Developing Sustainable Districtwide Implementation of a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Initiative

Implementation and Evaluation of the SEL Skills for Life Program in Ohio’s 17th Congressional District

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Objectives

- **Objective One**: Become familiar with SEL and its role in promoting positive youth development and academic outcomes.
- **Objective Two**: Become familiar with the components of the Skills for Life and its methods for fostering social emotional health in young people.
- **Objective Three**: Be able to identify the ingredients for success in implementing a research-based Social Emotional Learning program in a public school setting.
- **Objective Four**: Recognize the potential barriers for implementation and possible funding streams for financial support.
Emotional Intelligence Defined

“The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.”

Daniel Goleman
The Feeling-Learning Connection

Without access to our memory we cannot learn.

In order to remember, we need to be able to focus our attention. When we’re focused we’re in a state of “relaxed alertness” and we’re ready to learn.

Our feelings determine whether we can focus or not. When we’re emotionally flooded and don’t have a chance to empty or express them, our emotions hijack us and block our capacity to focus.

Our feelings determine our capacity to learn.
What is Social Emotional Learning?

Self
- Self-awareness
- Self-management

Other
- Social-awareness
- Relationship Skills

Decision-Making
- Responsible Decision-making

Source: CASEL
SEL is an evidence-based strategy that integrates the intellectual, emotional and social facets of learning. It works through two related approaches:

Positive School Climate + Explicit SEL Skills Instruction = Positive Results for Children

What Does the Research Tell Us?

- **Meta-analysis of over 200 studies on SEL**
  - Quasi-experimental (Pre-Post) – 213 studies
  - Randomized = 47%
  - Since 1990 = 75%
  - Number of students: 270,034
  - Elementary (56%), middle (31%), an high school (13%)
  - Urban, suburban, and rural

What Does the Research Tell Us?

Benefits of SEL

- Social-emotional skills
- Improved attitudes about self, others, and school
- Positive classroom behavior
- 11 percentile-point gain on standardized achievement tests

And Reduced Risks for Failure:

- Conduct problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Emotional distress
Benefits of SEL (cont.)

- More high school graduates
- More attending college
- More employed
- Better emotional and mental health
- Fewer with a criminal record
- Less drug selling
- Less co-morbid diagnosis of substance abuse and mental disorder

Source: Hawkins et al.
Benefits of SEL (cont.)

- **SEL teaches 21st Century Skills**
  - Critical thinking and problem-solving
  - Ethics and social responsibility
  - Communication
  - Teamwork and collaboration
  - Lifelong learning and self-direction
  - Leadership
  - Global awareness

Source: Partnership for 21st Century Skills
Skills for Life Program

Integrates the research based SEL program – The 4R’s with the evidenced based intervention of the work of the Inner Resilience Program to offer:

- SEL as a guiding framework for school improvement by creating the classroom climate and explicit skills instruction.

- The cultivation of the adult’s own emotional intelligence and stress management skills as well as helping them create a calmer and more peaceful classroom environment by teaching young people practices that will improve their attention, manage stress, and regulate their emotions.
Skills for Life Program Objectives

1. Increase the knowledge and ability of teachers/school staff to deliver an evidence-based SEL curriculum/approach.

2. Promote the SEL competence of staff through professional development.

3. Support the launch of weekly implementation of an evidence-based curriculum and approach.

4. Increase the knowledge and ability of school administrators and other school leaders to support schoolwide SEL through training and coaching.

5. Increase the knowledge and ability of district administrators and other district leaders to support districtwide SEL through training and coaching.

6. Build capacity of schools to involve parents in supporting student SEL by providing SEL train-the-trainer workshops.

7. Build local capacity (district and school) to support high-quality, sustainable SEL programming.
Skills for Life Evaluation

- **Purpose of Evaluation:**
  - Determine the extent to which the program met its objectives

- **Research Design**
  - Implementation and Outcome Evaluation
  - Mixed-methods

- **Data Sources**
  - Training evaluation forms.
  - Online surveys
  - Interviews and focus groups
  - Document review
**District Context**

- **Youngstown City Schools:**
  - Academic Emergency – at the start of the grant (2010-2011 school year).
  - Improved its rating to Academic Watch for the 2011-2012 school year.

- **Warren City Schools:**
  - Academic Watch
  - Improved its rating to Continuous Improvement for the 2011-2012 school year.

- **Both Districts:**
  - Ranked among the lowest in student performance on state tests (based on data from the 2011-2012 school year)
  - Experienced changes in district and school leadership
Key Findings: SEL Knowledge

- Participants demonstrated statistically significant improvement in their knowledge of training topics after one year of implementation.

- The greatest gains in knowledge occurred in topics related to the improvement of social emotional competencies.
Both cohorts increased their perceptions of the positive relationship between SEL and academic achievement.

- This increase was only statistically significant among Cohort 1 participants.
School staff significantly increased their social and emotional learning efficacy and became more mindful about their interactions with students.

Cohort 2 participants reported statistically significant change in their classroom behavior management efficacy after the first year of implementation.
Key Findings: Implementation and Student Outcomes

- Skills for Life was implemented at least once a week in most classrooms

- Teachers reported positive changes in student behavior.
  - Improved peer interactions
  - Improved classroom climate
  - Increased student awareness of their own feelings
  - Independent problem solving
Key Findings: Capacity Building

- 28 school administrators were trained
  - Administrator support varied by school
  - Changes in leadership and academic pressures impacted the level of administrator support
- 15 district administrators were trained
  - District SEL liaisons were identified as a primary source of district-level support and their involvement was key in encouraging participation and support at the school level.
- Schools developed the capacity to implement parent SEL workshops
  - By the end of Year 2 nearly 300 parents had attended at least one workshop
Key Findings: Capacity Building

- SEL school liaisons were key in leading SEL work in the schools and helping schools to promote schoolwide expansion of some program components.

- SEL steering committees were established in each school and made the most progress toward developing a shared schoolwide vision for social and emotional learning.
  - Committees had inconsistent participation and ongoing changes in the composition of some committees may have had an impact on their progress.

- Districts and schools demonstrated a commitment to sustaining SEL programming beyond the life of the grant.
Warren City Schools Implementation Schedule

- 2010-2011 4 day training for 80 PK-2 teachers, counselors, literacy coaches, and principals funded by DOE grant and Title I funding.
- 2011-2012 4 day training for 58 3rd-5th grade teachers and counselors DOE Title I Funding
- 2012-2013 2 day training for new PK-5 teachers, 3 hours of training for 6th-8th grade staff, Principal Academy-Nov-o Foundation and Title I
- 2013-2014 4 day training for new PK-6th Staff –Novo Foundation and Title I funding

6 Hours Mandatory PD for all PK-12 staff- General Fund
## On going SEL Support

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<tr>
<th><strong>Round-ups</strong></th>
<th><strong>Principal Academy</strong></th>
<th><strong>Peace in Family Training for Counselors and School Liaisons</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 hour meetings to discuss SEL Implementation and Adult Mindfulness</td>
<td>6 hour PD on Leadership and SEL emphasis on staff support</td>
<td>12 hour class to work with families</td>
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<th><strong>SEL Fridays</strong></th>
<th><strong>In Class Coaching</strong></th>
<th><strong>Adult SEL Retreat Days</strong></th>
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<td>30 minute weekly sessions to support the heart and pleasures of teaching</td>
<td>1 hour sessions 30 in class, 30 out of class consultation</td>
<td>6 hour days for rest and reflection for Adult educators</td>
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Ingredients for SEL Implementation

Success

- Respecting the emotional work of teachers.
- Teaching SEL skills for teachers first and giving time for experiential learning for adults.
- Allowing time during trainings to talk with colleagues about teaching and SEL.
- Giving time to practice teaching skills ahead of time and on-going support from consultants and school SEL leaders.
- Developing in school leaders who can assist in on-site coaching and materials management.
Warren City Schools Next Steps…

- Adding 4 R’s to 7th grade for 2014-2015.

- Piloting “Circles” an SEL curriculum created by Morningside Center For Teaching Social Responsibility to build relationships and prevent bullying in Middle Schools and High School.

- Design a HS transition course for 8th and 9th grade including SEL and College/Career Readiness components.
Coaching and classroom visits by staff developers
Administrator Component
Strategies for Coordinated District/School SEL Promotion

- Select an evidence-based SEL curriculum
- Teach, model, and reinforce skills throughout the day
- Create opportunities to practice SEL skills in a variety of settings/situations
- Infuse SEL concepts and skill-building into core academics
- Coordinate with student support services, extracurricular activities, out-of-school programs
- Partner with families and the community
Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act

Introduced as HR 4223 in December 2009 by Congressman Dale E. Kildee (D-MI), Congresswoman Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Congressman Tim Ryan (D-OH)

1. Will reach more children with evidence-based Social and Emotional Learning Award competitive grants to states and school districts to develop and implement social and emotional learning
2. Will measure and broadly share results
3. Will support teachers, school districts and states

Establish a National SEL Technical Assistance and Training Center to provide high quality information, professional development, and research-based tools

Key Strategy: HR 4223 must be included in reauthorization of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA), now underway.
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