Social and Emotional Competence: Critical Skills for School Success

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Today’s Objectives

• Importance of social-emotional learning (SEL)
• Describe a district-wide implementation of SEL in Pennsylvania
• Relationship of SEL and academic achievement
• Relationship of SEL and behavioral infractions
Social and Emotional Learning Defined

- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process by which children and adults acquire the skills to:
  - Recognize and manage emotions
  - Develop caring and concern for others
  - Establish positive relationships
  - Make responsible decisions
  - Handle challenging situations effectively

(paraphrased from CASEL)
Social & Emotional Learning Core Competencies

- **Self-management**: Managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals
- **Self-awareness**: Recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and challenges
- **Social awareness**: Showing understanding and empathy for others
- **Relationship skills**: Forming positive relationships, working in teams, dealing effectively with conflict
- **Responsible decision-making**: Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior

CASEL (2012)
Benefits of SEL

Student gains:
- Social emotional skills
- Improved attitudes about self, school, and others
- Positive classroom behavior
- Average of 11 percentile-point gain on academic achievement tests

Reduced risks for failure:
- Conduct problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Emotional distress

States with SEL Standards

- Illinois
- Ohio
- New York
- Washington State
- New Jersey (proposed)
- Pennsylvania (in committee)
- Kansas
- Oklahoma
- Tennessee
- Vermont
- Anchorage, AK
- British Columbia
District-Wide SEL Implementation in Allentown, PA

- Located in mid-sized city
- Third largest urban school system in PA
- Current enrollment is about 17,200 students
- Diverse student body – 65.7% Hispanic ethnicity
- 86% of students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch
Allentown’s Social-Emotional Learning Initiative (2011-2014)

- **Elementary Schools:**
  - Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum being delivered in pre-K through 5th grade classrooms in 12 schools

- **Middle Schools:**
  - Second Step curriculum being delivered in 6th through 8th grade classrooms in 4 middle schools

- DCRC’s role is to monitor implementation fidelity and evaluate the impact of the initiative
Evaluation of SEL - DESSA-mini

- Provides a snapshot of the overall social-emotional competence of students
- 8 items
- Completed in 1-2 minutes by teachers
- Allows for:
  - Universal screening
  - Repeated assessment
  - Contribute to determination of need for intervention or referral
DESSA-mini Results

• One score – Social Emotional Total (SET)

• *T*-Scores
  – Mean of 50, SD of 10

• Percentiles

• Descriptive terms for score ranges
  – $\geq 60 = \text{Strength} \ (\approx 16\%)$
  – 41-59 = Typical \ (\approx 68\%)
  – $\leq 40 = \text{Need for Instruction} \ (\approx 16\%)$
DESSA-mini in Allentown

• Completed by all Allentown teachers (K-8) in:
  – Oct 2011 (baseline)
  – Jan/Feb 2012 (midyear)
  – June 2012 (end of year)

• Complete data:
  – Year 1:
    • 4,713 elementary students
    • 633 middle school students
SEL and Academic Achievement
Evaluation of Academic Achievement

- Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA’s)
  - Standardized assessments in math and reading
  - Completed by 3rd-8th and 11th grade students
  - Scores are categorized as:
    - Below Basic
    - Basic
    - Proficient
    - Advanced
Relationship Between SEL and Academic Achievement

- Midyear DESSA-mini SET correlated significantly with Math and Reading PSSA scores for elementary and middle school students (moderate effect size)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary (3rd-5th)</strong></td>
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<td>Year 1</td>
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<td>.39</td>
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<td>Year 2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Middle School (6th-8th)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.36</td>
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**p < .01 for all
Elementary Students

Midyear DESSA-mini SET by PSSA
Math Category

Midyear DESSA-mini SET by PSSA
Reading Category

N = 2,189

N = 2,183
Elementary Students

% of Students by PSSA Math and DESSA-mini Categories

% of Students by PSSA Reading and DESSA-mini Categories
Middle School Students

End of year DESSA-mini SET by PSSA Math Category

End of year DESSA-mini SET by PSSA Reading Category

N = 590

N = 586
Middle School Students

% of Students by PSSA Math and DESSA-mini Categories

% of Students by PSSA Reading and DESSA-mini Categories
Income Achievement Gap
Data from Anchorage School District
### 3rd Graders SEC (N=148)

Across 9 Sites
Rated by 10 Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEC</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>d-Ratio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>1.5**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M=51</td>
<td>M=44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race: White</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>NS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>M=48</td>
<td>M=46</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>.76**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M=44</td>
<td>M=51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>.78**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M=41</td>
<td>M=48</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
$3^{rd}$ Graders SEC (N=148)

Variance Explained

76%

SBA Reading

24%

Low Income

- Economic disadvantage explains approx 24% of SBA variance.
- Low income students predicted to average 80 pts lower on the SBA (1 SD).
3rd Graders SEC (N=148)

Variance Explained

- 53% SBA Reading
- 22% SEC
- 16% Low Income
- 9%

- When DESSA scores are added, an additional 22% of SBA variance is uniquely predicted.
- Together, 47% of SBA variance is predictable from economic disadvantage and DESSA.
- Impact of poverty reduced to predicting an average of 50 points less on SBA.
- Students with SEC 1 SD above the mean predicted to average 40 pts higher on the SBA, controlling poverty.
7th Graders SEC (N=288)

Variance Explained

- Economic disadvantage explains approx 9% of TerraNova variance.
- Low income students predicted to average 10 pts lower on the Terranova (almost 2/3 of a SD).
7th Graders SEC (N=288)

When DESSA scores are added, an additional 12% of Terranova variance is uniquely predicted.

• Together, 22% of Terranova variance is predictable from economic disadvantage and DESSA.

• The impact of SEL on elementary school academic achievement may be more profound than middle school achievement.
SEL and Student Behavior
Evaluation of Student Behaviors

- District records behavioral infractions occurring during the school year
  - Level I: Classroom disruption
  - Level II: Minor offenses
  - Level III: Major school offenses
  - Level IV: Expellable offenses
Level IV Infractions During
2011-12

- Assault on staff
- Assault on student
- Bomb threat
- Possession/use/distribution/sale of a controlled substance
- Threat to staff
- Weapons Policy violations
- Repeat Level III Infractions

- 1,003 Level IV Infractions were committed by 218 students
  - Social-emotional competency data is available on 73 of these students (33.5%)
Social-Emotional Competency of Students Committing a Level IV Infraction (Beginning of School Year 2011)

Social-Emotional Categories (DESSA-mini SET) Time 1
Grades K-8
- Strength: 17.8%
- Typical: 59.1%
- Need: 23.1%

N = 9,248 students

Social-Emotional Categories of Students Committing a Level IV Infraction
- Strength: 6.8%
- Typical: 50.7%
- Need: 42.5%

N = 73 students
Level IV Infractions During 2012-13

- Assault on staff
- Assault on student
- Bomb threat
- Possession/use/distribution/sale of a controlled substance
- Threat to staff
- Weapons Policy violations
- Repeat Level III Infractions

- 895 Level IV Infractions were committed by 201 students
  - Social-emotional competency data is available on 86 of these students (42.7%)
Social-Emotional Competency of Students Committing a Level IV Infraction (Beginning of School Year 2012)

Social-Emotional Categories (DESSA-mini SET) Time 1 Grades K-8

- Strength: 17.6%
- Typical: 60.0%
- Need: 22.4%

N = 10,750 students

Social-Emotional Categories of Students Committing a Level IV Infraction

- Strength: 3.5%
- Typical: 48.8%
- Need: 47.7%

N = 86 students
Conclusions

• Social and emotional skills are positively related to academic achievement
• Enhancing social and emotional skills promises to narrow the income achievement gap
• Social and emotional skills are negatively related to challenging behaviors
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