2011 Student Participants Within the Research
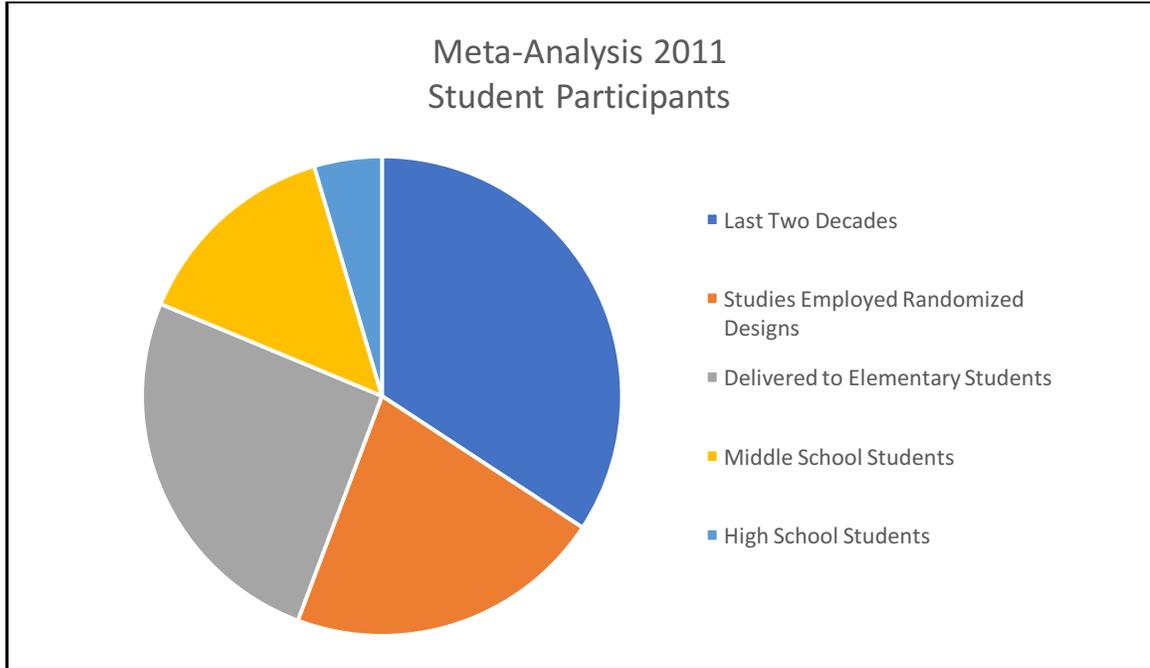
Figure 2 represents other characteristics required for each study that could be included in the meta-analysis.

Figure 2. Characteristics of Studies
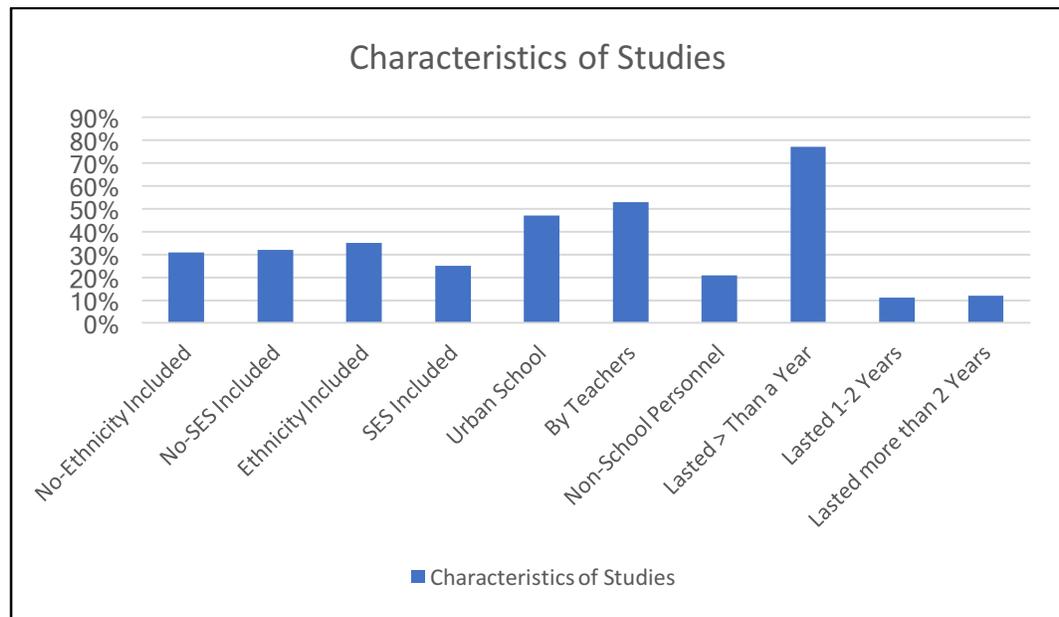
It is important to note that while this particular meta-analysis contains multiple studies, the overall goal involved reviewing research containing data on specific outcomes aligned and related to the implementation of SEL programs. Many of the studies are dated; however, six outcomes were identified to consistently align the focus of the research and the effectiveness of the interventions reviewed. Those six outcomes were: *Social and Emotional Skills, Attitudes, Positive Social Behavior, Conduct Problems, Emotional Distress, and Academic Performance.* Each outcome focused on a different aspect of SEL interventions the students received and their responses to such interventions over time.

Social and emotional skills focused on the evaluation of cognitive, affective, and social skills related to such areas as identifying emotions from social cues, goal setting, and perspective taking. Outcomes from this particular category reflect skill or performance assessed in test situations or structured tasks (such as interviews, role plays, or questionnaires). *Attitudes* combined positive attitudes about the self, school, and social topics; and outcomes were based on student self-reports. *Positive social behavior* focused on outcomes such as getting along with others. This was assessed through observations of daily behaviors. *Conduct problems* measured different types of behavior problems, such as disruptive class behavior noncompliance and aggression. Most of the data collected from this area came from student self-reports. *Emotional distress* focused on internalized mental health issues. Data was collected from student reports, teachers, or parents. *Academic performance* focused on the success of students in reading and math achievement test scores.

Over time, mastering SEL competencies result in a developmental progression that leads to a shift from being predominantly controlled by external factors to acting increasingly in accord with internalized beliefs and values, caring and concern for others, making good decisions, and taking responsibility for one's choices and behaviors (Taylor et al., 2017). It was noted if the authors of the research monitored the process of implementation. Table 2's information is directly extracted from the meta-analysis and contains the data collected postintervention. The table outlines how each identified outcome may have been impacted if the intervention was implemented by a classroom teacher, nonschool personnel, or a multicomponent program.

Table 2

Means Effects for Identified Outcomes

Mean Effects and .05 Confidence Intervals at Post for Total Sample and Each Intervention Format							
		Outcomes					
		SEL skills	Attitudes	Positive social behavior	Conduct problems	Emotional distress	Academic performance
Group							
Total	ES	0.57*	0.23*	0.24*	0.22*	0.24*	0.27*
sample	CI	0.48 to 0.67	0.16 to 0.30	0.16 to 0.32	0.16 to 0.29	0.14 to 0.35	0.15 to 0.39
	N	68	106	86	112	49	35
Class by	ES	0.62*	0.23*	0.26*	0.20*	0.25*	0.34*
Teacher	CI	0.41 to 0.82	0.17 to 0.29	0.15 to 0.38	0.12 to 0.29	0.08 to 0.43	0.16 to 0.52
	N	40	59	59	53	20	10
Class by	ES	0.87*	0.14*	0.23	0.17*	0.21	0.12
Nonschool	CI	0.58 to 1.16	0.02 to 0.25	−0.04 to 0.50	0.02 to 0.33	−0.01 to 0.43	−0.19 to 0.43
Personnel	N	21	18	11	16	14	3
Multicomponent	ES	0.12	0.23*	0.19	0.26*	0.27*	0.26*
	CI	−0.35 to 0.60	0.15 to 0.31	−0.02 to 0.39	0.17 to 0.34	0.07 to 0.47	0.16 to 0.36
	N	7	26	16	43	15	22

*$p \leq .05$.

All effect sizes (ES) were calculated, such that positive values indicated a favorable result for program students over controls (Durlak et al., 2011).

The research data indicated that following intervention, students demonstrated enhanced SEL skills, attitudes, and positive social behavior—as well as fewer conduct

problems and lower levels of emotional distress (Durlak et al., 2011). Additionally, academic performance was significantly improved. Classrooms where teachers were implementing the interventions were effective in all six identified outcome categories. In small cases where *other* school staff implemented the program, they were only effective in four outcome categories. Students who received interventions from nonschool personnel were effective in only three outcome categories. In general, student academics were impacted positively when the interventions were provided by school personnel.

The studies considered other possible variables that could support the hypothesis identified for the studies. The results suggest that SEL programs are successful at all levels—elementary, middle, and high school—as well as in urban, suburban, and rural schools (Durlak et al., 2011).

Meta-Analysis 2017

The participants within this meta-analysis consisted of 82 school-based, universal SEL interventions involving 97,406 students, represented in Figure 3. The main purpose of this study involved filling the gap in research by conducting a meta-analysis of the follow-up effects of school-based universal interventions (Taylor et al., 2017).

Figure 3. 2017 Meta-Analysis—Student Participants
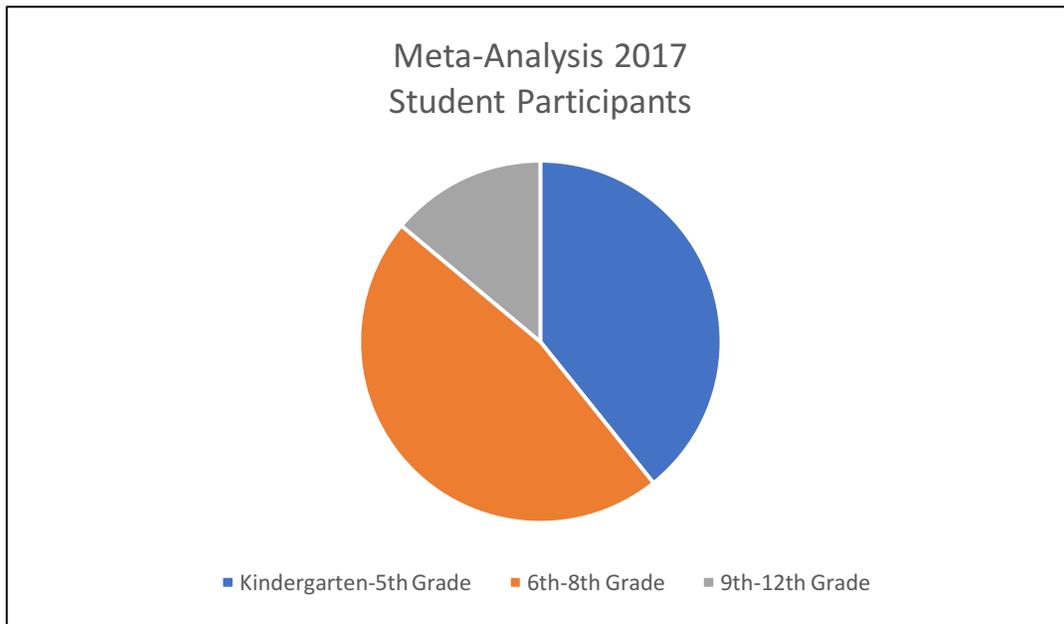
The overall goal of this particular meta-analysis was in determining the effectiveness of interventions at least 6 months after the intervention had concluded. Additionally, the goal of the current review was to determine whether SEL interventions were effective in promoting positive developmental trajectories across diverse and global populations. There were several identified outcomes, but they were limited to measures that reported changes in students (Taylor et al., 2017). The research identified interventions that had the following outcome categories assessing positive social and emotional assets: *Social and Emotional Learning Skills, Attitudes, Positive Social Behavior, Academic Performance, Conduct Problems, Emotional Distress, and Drug Use.* The researchers identified several hypotheses regarding the meta-analysis:

1. Significant effects for outcomes assessed at follow-up periods of 6 months or longer would significantly favor SEL program participants over control groups.

2. Social and emotional learning interventions would be an effective approach with diverse racial and socioeconomic populations.

3. There would be benefits of enhancing social and emotional skills and positive attitudes at postintervention.

The research reports analyzed had to describe a school-based universal SEL program for grades K–12 students that collected follow-up data at least 6 months postintervention. Table 3's information is directly extracted from the meta-analysis and contains the data collected postintervention. It outlines how each identified outcome may have impacted students postintervention with follow up. The outcomes were sorted into seven categories and were measured in hypothetical situations or using structured tasks or questionnaires (Taylor et al., 2017).

Table 3

Means Effects for Identified Outcomes

Mean Effect, Confidence Intervals, Follow-Up Periods, and Improvement Indices for Total Sample

	Follow-up ES by outcome category						
	Social and emotional assets		Positive and negative indicators of well-being				
	SEL skills	Attitudes	Positive social behavior	Academic performance	Conduct problems	Emotional distress	Drug use
ES	.23[a]	.13[a]	.13[a]	.33[a]	.14[a]	.16[a]	.16[a]
95% CI	.15, .31	.05, .21	.05, .21	.17, .49	.07, .21	.08, .23	.09, .24
N	29	26	28	8	34	35	28
Mean follow-up (weeks)	56	103	89	195	113	88	139
Improvement index, %	9.09	5.17	5.17	12.93	5.56	5.64	5.64

Note. ES = effect size; SEL = social and emotional learning. [a]Mean effect is significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

Social and emotional skills focused on students' abilities to identify emotions, perspective taking, self-control, conflict resolution, and more. *Attitudes* on assessing student attitudes about the self, others, and school. These reports came from student self-reports. *Positive social behavior* identified how students behaved in natural settings.

Academic performance used data from achievement test scores or student grades. *Conduct problems* included reports of problem behaviors, which could be self-reported or observed by others. *Emotional distress* focused on symptoms such as depression and anxiety. *Drug use* included measures focused on use or misuse of intoxicating substances including legal and illegal drugs.

All ESs were calculated, such that positive values indicated a favorable result for program students over controls (Taylor et al., 2017). Some of the key findings from the meta-analysis entailed significant positive effects for each of the seven outcomes found at follow up. Students who participated in SEL programming showed benefits more than the control groups at each follow-up period. Follow-up periods varied from 56 to 195 weeks, depending on the identified categories.

Interpretation

Research data that was reviewed and analyzed outlined a few themes. First, the research data strongly supports the notion of the importance of the implementation of SEL programs for students. Students who participate in these types of interventions have shown positive outcomes academically and socially.

Implementation of Social and Emotional Learning Programs

The data that was reviewed and analyzed from the research outlined a few themes. First, the research data strongly supports the notion of the importance of the implementation of SEL programs for students. Students who participate in these types of interventions have shown positive outcomes academically and socially. In the 2011 meta-analysis, students who participated in the social and emotional interventions showed significant benefits in the aforementioned six outcomes that were identified throughout

the research. According to Durlak et al. (2011), the results indicate that students participating in the interventions demonstrated enhanced SEL skills, attitudes, and positive social behavior following intervention. Additionally, demonstrated fewer conduct problems and had lower levels of emotional distress. These results support the original hypothesis identifying that SEL programs would yield a significant mean effects across skill, attitudinal, behavioral, and academic domains.

Positive Impact of Social and Emotional Programs

Another major theme captured was that SEL programs have a positive impact on students when there is consistent implementation from school personnel. Within this particular meta-analysis, student academics were impacted greatly when school personnel implemented the intervention. Overall, SEL programs positively impacted students in the SEL competencies and attitudes about self, others, and school. The programs implemented also increased prosocial behaviors, reduced conduct problems, and improved academic performance on achievement tests and grades (Durlak et al., 2011). This research also supports the notion that SEL programs can be implemented at any grade level, prekindergarten through high school, by classroom teachers, and other school staff—as long as consistent implementation is a part of the school routine.

Additional themes emerged from the 2017 meta-analysis. Each outcome that was measured was identifiable in each of the 82 school-based interventions analyzed in the research. One major theme that emerged was that school-based students overall well-being was impacted positively by the SEL interventions postinterventions. The well-being of students measured their positive attitudes, prosocial behaviors, and academic performance. The data highlighted that the interventions were positive for students across

various racial groups and socioeconomic statuses. The outcomes of each intervention were collected for a number of weeks to determine if the intervention was successful postimplementation.

The outcomes of each meta-analysis are crucial to the overall research inquiry of determining if implementing SEL programs, in fact, positively impact the social and academic skills of students. It was interesting to note that the socioeconomic status of the students did not determine the success or failure of the program implementation. In general, students come to school lacking these social skills and are in need of support from the adults in which they interact. Extensive developmental research indicates that effective mastery of SECs is associated with greater well-being and better school performance, whereas the failure to achieve competence in these areas can lead to a variety of personal, social, and academic difficulties (Durlak et al., 2011).

Professional Reflection

In my professional experience as a school principal, I have had the privilege of working in a school from the onset of the implementation of SEL programs. At the beginning of the 2016–2017 school year, I was asked to become the interim principal of an underperforming school with a long history of low academic data and a highly toxic culture and climate. Within my first week, I was bombarded with unfavorable stories of the school, students, parents, and so much more.

I was extremely saddened by the academic data I reviewed, but even more overwhelmed by the belief systems ingrained in the fabric of the school. This school was considered one of the lowest-performing schools in the district academically and it had extremely high student behavior data that included significant amounts of out-of-school

suspensions. The school report card indicated the school was in need of *intensive* support. According to the School Quality Rating Policy, or the SQRP, within CPS, a school in need of intensive support means the school needs a high level of support, which can come from the CEO such as a CPS Designee will work with the school to develop and implement a Probation Plan, which may require amendments to the school's CIWP and/or budget. For schools on Probation, Board approval of the CIWP is required. LSCs must have an opportunity to review and provide input into the plan, but LSC approval of the CIWP and budget is not required (Chicago Public Schools, 2019, p. 4, para. 1)

A school can also be identified as needing *provisional* support, which means the CEO can take actions such as, "Draft a new school improvement plan; require additional training for the LSC; direct the implementation of the CIWP; and/or mediate disputes or other obstacles to reform or improvement at the school" (Chicago Public Schools, 2019, p. 4, para. 2). In addition to the interventions listed the Board of Education may—in extreme cases—take actions such as a turnaround or principal removal. These actions will not happen in all intensive support schools and require a public hearing.

Additionally, student attainment at this school was far below average, which means Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) test scores in Spring 2015 were much lower than the national average score. Only 1 percent of the student population was able to demonstrate attainment in Math and only 2 percent for Reading. Students performing below grade level norms at the school appeared to be a major challenge. Northwest Evaluation Association further elaborated the following:

> When educators and parents speak of improvement, progress, or growth in learning, normative performance is probably not the first thing that comes to

mind. It is always important to hear about what, and how much more of the

curricular content, a student has learned; but knowing how much a student has

learned compared with the attainment of the student's peers is probably a close

second. For meeting this purpose, norms are critical. Norms indicate the levels of

achievement and growth that are attainable for identifiable populations of

students or schools. (Thum & Hauser, 2015, p. 1)

Discussing student growth with the stakeholders in the school community provided

insight into their limited understanding and proved to begin to shape my thinking about

the action steps that would be necessary to make improvement.

This school was plagued with an extremely toxic culture and climate. According

to the data shared on the school's quality rating report during the 2015–2016 school year,

the school was considered *Not Yet Organized for Improvement*, which means there were

several weaknesses with the school's culture and climate—suggesting the school was not

set up for success. These results were based on student and teacher responses to the *My*

Voice, My School 5Essentials survey. This survey is administered every year to assess the

well-being of the school. The behavioral data for the school was extremely dismal with

8.9 percent suspensions and 14.3 percent for the previous year.

One of the professional developments identified for the school regarded the SEL

program, Second Step, which I was very familiar with as my previous school had

implemented it. Based on the initial conversations and interactions with the stakeholders,

I immediately assumed it would be a huge challenge to establish buy-in to implementing

a program to assist students with learning new social skills. Their personal articulations

of experiences of the school was heartbreaking. It was clear to me there was no real

structure within the school. The belief systems and expectations of all stakeholders were very low. There were so many interesting dynamics that needed to be considered at the onset of the implementation plan.

The school year began with schoolwide professional development on Second Step—as mentioned, a SEL program offered by district personnel. This was the program selected by the previous administration. We received the one-day training provided by the school district and established our schoolwide implementation plan, which consisted of teachers implementing SEL weekly in their classroom and the school counselor providing SEL instruction to the students. In all honesty, our initial implementation plan was extremely challenging due to the need to establish a strong culture and climate with consistent routines and procedures, high expectations, and the need to establish a cohesive team, which took precedent. The implementation was not stopped, but it was definitely inconsistently implemented across the entire school based on various roadblocks, hindrances, and lack of teacher buy-in.

The major theme for the initial year of implementation was establishing a culture and climate with high expectations for all, using the SEL competencies outlined in Second Step. With limited staff support and buy-in, we forged forward with implementation. From previous experiences, I knew that Second Step could have a positive impact in the school, but it would take time, consistency, and buy-in. Often, staff members would say that this would not work for *these* kids; or they would say they just did not have time. By the conclusion of the first school year, there was much improvement in all of the school data metrics. Student growth was far above average, which means the change in NWEA test scores between Spring 2016 and Spring 2017 was

much greater at this school than at other schools (nationally) with the same pretest score. Ninety-nine percent of the students met or exceeded their academic growth targets for the 2016–2017 school year in reading and math; and grade level attainment moved to 31 percent for both reading and math. The school culture and climate improved tremendously. The school went from *Not Yet Organized for Improvement* to *Organized for Improvement*, which means the school has a strong culture and climate with only a few areas for improvement. Attendance increased from 91.7 percent to 93.5 percent. The percent of students who received one or more out-of-school suspensions went decreased from 8.9 percent to 5.4 percent thus represented a significant decrease for the school community.

Over the past 4 years, our SEL implementation strengthened the school community at large and there continues to be positive changes to the school and the students. For example, during the 2017–2018 school year, suspensions dropped from 5.4 percent to only 1 percent. We continue to see a huge adjustment in how students interacted with one another, how they addressed adults, the types of relationships they maintained, and their behavioral challenges.

Each year, the implementation plan was adjusted to ensure it aligned to overall schoolwide goals. We were able to move from compliance to this being how we operated as a school community. Additionally, during the 2018–2019 school year, we applied for the supportive school certification. The supportive school certification process encourages meaningful improvement toward establishing strong and supportive school climates and universal SEL practices aligned with district priorities. The process was rigorous and challenging; however, we received the highest rating of *exemplary* status.

One of the strongest contributors to our success was that of the instructional leader of the school; I believed in SEL and knew its impact could be beneficial to all stakeholders if implemented with fidelity.

The research that was reviewed and my professional reflection as an instructional leader support the importance of implementing SEL programs.

Judgments

The study's primary research questions, research, and data provided additional understanding and answers to several questions. The primary research question guiding this study was:

1. How does the implementation of social and emotional learning programs improve the social and academic outcomes of students?

Secondary questions included:

2. What additional supports are provided to aid schools in the implementation of social and emotional learning programs?

3. How are schools that need additional support and guidance identified and supported?

4. What external and internal barriers are present that prevent schools from a successful implementation?

5. How does the current policy for social and emotional learning need to be modified to support the incorporation of ongoing professional learning for effective implementation?

The data reviewed directly answers the primary research question by clearly supporting the need for the implementation of SEL programs that provide students with SEL

competencies that can support their educational journey in a positive and predictable manner. Students who obtain these competencies are able to demonstrate these skills even after the intervention has ended. It is clear throughout the data that the benefit of such programming impacts the social and academic skills of the students.

In reviewing the fourth research question, there are definitely external and internal barriers that can prevent an effective implementation. In my professional experience, stakeholder buy-in is a major barrier that can impact program success. There are many possible indicators that support a lack of buy in. Additionally, a lack of ongoing professional development, coaching, and funding hinders the successful implementation of SEL programs. When people are not open-minded, it hinders the overall process and makes it challenging.

Recommendations

The implementation of any program comes with unique challenges, and each school setting has its own context and culture. There are vast ways that programs are unpacked, which requires flexibility. In thinking about the context and culture of my school and how we implemented programming, several key indicators of success were overlooked for a variety of reasons. At the onset of implementation at the school level, the focus was on becoming familiar with an approved program that focused on SEL with limited buy-in. While this is crucial to the success of implementing a program, this is not enough. The school district identified specific programs that could be selected for implementation. Stakeholders received professional development a few days before students returned to school and were expected to be *experts* on the content. The provided professional development was limited at building a basic knowledge about the program.

There was little to no consideration given to the experience and competency levels of the adults who were primarily responsible for its implementation. The professional development only focused on the program.

In efforts of strengthening the implementation of programming, I would begin with focusing on the adults responsible for program implementation. I have come to realize that every adult in a school comes with diverse backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, and educational levels. To promote students' SEC, it's important for schools to simultaneously foster a supportive staff environment that cultivates the SEC and capacity of the adults in the building (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2019). The adults cannot be left out of the implementation process and they must know their own SEL competency level. Successful SEL implementation depends on how well staff work together to facilitate SEL instruction, foster a positive school community, and model SEC. This calls on schools to focus on adults' professional growth as educators as well as their own SEL (Jones et al., 2018).

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning has created a guide that school districts can use to implement SEL effectively and consists of four focus areas:

Focus Area 1: Build Awareness, Commitment, and Ownership

Focus Area 2: Strengthen Adult SEL

Focus Area 3: Promote SEL for Students

Focus Area 4: Practice Continuous Improvement

Each area focuses on a different stage of implementation of SEL. As a district, CPS has done well in the development of Focus Area 1 (build awareness, commitment, and

ownership). However, there is a great disparity in Focus Area 2 (strengthen adult SEL).

To cultivate the SEL needs of the adults, several changes are necessary—changes that

include ongoing professional development to help develop the SEL competencies they

are expected to teach students, direct coaching support for schools and teachers, and

ample resources that support schools fully in all aspects of the implementation. In

addition to training and support dedicated to developing students' social and emotional

skills, teachers need support in building their own skills in these areas. According to

Jones and Kahn (2017), it is difficult for adults to help students build these skills if they

themselves do not possess them. Research indicates that teachers with stronger social and

emotional skills have more positive relationships with students, engage in more effective

classroom management, and implement their students social and emotional programming

more effectively. According to Jennings and Greenberg (2009), socially and emotionally

competent teachers set the tone of the classroom by doing the following:

- Developing supportive and encouraging relationships with their students.

- Designing lessons that build on student strengths and abilities.

- Establishing and implementing behavioral guidelines in ways that promote intrinsic motivation.

- Coaching students through conflict situations.

- Encouraging cooperation among students.

- Acting as a role model for respectful and appropriate communication.

- Exhibiting prosocial behavior. (p. 492)

As a school leader, it is important to consider the SEL of every adult that students will come in contact with. A student's experience in school is truly predicated on how well the adults set the boundaries and expectations for learning and success.

CHAPTER FIVE: TO-BE FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Social emotional learning competencies are a critical component to the foundational success of students and schools as a whole. Teachers must be able to create such a foundation for students to be successful in all aspects of their school experience. To create this foundation, school leaders, schools, and districts must clearly understand the competencies, conditions, culture, and context currently operating. This will support districts in creating a vision of what is To-Be, as it relates to effectively implementing SEL programs. As mentioned in the previous section, the results of the program evaluation, along with Wagner et al's (2006) 4 C's diagnostic framework, was used to assess the districts' effectiveness, as it relates to the effectiveness of the implementation of SEL programs. Social and emotional competence (SEC) among staff improves teaching and leadership by strengthening relationships, creating safer learning environments, reducing staff burnout, and building trust among colleagues (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017). For teachers to be able to create a strong foundation and support students with developing their own SEL competencies, there must also be a strong foundation where teachers are able to learn about SEL, acknowledge their own SEL competency level, identify how it impacts their ability to support students in their SEL journey, and determine possible SEL competencies where they need additional support—which could ultimately hinder the effectiveness of implementation.

When teachers and principals are aware of their own emotions and how these emotions impact the classroom and school environment, they are more likely to support students in understanding their own emotions. "Research has shown that the success of evidence-based SEL programs depends on high-quality implementation or implementing the program as intended by its developers" (Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017, p. 9). Teachers cannot effectively implement a program that focuses on teaching and modeling skills for students that they themselves might not possess. Domitrovich, Weissberg, and Gullotta (2015) contend that professional development is an effective practice that must be done to support an effective implementation; they state, "professional development is critical for success in evidence-based programs because it helps to ensure high-quality implementation (p. 381).

Domitrovich et al. (2015) stated, "Research has demonstrated that professional development (including formal training) is key to program success. When programs provide professional development, including initial training and ongoing support and coaching, quality implementation is enhanced and student outcomes are improved" (p. 381).

Additionally, adult learning is quite different than that of a child. To build the capacity of adults in schools, it must be considered how adults best learn. Malcolm Knowles used the term *andragogy*, which he defined as, the art and science of helping adults learn (Merriam, 2001).

According to Merriam (2001), Malcolm Knowles identified five assumptions describing the adult learner:

1. Someone who has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning.

2. Someone who has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that are a rich resource for learning.

3. Someone who has learning needs closely related to changing social roles.

4. Is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge.

5. Is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors. (p. 5)

Providing professional development to adults requires considerations beyond the content being taught. There must be a consideration for creating an environment where teachers are willing to learn and be vulnerable. According to Beavers (2009):

> Meaningful professional development must involve educators as whole persons—their values, beliefs, and assumptions about teaching. Creating an environment where educators are comfortable with active involvement and critical reflection is often complex and requires teachers to be willing to take risks. (p. 28)

Teachers are asked to know their students when considering how to best teach the content; however, teachers must know the learners in order to be able to provide the type of professional development that will have long-lasting impact. It is my belief that the school leader is responsible for developing every adult in their building. Providing this level of support must be intentional.

Envisioning the Success—TO-BE

Drawing from my program evaluation and assessment of the current state of the implementation of SEL programs within school districts through the lens of Wagner et

al's (2006) 4 C's (context, conditions, competencies, culture), we can begin to establish

and create a vision of the necessary changes, or the To-Be (see Appendix D), to ensure

that the effectiveness of the program implementation is not hindered in any capacity. To

this end, there are several key elements of program implementation that must be deeply

considered. For a school improvement initiative to succeed, education leaders must do

more than adopt a new program and train staff (LaTurner & Lewis, 2013).

Competencies and Conditions

To enhance the competencies of those engaged in the implementation process of

the SEL programming, there needs to be an intentional focus on developing a robust

professional development plan that includes elements of effective professional

development that is supported by research and considers how adults learn. According to

Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner (2017), the elements of effective professional

development:

1. Is content focused.

2. Incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory.

3. Supports collaboration—typically in job-embedded contexts.

4. Uses models and modeling of effective practice.

5. Provides coaching and expert support.

6. Offers opportunities for feedback and reflection.

7. Is of sustained duration.

Engaging adults in the implementation process begins with providing training through

high-quality, professional development to ensure they have the essential competencies

and an initial understanding of the content. This will be an important factor in helping

staff members understand the purpose of teaching SEL. This professional development focus will provide specific strategies associated with the program that supports teachers and others who will be responsible for the implementation within their classroom context and delivery of the program. Ongoing professional development will consist of utilizing professional development strategies that promote active learning. It is important for teachers to learn about their own SEL competencies to ensure they are able to support students in learning their competency skill levels. This has to be structured with consideration of how adults learn and how to unpack the learning in a meaningful manner that will ultimately improve student outcomes. According to Wagner et al. (2016),

> We firmly believe that creating a system focused on the ongoing improvement of instruction must be the central aim of any education improvement effort. It is our 'theory of change' that students' achievement will not improve unless and until we create schools and districts where all educators are learning how to significantly improve their skills as teacher and as instructional leaders. (p. 23)

Ongoing professional development practices will provide teachers and staff members with access to resources that encourage learning and growth at any stage of the SEL implementation plan. To assess which professional development is needed, a survey will be utilized to provide specific data. The data collected from the survey will be analyzed at the school and district levels. It will be used to develop professional development plans, create calendars, and determine resource needs. A variety of differentiated professional development resources will be available. This encourages staff members to work on competencies or skills specific to their needs. This could include a SEL coach, online courses, videos, and classroom embedded modeling to ensure that the needs of those

implementing programs are met and any potential barriers minimized. For example, a SEL coach can work alongside staff members to provide ongoing feedback and support, if needed. More importantly, the coach can model for the staff members the specific SEL skills. By providing these resources for staff members, those involved may feel more supported, confident, and equipped to provide SEL instruction.

Culture and Context

As educators develop through professional development and become more aware of their own SEC levels, they will be able to create an environment that has a strong SEL culture. Providing opportunities and allocated time for members to collaborate, dialogue, and reflect on the topics that are being introduced will allow staff members to express their understanding of the content and receive support if needed. This is crucial for staff members, as this provides another level of needed support and will enhance the implementation process. The professional development plan will be outlined and detailed with specific dates, timelines, and topics. The schedule will be outlined to articulate when the professional development will occur, the audience it will support, and the intended outcomes.

Additionally, the capacity of the school counselors and the social workers to provide support will be strengthened and they will be integral in the execution of professional development plans. These individuals will be able to provide another level of support for the staff members by ensuring they have clear understandings of the SEL skills that are developmentally appropriate at each level through the use of their expertise in social emotional support. Also, there will be a greater push for the involvement of each clinician in a student's social and emotional development. Counselors and social workers

will have autonomy to support students in developing their social skills. As well, school social workers can provide technical assistance and coaching support for school staff as they learn to implement intervention strategies (Anyon, Nicotera, & Veeh, 2016). Each school will have a full-time counselor and social worker—an essential resource as currently, school counselors and social workers only support students who have an identified need based on an individualized education plan. In most cases, schools only have a part-time social worker who supports multiple schools at a time, which presents a major challenge.

The professional development plan will focus on building the culture of each school to support how students experience SEL instruction and to aid in addressing plausible adult biases and belief systems from hindering the process. There will be an emphasis on creating professional development cycles that will support staff members at the individual level. This will allow more input on behalf of each person to be supported based on their needs. Staff members will be encouraged to share their input through collegial feedback opportunities, surveys, and discussions that will promote open dialogue and support. Staff members will be supported to learn at their own pace. Learning experiences will be structured to allow for the assessment of knowledge and corrective support where needed.

One way this will occur is by identifying strategic cultural norms that must exist in each school context, such as a supportive environment that establishes high behavioral expectations, a climate that promotes healthy relationships, effective classroom management strategies, and high instructional expectations. Schools that do not have

these initial essentials will receive another level of support from the district to ensure

their readiness—which requires flexibility at the district level.

There will be a strong focus on building partnerships with the family and the

community, which allows for a stronger, home-school connection. Through these

external partnerships, families will also participate in specifically designed SEL

professional development opportunities. Parent workshops will be designed to provide

families with ways to incorporate SEL skills in the home. In effective SEL programs,

educators receive ongoing professional development in SEL, and families and schools

work together to promote children's social, emotional, and academic successes (O'Brien

& Resnik, 2009). Additionally, district personnel will support individual schools directly

by providing ongoing feedback and resources unique to each school building. The district

will also provide schools with demonstration sites where staff members can go to observe

quality implementation within schools with similar demographics and challenges. The

learning cycle will be a continuous process and engage every stakeholder at every level.

This is crucial, as currently, professional development is only done at the onset of the

implementation, providing teachers only a program overview. Professional development

will be the norm and essential to the effectiveness of the implementation.

<div align="center">**Conclusion**</div>

Chicago public school district has taken a huge leap in outlining a strong focus on

SEL programs to establish a sense of urgency in providing support to students from a

holistic approach. It is important to note that teachers and other school-based personnel

have come to the teaching profession ill-equipped to handle the systemic social

dysfunctions that plague the school setting. To better prepare teachers and staff to support

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students effectively, it is essential they have supportive systems through job-embedded, professional development that continues to help them progress as adult learners and gain the necessary skills to support the learners inside their classrooms. If the ineffectiveness of program implementation through antiquated professional development cycles is not addressed, then educators are preparing themselves to truly not meet the needs of their student population, due to lack of adult preparation. This is known as the As-Is. Your system, any system, is perfectly designed to produce the results you're getting (Wagner et al., 2006).

Continuing to remain in the As-Is is unacceptable. If the desire is to have the types of schools where growth and development are the norm for students and adults, "Now, we must place a high priority on providing resources to help educators do it well, sustaining the momentum of a growing demand for SEL and strengthening broad-based support for making SEL a foundation of American Education" (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013, p. 13). To change how SEL is currently implemented, efforts must be focused on the results one desires, then move to the To-Be. This focus will enable schools to create effective strategies and actions that will help educators obtain desired results.

CHAPTER SIX: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Introduction

Working to change the SEL program implementation requires strategies and actions that will allow optimal adjustments to ensure that the most critical stakeholders, the students, are the direct recipients of the change. By providing ongoing professional development—which includes direct coaching and support to classroom teachers and other stakeholders, creating a school support team, and establishing strong partnerships with families and the community—it will create a sustainable program that is implemented with fidelity and one that not only increases social skills for students but for the adults as well. "By attending to the phases of a change process, leaders can lay the groundwork for movement along the continua toward a greater purpose and focus, engagement, and collaboration that are vital to successful change efforts" (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 133).

Strategies and Actions

Effective implementation of social emotional programs at the school level are the cornerstone to the behavioral success for students at all grade levels within any school setting. While the challenging task of implementation happens at the school level, the district must have a clear picture of the plan of action. It is important for schools to implement programming that provides teachers with the necessary tools so that students benefit positively and the school community is successful overall. This supports the work by Wagner et al. (2006) on the 4 C's: competencies, conditions, culture, and context (pp.

99–105). To make this shift, there must be a clear understanding of what is necessary to create sustainable change with a strong focus on the necessary support to get there.

This section of the study focuses on the research and best practice in professional development that support the effective implementation of programs. "Professional development is primarily on-site, intensive, collaborative, and job embedded, and it is designed and led by educators who model the best teaching and learning practices" (Wagner, 2006, p. 31). It's important to offer ongoing SEL professional learning throughout all of the implementation. At the beginning of implementation, initial professional learning will help build awareness and foundational knowledge so all stakeholders understand what SEL is, why it's important to the district's goals, and what their role in SEL is. Beyond the initial professional development, it is essential to provide stakeholders with ongoing and scaffolded learning to help ensure that SEL is central to both district and school level priorities. Additionally, those who will be leading implementation or working closely with students will likely need additional coaching, professional learning communities, and technical assistance providing deep, real-time implementation support (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning n.d.-d, para. 9).

Chicago public schools places a premium priority on professional development. All aspects of the work performed within the district begins with adult learners participating in and learning information through the use of professional development. In most cases, the traditional *sit* and *get* or *train the trainer* model formats are still utilized excessively. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) stated,

Active learning, in sharp contrast to sit-and-listen lectures, engages educators

using authentic artifacts, interactive activities, and other strategies to provide

deeply embedded, highly contextualized professional learning. Active learning is

also an 'umbrella' element that often incorporates the elements of collaboration,

coaching, feedback, and reflection and the use of models and modeling. (p. 7)

Some would venture to say this model has been successful within CPS as the

district has experienced a level of success; however, there has been little progress in

making sustainable change. To this end, one of the biggest challenges involves pushing

the district to move from its current position: The As-Is, to what could be, the To-Be. The

status quo must be challenged through employing specific strategies and actions that will

propel the district to move from the As-Is to the To-Be.

There are many considerations to take into account when considering the

necessary supports that are required to create a culture of professional development that

embodies the qualities of effective professional development. Collaborative for

Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (n.d.-b), outlined four focus areas that support

implementation and provide resources. Each focus area outlines a specific aspect of

implementation that supports schools in doing so effectively. Focus area two supports the

notion of providing professional learning to support implementation.

Providing professional development without a clear plan of what is needed

collectively and individually at the classroom level poses a huge challenge to the

district's ability to create sustainable practices learned by staff. To this end, the first

strategy requires that a clearly defined and outlined professional development must be

created based on data that allows district and school based personnel to establish what

supports are needed. This data also provides the district with a means to assess the current

state of the implementation of SEL across the district. By understanding the staff

members and schools' needs, the district will be able to create a strategic implementation

action plan as well as a professional development schedule for every adult. To

accomplish this, the district will analyze the data, identify needed resources, and create

and plan a variety of differentiated professional development opportunities. The

professional development plan will need to be evaluated periodically to determine if any

adjustments need to be made. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and

Emotional Learning (n.d.-c),

> Districts conduct a needs and resource assessment focused on social and
>
> emotional learning (SEL), leveraging a diverse set of stakeholders to reflect on
>
> SEL programs and practices already in place and what needs to be addressed, and
>
> to build on strengths when implementing SEL system wide. (para. 1)

The assessment documents all existing SEL programs and practices in order to integrate

all components of effective SEL and facilitate systemic change.

The creation of the professional development plan establishes the foundation and

will assist the district with the second strategy to achieving the To-Be. To address this,

schools and the district need to establish a support team that can provide differentiated

support to schools depending on where they are in the implementation plan. The support

team could consist of district personnel (to support the school in establishing a

schoolwide culture for SEL implementation), a school based coach (who provides direct

support to classroom teachers through modeling), school principal, classroom teachers, or

school level counselors and social workers. To accomplish this, the district will identify

who will be on the team based on expertise levels with SEL, specific roles, and involvement and support in the implementation plan. The support team will also help design and deliver professional development.

Lastly, a strategy that will be crucial to the success of the implementation plan is establishing strong partnerships that will support the process at every level. These partnerships include parents, community members, and staff members alike. There needs to be a representation of every stakeholder so that their voices are deeply entrenched in this process and to be able to participate in the professional learning through workshops. Families also need access to SEL resources within the community. Engaging all stakeholders in this process creates a community of learners that ensures that everyone involved is well versed in what SEL is and how it can support students. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, "It is important to offer meaningful opportunities for families to participate and collaborate in SEL activities, so that families understand, experience, inform, and support the SEL development of students in partnership with school and district staff" (CASEL, n.d.-a, para. 5).

Social and emotional learning doesn't stop when students leave the classroom. All social interactions are learning experiences, and many of a young person's formative experiences will take place in informal learning environments at home and other social spaces. Family and community partnerships build bridges between a school and the world students experience outside of its walls. District and school staff also benefit from family and community partnerships as they learn about the experiences, perspectives, values, and assets of the communities they serve, and they are better at reaching and supporting

students because of these partnerships. Table 4 outlines the specific strategies and actions

to support that will support the identified changes.

Table 4

Strategies and Actions

Strategy	Action Plan	Levers (Data, Relationships, Accountability
• Create a professional development plan based on the data to identify the needs of district, schools, and staff members.	• Conduct a needs assessment/survey that focuses on the supports needed for SEL implementation. • Analyze data and disaggregate to narrow focus for specific PD needs. • Identify specific resources; i.e., curriculum. • Create PD plan that details a variety of PD topics and options for all stakeholders. • Create PD schedule with specific dates and timeline that details the opportunities for learning. • Create multiple check-in points to review schedule to ensure proper implementation.	• Accountability • Relationships • Data
• Provide support for schools by creating a SEL support team.	• Provide a description of the role and responsibility of the SEL support team. • Identify district personnel with expertise in SEL to support implementation. • Provide schools with SEL coach that will assist with implementation, classroom embedded coaching, and support. • Engage the team in creating protocols that the team will use periodically to determine effectiveness, strengths, challenges and next steps.	• Accountability • Relationships • Data

	• Design and deliver professional development for various stakeholders. • Create a monitoring/coaching schedule to provide classroom embedded support. • Social emotional learning team will create data collection tool to be used by all stakeholders to determine effectiveness of the implementation of SEL strategies.	
• Build strong partnerships with families and the community.	• Engage all stakeholders to participate in learning about SEL. • Create professional development opportunities for families and community members. • Create opportunities to receive feedback from families and community members. • Align families access to SEL community resources, such as Social Service agencies.	• Relationships • Data

Conclusion

Creating high-quality professional development and engaging multiple stakeholders in any process is not an easy task. There are many things that must be considered during the designing phase to ensure that those who will be participating in the professional development will be able to receive optimal learning. Beavers (2009) commented, "For growth and improvement of any educational institution, teacher professional development becomes a milestone in teachers' continuum of life-long learning and career progression" (p. 25). Effective implementation is the responsibility of every stakeholder involved in the process. While every person has a unique role and responsibility, there cannot be a disregard to the necessity of continuity, collaboration, and communication. "In summary, policy, theory, research, administration, and practice

must come together to work synergistically in order to maximize program

implementation" (Durlak, Domitrocich, Weisberg, & Gollotta, 2015, p. 401). These

strategies and actions will not only help every student succeed, but will also help every

adult succeed.

CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The process through which we support students who need varied social interventions have changed, as the result of some very intentional work in defining what social and emotional needs are. "Social and emotional learning is the process through which children and adults 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, n.d.-a, para. 1). In 2004, the ISBE recognized there was a great need to develop SEL standards and that each school district should be responsible for ensuring that every school implements the standards through each district policy. This policy for the state of Illinois was Public Act 94-0495 and stated the following:

Section 15. Mental health and schools.

(a) The Illinois State Board of Education shall develop and implement a plan to incorporate social and emotional development standards as part of the Illinois Learning Standards for the purpose of enhancing and measuring children's school readiness and ability to achieve academic success. The plan shall be submitted to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Partnership by December 31, 2004.

(b) Every Illinois school district shall develop a

policy for incorporating social and emotional development

into the district's educational program. The policy shall

address 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. Each district

must submit this policy to the Illinois State Board of

Education by August 31, 2004. (Illinois.gov, n.d.; p. 4, para. 3)

The ISBE created the social and emotional standards that would govern the

implementation of SEL. The standards are used to govern the various grade levels and

content aligned to each grade level. According to ISBE (n.d.),

The standards describe the content and skills for students in grades K-12 for

social and emotional learning. Each standard includes five benchmark levels that

describe what students should know and be able to do in early elementary (grades

K-3), late elementary (grades 4-5), middle/junior high (grades 6-8), early high

school (grades 9-10), and late high school (grades 11-12). These standards build

on the Illinois Social/Emotional Development Standards of the Illinois Early

Learning Standards. (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d., para. 1)

While the overall goal of the Illinois Public Act 94-0495 is to provide consistent

standards whereby school districts can effectively provide implementation guidance to

schools on what social skills educators should focus on, the policy does not address the

high-level need for sustainable practices and professional development that is needed for

educators to address the diverse social needs of the students they serve on a consistent

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basis. Educators have varying degrees of experience in SEL knowledge and expertise, which poses a great deficit and threat in the effective implementation of the SEL standards and the outcomes for students.

The policy, Public Act 93-0495, established by the ISBE, mandated that school districts implement SEL standards and that there is a policy at the district level for such. However, the policy does not provide school districts with specific guidance on how to best support the implementation of the programs to ensure that teachers are able to effectively support the various social and emotional needs of the students that they serve beyond the research-based programs. The policy also does not take into account the social competencies of the adults.

To ensure that SEL is effective and sustainable, it is important that each school district develop a system of continuous improvement. According to the Minnesota Department of Education (n.d.), "A comprehensive approach provides varying levels of professional development for different audiences" (p. 8). Professional development can be done through conferences, workshops, webinars, and online courses, as well as through professional learning communities and coaching support. Teachers can simply implement the selected research-based program without a deep understanding of their own areas of growth and needed skill sets based on the professional development that they receive. Schools that ignore these experiences or ineffectively implement programs due to poor program adherence, lack of ongoing professional development, and fidelity often have increased behavioral issues, student altercations, poor academic performance, and a host of other behavioral issues that hinder students' academic and social emotional success. In my experience, teachers who are unable to implement the program with

fidelity do so due to the lack of consistent professional development that provides ongoing support through learning and coaching.

Policy Statement

This policy advocacy makes the recommendation whereby each school district would be responsible for creating and developing an ongoing professional development plan that also includes classroom coaching, teacher mentoring, and other supports that would enable a teacher to gain the necessary skills and understandings to effectively support students in learning SEL skills. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), stated, "There is a direct link between teacher professional development, teaching practices, and student outcomes" (p. 5). According to Wagner et al. (2006), "Competencies are most effectively built when professional development is focused, job-embedded, continuous, constructed, and collaborative" (p. 99, para. 1). To this end, school districts need to create a systematic plan that incorporates a comprehensive needs assessment of each educator responsible for the implementation of the SEL standards. The needs assessment will be the source used to determine the professional development needs of each educator and stakeholder responsible for implementing SEL. The data collected will allow schools to create a professional development plan at the school and individual classroom teacher levels.

Analysis of Need

The analysis of need section focuses on the problem and the context. There are six disciplinary areas brought under analysis: education, economic, social, political, legal, and moral and ethical. It is critical to perform an analysis of each of these areas.

Educational Analysis

The education field seems to constantly be under a microscope; and it seems as if everyone has something to say and a point to make. When I think about the state of education, so much has changed and so much still needs to change. Everyday decisions are being made about children, policy, reform, and how schools should be managed. Decisions are being made about what students need and the best way for schools to meet those needs whether by a specific program or ensuring that schools are staffed with the appropriate personnel. Educators are given curriculum and programs and expected to teach with a high level of fidelity. Once the initial program implementation has started or the professional development or support has been provided, educators are often left to build a level of expertise on their own.

In an article written by Amy Beavers (2009), she stated, "Teachers are the foundational component of any educational system" (p. 25). It is vital that adequate attention be focused on appropriate and effective training for teachers. Teachers are required not only to be experts in their content area, but also fluent in child psychology, skilled in communication, execute brilliant classroom management strategies, and navigate the unrelenting gauntlet of educational politics. School leaders must ensure that teachers are adequately prepared to support and manage the classroom, the students, and the daily demands of the job. Providing high-quality professional development is necessary and must be a priority for every educator.

Economic Analysis

Traditional teacher education preparation programs provide teachers with basic knowledge about educational content and pedagogy. Teachers are immersed in theory

and in most programs, participate in a 16-week internship to learn how to teach in real time. Upon graduation, those college students are expected to be able to oversee a classroom full of students and provide high-quality instruction. The problem facing the nation is that the preservice programs are not adequately preparing students to take on the massive educational challenge. Teachers need ongoing professional development throughout their career—especially when it involves learning new programs and curriculum. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) stated the following:

> Given the lack of explicit preservice or in-service training aimed at teachers' personal development, the current educational system appears to assume that teachers have the requisite SEC to create a warm and nurturing learning environment, be emotionally responsive to students, form supportive and collaborative relationships with sometimes difficult and demanding parents, professionally relate to administrators and colleagues, effectively manage the growing demands imposed by standardized testing, model exemplary emotion regulation, sensitively coach students through conflict situations with peers, and effectively (yet respectfully) handle the challenging behaviors of disruptive students. (pp. 495–496)

Consideration must be taken to how teachers are prepared to support the students they will encounter and ensure that ongoing support is provided throughout the teacher's tenure. One major hindrance in providing ongoing professional development is the financial commitment a school must be committed to. There is a strong cost indication for the district and the individual schools when looking at ongoing professional development. "Even when reform-minded district and school leaders want to deploy

effective professional development strategies, they rarely know how much the programs cost" (Odden, Archibald, Fermanich, & Gallagher, 2002, p. 52). It is important to consider that while professional development might be costly, it does not compare to the impact on student achievement. "As a result, the importance of PD programs for improving teacher preparedness, in addition to their potential for impacting student achievement, has become accepted worldwide" (Bayar, 2014, p. 320).

Oftentimes professional development takes a back seat to other district financial priorities. Funds come in the district door with numerous conditions and regulations for their use. As Roza (2010) commented, "Once inside the district, the funds are subject to the influence of numerous stakeholders before they are brought to bear on students" (p. 13) . . . "a highly functioning finance 20 system would promote continuous improvement by adapting the best insights about high quality efficient services and discontinuing investments in efforts that do not yield the desired results" (p. 92). Professional development is an investment that is essential to the success and impact of students. As teachers develop, learn, and grow as professionals, they are better prepared to provide the type of instruction that will yield positive results for students. Adequate funding must be allocated to schools to ensure the professional development needs of teachers are met to support the implementation of this policy.

Social Analysis

In my experience, children learn many of their social cues from the adults they encounter on a daily basis. We model for children positively and negatively. "As adults, we set the tone for what is acceptable in our society, and this contributes in powerful ways to the social norms of our schools' culture" (Collaborative for Academic, Social,

and Emotional Learning, n.d., para. 4). Schools are filled with adults that come from all walks of life and have various social cues that oftentimes impact how students feel about school. When we think about schools from a social viewpoint, what can be overwhelming are the various social understandings present in a school on a daily basis and how trivial it must be for teachers to manage while navigating their own.

Some would argue that schools should only focus on providing students with academic support in core subjects such as Reading, Math, Writing, Social Science, and Science. Only focusing on those content areas poses a great challenge. According to Zins and Elias (2007),

> The list of issues facing today's educators and students is daunting. But genuinely effective schools—those schools that prepare students not only to pass test at school but also to pass the tests of life—are finding that social-emotional competence and academic achievement are interwoven and that integrated, coordinated instruction in both areas maximizes students' potential to succeed in school and throughout their lives. (p. 1)

The goal in education has to be to prepare students for life beyond the classroom. To do this, required are teachers who are apt in teaching students the necessary skills and tools to be productive and contributing members of society.

Political Analysis

Teacher professional development and its effectiveness has been debated for some time with various political stances for and against it. Some say it is a waste of time while others say it is a meaningful anchor in the education field. The deciding factor seems to be incumbent upon the various political viewpoints of those establishing the policy. To

ascertain whether the desired ends are later attained and the cost and relative risk conform to what was planned and promised, policymakers commission research and evaluation studies to provide rationale and objective information. The current Illinois policy for SEL, Public Act- 94-0495, details the importance of SEL and what school districts must do to implement a SEL program that focuses on students. In reviewing the policy, there were no noted considerations for how to support and provide ongoing professional development for teachers in understanding SEL and how to analyze their own SEL competencies. According to ISBE, "This act calls upon the Illinois State Board of Education to develop and implement a plan to incorporate social and emotional development standards as part of the Illinois Learning Standards" (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d., para. 2).

A robust, ongoing professional development plan that takes into consideration the need for, type of, and cost of professional development creates a major emphasis in this debate because one could argue that teachers go through 4 years of college education to prepare for teaching and that should be enough. The truth of the matter is that teacher preparation programs vary from state to state and in most cases, teachers are not prepared for the day to day facilitation of teaching and learning. Teaching is very complex and requires a skill set that must be developed over time. This skill set must be shaped through the use of high-quality professional development that provides ongoing coaching, modeling, and support.

Legal Analysis

The current policy written by the state of Illinois General Assembly requires that every school district develop a policy for incorporating social and emotional development in the educational program. This policy is important due to the state of our schools and society. It is imperative that educators hold themselves responsible for ensuring students are prepared—both socially and emotionally. The ISBE identified several standards developed in accordance with Public Act 93-0495. This Public Act can be viewed as a springboard in helping school districts ensure they are teaching to the whole child.

This Public Act supports the need for the implementation of social emotional standards; however, it does not take into account teacher readiness and ability to do so without their own social emotional needs being addressed and developed. To fully support this policy, districts also need to ensure that teachers receive ongoing support through professional development focusing on building the social and emotional skill level. Efforts to continue supporting teachers along their journey can have a lasting impact on student achievement and teacher development.

Moral and Ethical Analysis

Education seems to be one of the few professions that promotes a viewpoint that the completion of degree implies readiness, capability, effectiveness, and ability. Upon leaving the doors of college and entering the doors of a school, teachers are expected to know how to teach any content and ensure the academic outcomes for every student in their classroom. Additionally, educators are expected to know how to manage classroom behavior, interact with parents, create assessments, mentor students, grade papers, and so much more. College classrooms simply do not prepare teachers for the road ahead and

the multiplicity of the demand of the job. As a result, many teachers leave the profession

because they do not feel supported in their job, as it is quite different from what they

learned in college. According to Karsenti and Collin's (2013) research, four main factors

exist as to why teachers leave their profession:

a) Task-related factors: a demanding and time-consuming job, management of

difficult classrooms, unsatisfactory work conditions, particularly low

salaries, inappropriate teaching subjects, restrictive administrative policies,

and unappealing tasks,

b) Individual factors: emotional and psychological characteristics that are

incompatible with the teaching profession and sociodemographic and

professional factors

c) Social environment factors: failed relations with educational and social actors

and difficult students and workplace conditions

d) Socioeconomic conditions: Even in the medical field, doctors are expected to

continue their education for a minimum of 8 additional years to ensure that

they are ready to tackle people's lives. Just like doctors, teachers are handling

people's lives. (p. 142)

In my opinion, society cannot continue throwing teachers into schools and expecting

them to effectively implement various programs and curriculum without adequate

training and support. Between the pressures of moral urgency and those of political

expediency, many systems won't be able to resist the temptations of trying to do

everything at once. Morally and ethically, school leaders owe it to teachers to provide

ongoing support through professional development to ensure students receive the best

possible education possible. This might be the very thing that helps schools truly close the achievement gap across all demographics and subgroups.

Implications for Staff and Community Relationships

It is common knowledge that education involves a variety of stakeholders. "Many educators recognize that the world of academics is quite far from the realities of their communities and families" (Purniton & Azcoitia, n.d., p. 7). Each stakeholder has a different position or expectation for what happens inside of schools and classrooms on a daily basis. There is one common goal amongst all stakeholders: To ensure the academic outcomes for students that allow them to demonstrate growth. Drago-Severson (2009) indicated, "To be true mentoring communities and learning centers, schools and school systems must be places where the adults as well as the children can grow" (p. 30). Due to the nature of the work, the demands of the job, and the constant changes, educators may feel overwhelmed and incompetent in their ability to do their job well. Strengthening the ability of educators by providing adequate support and learning opportunities that will enhance their skill level is a necessity. The policy should strengthen staff relationships because by providing teachers with ongoing professional development, coaching, mentoring, and support, teachers will be better able to support the social and emotional needs of students. This policy will aid in supporting teachers in being more effective in their daily roles and the demands of the job because they will be able to learn the necessary soft skills to adequately support students. This will ultimately impact the community at large and the effect of the development of the teachers (through strong academic learning environments, decreased staff attrition, better staff/student relationships, and high-quality school settings) will be visible.

Professional development is a tool used in many fields to develop and support those that work within the organization. Schools cannot expect to truly close the achievement gap without an intentional shift or approach to how teachers are supported beyond their college years. Providing high-quality professional development for teachers exposes them to learning that can impact the lives of many for a lifetime. It is critical that as the education field changes, new policy is written and greater demand put on academic outcomes. Equally important is ensuring that those who are responsible for providing support are effectively prepared.

Conclusion

Education constantly evolves. Approaches implemented 5 years ago are not as useful today—students, families, and communities present new challenges now. Simply doing things the way it has always been done is not going to prepare students for the future. Mandates and policies from policymakers are great; however, staying abreast of the latest information and trends impacting schools and communities at large will be significant.

For the purpose of my research, I am proposing implementing a policy whereby teachers and other stakeholders participate in ongoing professional development learning cycles focused on SEL. This policy recommendation outlines the need for professional development, types of professional development, and other possible professional development considerations to ensure that every stakeholder is constantly learning based on their individual needs.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The goal of this program evaluation was to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of SEL programs. Throughout my research, it was clear that in most cases, schools would provide teachers and other stakeholders with professional development to learn specifically about a SEL curriculum. Stakeholders would learn a basic overview of the program, the components of the program, and how to use the program within their respective settings. According to Dusenbury and Weissberg (2017), "SEL interventions do not work if they are adopted but not fully utilized in the classroom—the efficacy of SEL practices hinges on high fidelity of implementation" (p. 22). I have found this to be especially true in situations where there is little buy-in or belief or low social emotional skills. "Given the crucial roles of teachers in fostering the social and emotional competencies of their students, it is necessary to examine the views they may have in enhancing social and emotional learning in their classrooms" (Ee & Cheng, 2013, p. 60). The teacher's role is surely multifaceted; and preservice programs and schools must ensure they are preparing teachers for the type of student that arrives in their classroom on a daily basis.

During the program evaluation, I sought to answer the following questions:

1. How does the implementation of social emotional learning programs improve the social and academic outcomes of students?

2. What additional supports are provided to aid schools in the implementation of social emotional learning programs?

3. How are schools that need additional support and guidance identified and supported?

4. What external and internal barriers are present that prevent schools from a successful implementation?

5. How does the current policy for social and emotional learning need to be modified to support the incorporation of ongoing professional learning for effective implementation?

While it was apparent in my own personal reflection that the social awareness and academic levels of students improved over time, I was surprised to note that many of the adults who were responsible for the implementation struggled with providing adequate support for students beyond the scripted program. My observations highlighted the need to strategically engage the adults in professional development that would help them develop their own social emotional skills. There were several stakeholders that really struggled with implementing the program because of their own emotional deficits.

Discussion

Evaluating the effectiveness of implementing SEL programs and determining if it positively impacted the social and academic experience for students were goals of this program evaluation. Defining what constituted effectiveness was also a major consideration. One major theme from the research and my own personal observation was that teachers did not always feel prepared to teach the social and emotional skills. According to Dusenbury and Weissberg (2017),

There are a variety of ways high quality implementation may be promoted,

starting with clear, easy to understand instructions and detailed manuals.

However, professional development and ongoing support, including coaching is

key among the most effective strategies for promoting high quality

implementation. (p. 9)

A lack of consistent and ongoing professional development definitely impacts the

effectiveness of the program implementation. When you consider how people learn and

the ability to unpack new learning to other people, there is a learning curve that must be

allowed. A lack of clear understanding of the content correlates directly to poor

implementation.

In evaluating my own school's journey in implementing SEL programs, it took

me by surprise when I realized how disconnected the adults were from the program.

During my observations, I would see adults teaching a program they did not believe in

nor its impact. In some classrooms, there was a sense of just going through the motions

even though every adult in the building received the initial training provided by the

district. This made it very difficult from an implementation standpoint. Ee and Cheng

(2013), encouraged that, "A teacher's perception of where the SEL program is necessary

also affects the effectiveness of the SEL infusion in classrooms" (p. 61).

To this end, the organizational change plan discussed in Sections Five and Six

outlined the importance of creating a professional development plan that goes beyond the

sit and *get,* which has shown to be ineffective. Using Wagner et al's 4 C's context to

establish a To-Be forged an opportunity to specifically identify the necessary possibilities

for the district to be able to strengthen the implementation of the program. The policy

advocacy calls for SEC development for adults through ongoing professional development (with coaching support and feedback), peer support, and development based on individual needs, as well as building partnerships with families and community members. Focusing on building the capacity of the adults and developing their SECs will help ensure that students will be supported in learning their own SEL competencies through effective program implementation. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), "Well designed and implemented PD should be considered an essential component of a comprehensive system of teaching and learning that supports students to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to thrive in the 21st century" (p. 7).

To further support this policy advocacy, several strategies and actions were created to address the need for ongoing professional development. These recommendations are extracted based on my personal experiences and the research of the publically available data.

Leadership Lessons

Leadership often brings a certain level of awareness as a result of new learnings and understandings gained through experiences. I truly began to look at how I supported teachers through their own personal growth as educators, how I lead, and what I do on a daily basis that makes my school community a better place for adult learning. I realized that as a leader of adults, I was deeply responsible for the type of learning they engaged in and the positive or negative impact it had on students. This was a hard truth I had to really embrace. It is not enough for me to hold teachers accountable for differentiating learning for students and creating an environment where students had a voice in what they wanted to learn. I had to take a step back and evaluate how the adults experienced

their own learning through my delivery of information. This challenged me to implement

needs assessments from every adult in the building and to use the data to inform my

practice. Heifetz, Linsky, and Grashow (2009) supported this notion by stating, "A

commitment to individualized professional development comes from understanding that

the courage to make needed changes resides in people who have long term perspective

and a stake in the organization's future" (p. 104). As long as I was the one coming up

with all of the ideas about professional development needs, I was the one doing all of the

work. While most school leaders assume they know what is best for everyone (including

what's best for the students), it is humbling to admit the importance of listening to the

needs and ideas of others.

I also learned to spend more time on the balcony and to slow down and really

assess the needs. If I responded quickly, I could possibly assess the wrong problem.

When this happened, the negative impact was greater. Heifetz et al. (2009) stated, "First,

in most organizations, people feel pressure to solve problems quickly, move to action" (p.

7). This was such a major lesson for me. Everything does not need immediate attention. It

is absolutely okay to move slow to move fast. Those around me have important ideas and

thoughts that can help me learn as well. Engaging multiple stakeholders in the process

has provided me with more insight and information that helps move the process along

more efficiently.

I gained a strong appreciation for adaptive leadership. When I first began in a

leadership role, I mistakenly believed that people do what you tell them to do because

you are in authority. On the contrary, this is not the case. When trying to push a new

initiative or curriculum, it is easy to tell subordinates to be like Nike and *Just Do It*.

However, when you are trying to create a school community where the input and ideas of others are valued, your approach to the work is critical. If you are going to create change in any capacity in a school context, you have to be able to create buy-in, develop mindsets, and articulate the needs clearly so that people will want to help you move the initiative forward. Learning how to challenge the norm by not doing the norm actually produces greater outcomes.

Finally, as a school leader who is endeavoring to begin implementing a SEL program, there are a few considerations. School leaders must be the forerunners in this work by modeling a growth mindset and believe that program implementation can have a positive impact on their school community, culture, and climate. By modeling this, school leaders demonstrate how to handle implementing something that might be new or unfamiliar. Additionally, it is important for the school leader to be reflective and transparent as they unpack the learning. The voice of the leader is critical in helping everyone else become comfortable and willing to tackle any fears or reservations that might arise. Finally, the leader must know the capacity of every stakeholder in the school. This is important because the adults are a critical component to the success of the program implementation and how the leader supports them individually and collectively in this process truly matters. School leaders set the tone for every aspect of their building and the implementation of SEL is not exempt.

Conclusion

Education is an ever-evolving field; however, the goal of ensuring the academic success of students is still the most important goal. Additionally, schools also have to focus on the professional growth of the adults to ensure they are learning and developing

on a continuous basis. As stated by Wagner et al. (2006), "Professional development is primarily on-site, intensive, collaborative, and job embedded, and it is designed and led by educators who model the best teaching and learning practices" (p. 31). Developing adults can be a daunting task; however, it is essential to the growth of a school community. Wagner et al. (2006) suggested,

> We firmly believe that creating a system focused on the ongoing improvement of instruction must be the central aim of any education improvement effort. It is our 'theory of change' that students' achievement will not improve unless and until we create schools and districts where all educators are learning how to significantly improve their skills as teachers and as instructional leaders. (p. 23)

I firmly believe this is how we will impact the social and emotional and academic outcomes for students. As adults grow, it is inevitable that the students will grow.

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APPENDIX A: ILLINOIS SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS

Illinois Social Emotional Learning Standards

Goal 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.
A. Identify and manage one's emotions and behavior.
B. Recognize personal qualities and external supports.
C. Demonstrate skills related to achieving personal and academic goals.

Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships
A. Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others.
B. Recognize individual and group similarities and differences.
C. Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
D. Demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.

Goal 3: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.
A. Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions.
B. Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.
C. Contribute to the well-being of one's school and community.

APPENDIX B: SEL COMPETENCIES

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCIES

SELF-AWARENESS

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

- ⊃ IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS
- ⊃ ACCURATE SELF-PERCEPTION
- ⊃ RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS
- ⊃ SELF-CONFIDENCE
- ⊃ SELF-EFFICACY

SOCIAL AWARENESS

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- ⊃ PERSPECTIVE-TAKING
- ⊃ EMPATHY
- ⊃ APPRECIATING DIVERSITY
- ⊃ RESPECT FOR OTHERS

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

- ⊃ IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS
- ⊃ ANALYZING SITUATIONS
- ⊃ SOLVING PROBLEMS
- ⊃ EVALUATING
- ⊃ REFLECTING
- ⊃ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY

SELF-MANAGEMENT

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- ⊃ IMPULSE CONTROL
- ⊃ STRESS MANAGEMENT
- ⊃ SELF-DISCIPLINE
- ⊃ SELF-MOTIVATION
- ⊃ GOAL SETTING
- ⊃ ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- ⊃ COMMUNICATION
- ⊃ SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
- ⊃ RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
- ⊃ TEAMWORK

APPENDIX C: AS-IS DIAGNOSTIC TOOL

Baseline 4 C's Analysis for The Effectiveness of the Implementation of Social Emotional Learning Programs

As-Is

Context
- Second Step Curriculum is designed for students in PreK through 8th grade.
- Social Emotional Learning Standards are aligned to literacy standards
- Each grade covers specific topics. The topics spiral.
- Each classroom teacher is responsible for teaching the curriculum
- School counselor teaches sub topics from Social Emotional Learning standards in conjunction with the counseling standards
- Program standards assume the specific social emotional needs of the student.

Culture
- Teachers have to balance between teaching grade level content such as Reading and Math due to strong emphasis on test scores and academic growth
- Social emotional needs of the students are outside of the scope of the curriculum
- Teachers do not feel that they should be responsible for teaching social emotional skills
- Teachers expect the school counselor should solely teach the curriculum because they do not have the time built into their schedule.

Professional development provided to teachers on Social Emotional curriculum prepares teachers for a successful implementation that meets the needs of all students

Competencies
- Teachers do not feel prepared to teach on social emotional issues displayed by the students beyond the topics in the curriculum
- Teachers need more professional development to build their capacity and understanding of the impact of social emotional issues and
- Professional development is the same for new or veteran teachers/staff
- Professional development only focuses on how to implement Second Step at a basic level.

Conditions
The program only requires teachers to teach main points of the topics at the beginning of the week for 30 minutes and integrate the skill throughout the week
- Professional development is provided at the onset of the program implementation in a 1 day/3 hour training model
- Homeroom teachers are solely responsible for teaching Second Step
- Topics to be taught are predetermined by curriculum for each grade level but might not cover topics specifically needed by students
- Clinician team (social worker, psychologist etc) are not readily available to provide additional professional development support if needed
- Diverse Learner teacher and ancillary staff do not implement Second Step

APPENDIX D: TO-BE DIAGNOSTIC TOOL

TO BE

Context
- Social Emotional Learning curriculum implemented in PreK through 12th
- Social Emotional Learning Standards are aligned to literacy standards and embedded in the fabric of the instructional content schedule
- School-based clinicians (i.e. counselor and social worker) will be developed to provide ongoing support
- School-based clinicians will be a part of the school staff and provide technical assistance and coaching support

Culture
- Daily schedule created and provided tor the implementation of SEL curriculum on a daily basis
- Allocated time for collaboration, planning and support
- Professional development plan with outlined schedule, timeline and topics to be covered.
- Established cultural norms that outline implementation plan and support plans.
- Analysis of need of individuals school level social emotional trends to create deeper plans of support through professional development
- Family and community relationships established to building capacity and understanding of SEL through professional learning and support

Conditions
- Ongoing professional development and implementation support provided through coaching, modeling and classroom observation
- Engage all stakeholders in learning about SEL (i.e. families, community, staff, students, etc.
- Establish feedback cycles regarding the implementation plan from all stakeholders.
- District personnel provide ongoing coaching and support to schools based on data, observations and needs assessment
- District wide professional development plan that includes multiple stakeholders to ensure that the needs of the learners are met.
- Social and emotional learning team will create and use

Competencies
- Conduct needs assessments quarterly to identify professional development needs. Analyze data, identify resources, create professional development plan based on needs.
- Build stakeholder capacity through ongoing, differentiated professional development to provide high quality SEL instruction
- Professional development aligned to the needs of the students, staff and school culture
- Additional professional development and curriculum provided to teachers covers additional topics such as trauma, violence, and poverty if school community identifies additional needs.

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