A close-up photograph of a young child's face, showing their eyes and hair, positioned on the left side of the slide. The child has dark, curly hair and is looking slightly to the right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

Fostering Social- Emotional Competencies to Promote Success in School, Career, and Life

Gregory Austin, PhD, WestEd
Louisiana School Climate Institute
June 5, 2014

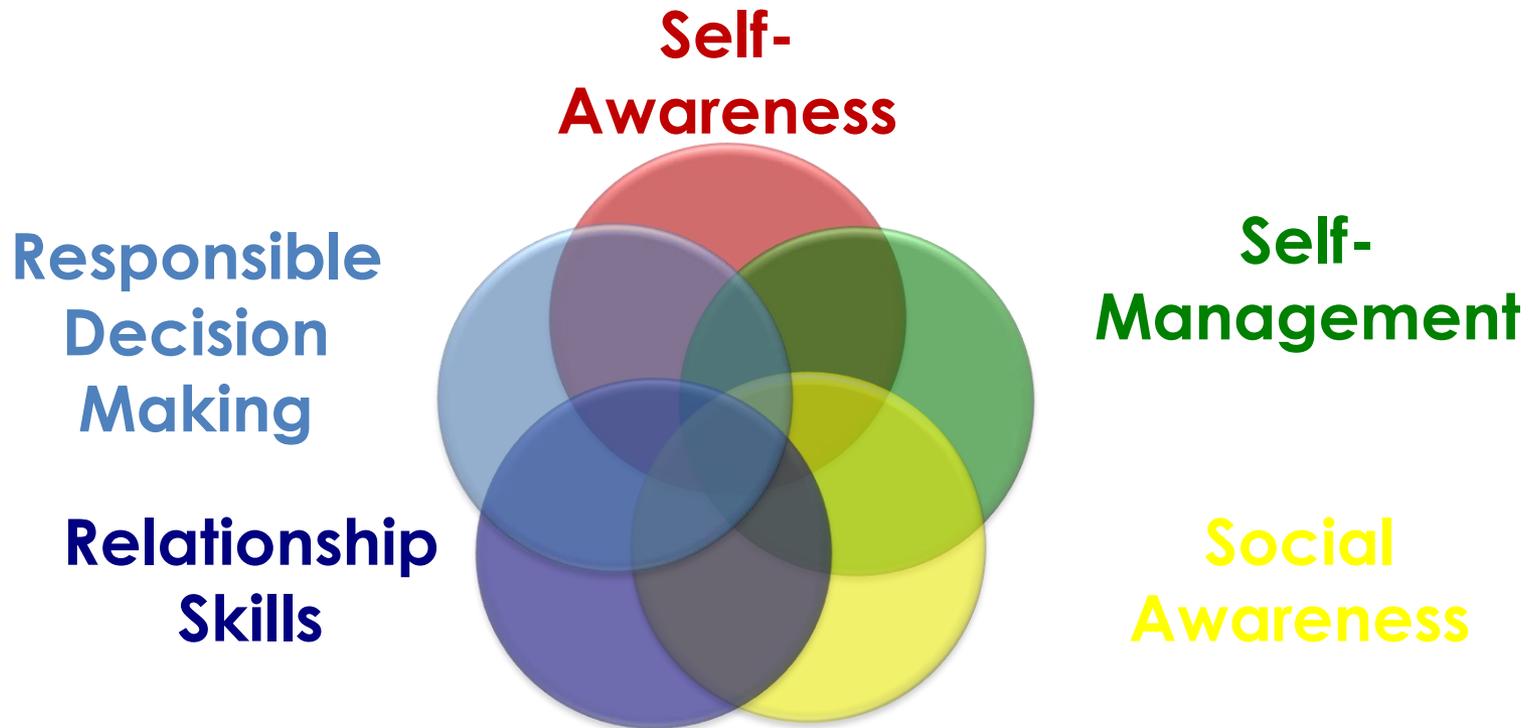
What Is Social-Emotional Learning?

- The process of developing general, personal competencies needed long-term for success in school, career, and life.
 - Other than content knowledge and intellectual capability as measured by cognitive tests.
 - Sometimes called “noncognitive skills,” a misnomer, or life skills, soft skills etc.
- Not what you know but HOW you approach learning.

What are They:

The Five CASEL Core Competencies

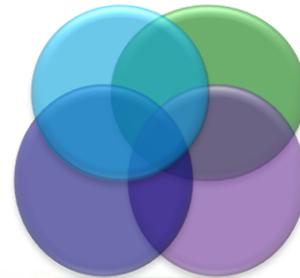
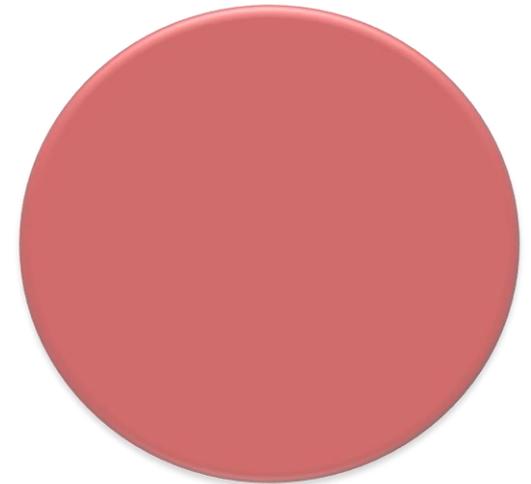
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning has identified five core areas of social and emotional competence.



Self-Awareness

Recognize, understand, and management one's emotions, values, strengths, and limitations

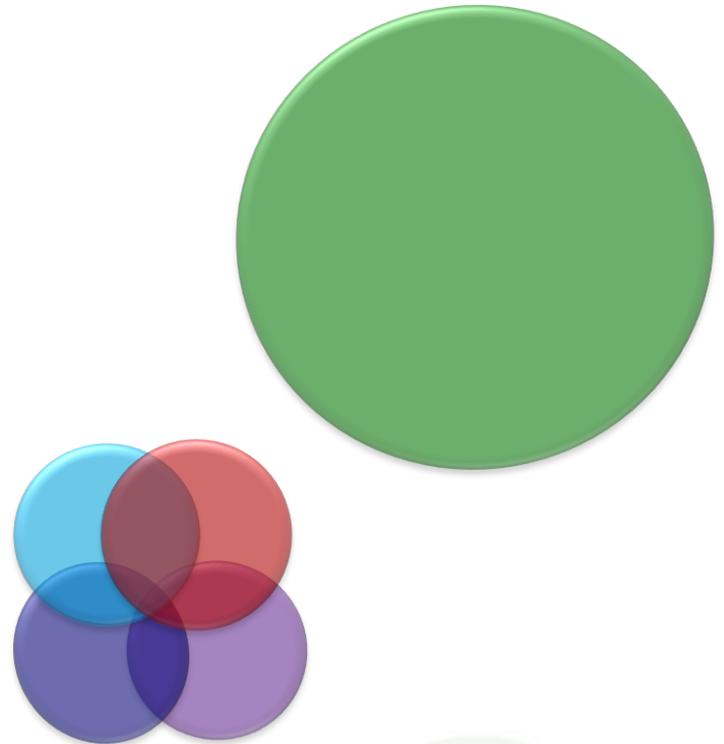
- Identifying emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Sense of self-confidence
- Self-efficacy



Self-Management

Manage emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals

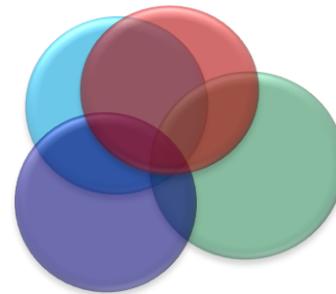
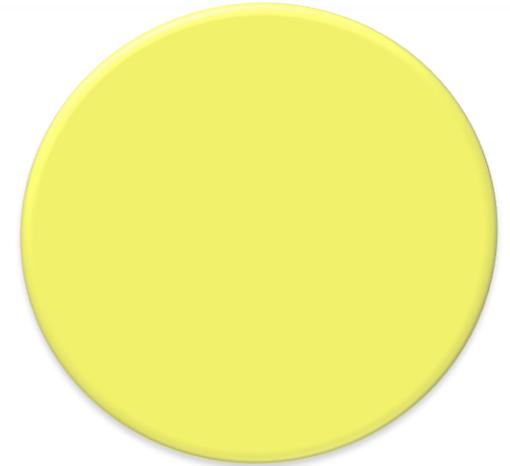
- Impulse control
- Stress management
- Self-discipline/control
- Self-motivation, grit, tenacity
- Goal setting
- Organizational skills



Social Awareness

Show understanding and empathy for others

- Perspective taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others



Relationship Skills

Form positive relationships, work in teams, deal effectively with conflict

- Communication
- Social engagement
- Building relationships
- Working cooperatively, collaboration
- Resolving conflict
- Helping/Seeking help

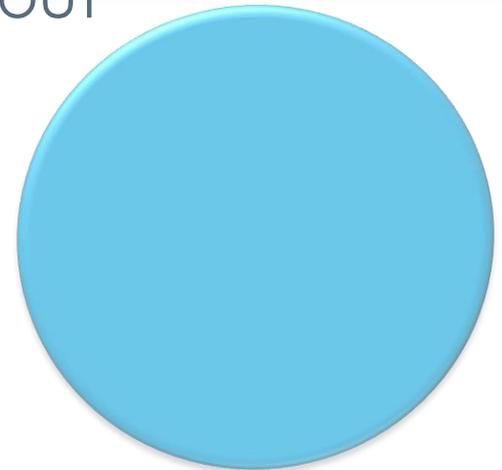


Relationships are the Foundation for Learning

Responsible Decision-Making

Make ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior

- Situation analysis
- Problem identification
- Problem solving
- Ethical responsibility
- Evaluation



What Are They?

- Resilience (positive adaption in the face of risk)
- Optimism & zest
- Gratitude
- Curiosity
- Metacognition: ability to reflect on how learning

Why They Are Important



Overview to Benefits

- Greater likelihood of success in school, career, and life
- Improved attitudes towards self, others, and school
- Citizenship
- Physical Health
- Mental Health
 - Reduced risk of emotional distress (coping skills), maladjustment, unhappiness.
- Social functioning and personal relationships

Behavioral Benefits (General)

- More prosocial behavior and self-regulation
- Understanding of consequences of behavior.
- Take responsibility for choices
- Less likelihood of substance use
- Operate with empathy for peers
- Reductions in violence, aggression, and victimization.

School Benefits

- Improved attitudes towards school
- Greater trust and respect for teachers
- Reduced absences.
- More classroom participation and less disruptions, thus more time on task.
- Lower rate of conduct and discipline problems and hostility.
- More positive school climate, less need for external controls.
- Increased engagement, academic mindset, learning, and achievement.

School Benefits

- Less teacher stress
 - School staff identify addressing the social and emotional issues of students as a major challenge

Learning

- Learning a holistic process involving intellect, emotion, and social interaction.
 - Cognitive and noncognitive factors continually interact in essential ways.
- Emotions affect how and what we learn.
 - Can facilitate or hamper learning
 - The brain's emotional centers are interwoven with the neocortical areas involved in cognitive learning.
- Learning a social process.
 - Schools are social places.
 - Students learn in collaboration with teachers, in the company of peers, and with support of families.

Learning: Self-control

- One of the two top social skills (along with cooperation) identified by teachers as critical for success.
- Consistently linked in research as a primary reason for educational problems.
- In one study, self-discipline and perseverance better predictor of academic success than intelligence.
- Related concept: GRIT, persistence — the fostering of “performance character”

Learning: Academic Mindset

- Passion and purpose (perceived value)
- Grit
- Growth mindset
- Self-efficacy (I can succeed)
- Identity and community (belonging)

Farrington et al. 2012

Learning: Success in Common Core

- Math and ELA standards contain communication (speaking, listening), cooperative skills, problem solving.
- Math standards mention persistence.
- Acquisition of noncognitive skills will help ensure that students are engaged in learning and better prepared to perform well, helping to ensure that the CCSS will not be another unsuccessful reform effort.

Career and Life Success

- Better predictors than academic skills of post-high school success, particularly career success (Deke & Haimson, Heckman, Conley)
- These are “Transferable” competencies that can be applied in broad range of situations throughout life.
- Highly valued by employers.
 - Teamwork and collaboration
 - Communication
 - Social responsibility
 - Problem solving

It's What Resilience Looks Like

- Positive self-perceptions, values, and skills that help youth gain sense of mastery and goal-orientation they need to thrive even in the fact of adversity.

Social Competence

- Responsiveness
- Communication
- Empathy/caring
- Compassion
- Altruism
- Forgiveness

Autonomy

- Positive Identity
- Internal locus of control
- Self-efficacy/mastery
- Initiative
- Self-awareness
- Resistance
- Adaptive distancing

Problem-solving

- Planning
- Flexibility
- Critical thinking/insight
- Resourcefulness

Sense of Purpose

- Goal directedness
- Achievement motivation
- Educational aspiration
- A special interest/hobby
- Persistence
- Imagination/creativity
- Optimism/hope
- Sense of Meaning

Mitigate High Poverty Risk Factors

- The most severe consequences of poverty on learning are psychological and behavioral rather than cognitive, and SE skills gaps open up early.
- Childhood traumas associated with poverty overwhelm the ability of developing bodies and minds to manage stress and block the capacity to learn.
 - The part of the brain most affected by early stress is the prefrontal cortex, which is critical in self-regularity activities.
- Children who grow up in stressful environments generally find it hard to concentrate, sit still, follow directions, and be resilient.

Serves as Coordinating Framework

Help move districts, schools, & communities move from...

- Fragmented efforts
 - Piecemeal implementation
 - No common language
- ...to a better place for kids.
- Built on student strengths
 - Academic *and* life success
 - Coordinated efforts
 - Systemic integration



Some Evidence



Durlak Meta-Analysis (2011)

Science Links SEL to Student Gains:



- Social-emotional skills (22%ile)
- Improved attitudes about self, others, and school (9%ile)
- Positive classroom behavior (9%ile)
- Standardized achievement test scores (11%ile)

And Reduced Risks for Failure:



- Conduct problems (9%ile)
- Emotional distress (10%ile)

Educational Outcomes

- School bonding and SEL related to improved test scores and grades three years later.
- 83% of high quality SEL programs produced academic gains.
- SEL and Character Ed programs increased test scores by 11-17%.
- Social-Emotion Learning interventions have increased academic achievement (grades, test scores) by 11 percentile points.
 - Positive impacts across grades and when implemented by existing school staff.

Educational Outcomes

- Self-discipline accounted for more than twice as much variance as IQ on final grades, school attendance, hours spent doing homework.
- Racial gaps in achievement are primarily due to gaps in skills, not discrimination.

Duckworth & Seligman 2005, Heckman 2011

Effects of SEL Participation on Teachers

- Problems-solving increased 96%
- Communication with students, 100% 6th grade and 79% 9th
- Dealing with stress, increased 88% and 83%

Pays Off Long-Term: Seattle Social Development Project 15 Year Outcome

At age 21—15 years after participating in a high-quality SEL program—young people still outpaced peers:

- Higher HS graduation and college attendance
- Better rates of employment and economic status
- Better emotional and mental health
- Fewer with criminal record and substance problems
- **Cost-benefit: \$3.14/student for \$1.00 invested²**

Career and Life Success

- 67% of high school students would benefit eight years after graduation from improving one of five noncognitive competencies vs. 33% from increasing math scores.
- Over 16 years, noncognitive skills (locus of control, self esteem) exert at least as high and probably a higher impact on job market outcomes than do cognitive skills, except for college graduate.

Summary

- Multiple cognitive and personal skills are needed to succeed in life. Content knowledge alone not sufficient.
 - Cognitive and social emotional factors continually interact in essential ways to foster success in school, career, and life.
- SEL highly predictive of grades, test scores, high school and college completion, wages and job success, overall well-being — in some cases more predictive than cognitive ability and content knowledge — in part because they are more transferable.

How Do We Foster?

SE competencies are malleable and can be taught and cultivated.



Main School-based Strategies

- Direct instruction through specific SEL curriculum.
 - Naming and recognizing emotions, preventing and resolving conflicts with peers, goal setting, and perspective taking
 - Application to specific problems behaviors, such as substance abuse, bullying, dropout.

School-based Strategies (2)

- Infuse into regular academic curricula and use of instructional strategies that promote SEL
- Informal learning events and activities (teachable moments)—cafeteria, halls, recess.
- Engage students actively in experiential learning that applies SEL competencies to real-life situations.
- Environmental supports (school climate)
- Parent-community partnerships

School-based Strategies (3)

- Teach, model, and reinforce SEL throughout the school, throughout the day
- Use educational methods that promote:
 - Active student engagement,
 - Opportunities for student contribution, and
 - Authentic, constructive communication among students and staff.
- SEL instruction most effective when provided through multi-year, integrated programming in a supportive school climate and when involves partnerships of schools, families, and communities.

Instructional Practices

Less

- Teacher lecture
- Disconnected subject areas
- Competition
- Rote learning
- Independent seatwork
- Teacher-directed
- Rewards
- Summative feedback

More

- Inquiry/project based learning
- Integrated learning
- Cooperative learning
- Critical thinking & problem solving
- Collaborative structures
- Student-centered
- Self-assessment
- Formative feedback

Strategies: Cooperative Learning

- When students possess skills such as being able to set goals and solve problems by working together in groups, they can apply them to enhance their study behaviors and increase their academic engagement. (Zins et al. 2004)
 - Develop important skills in negotiation and conflict resolution

Environmental Supports

- SEL takes place within the context of school, family, and community environments that support and provide opportunities and recognition for successfully applying these competencies. A requirement!
- Paradigm Shift: From focusing on changing youth improve their behavior to creating contexts that better support them in developing SE competencies.
- SEL needs to be a shared value schoolwide, reflected in policies, practices, and expectations (skills are called for).

School Climate

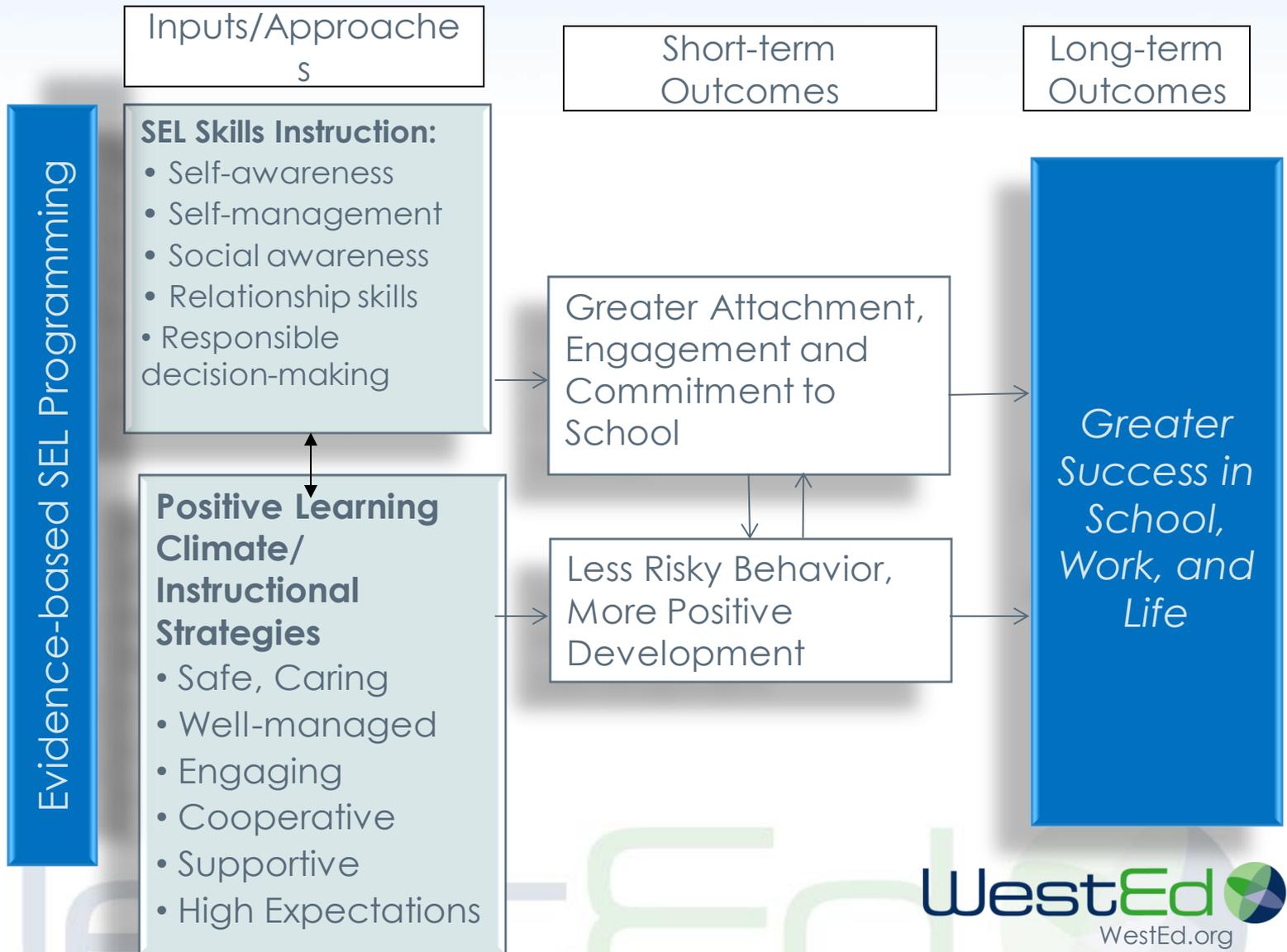
SEL needs supportive school climate in which students:

- See and experience competencies modeled by adults and peers, reinforcing lessons from curricula.
 - Positive, caring, respectful relationships with teachers strengthens student relationships skills.
 - Prosocial teachers/peers lead to more prosocial behavior.
- Have opportunities to apply/practice what they learn.
 - Opportunities for participation also increases intrinsic motivation for prosocial behavior.
- Are recognized for demonstrating skills (positive reinforcement).

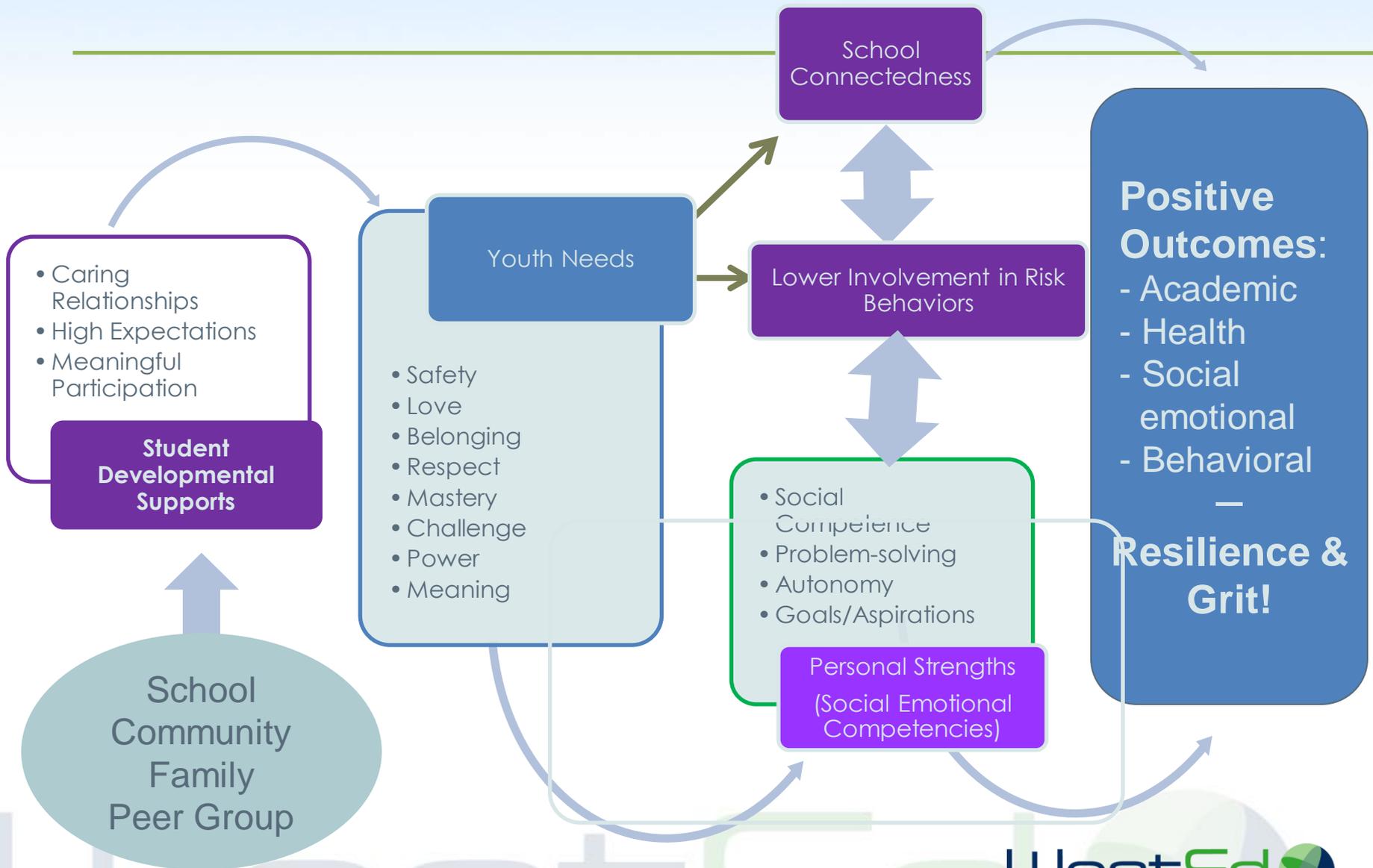
Instruction and Climate: Mutually Reinforcing

- SEL instruction improves school climate
- A positive school climate fosters SE competencies
- Programs implemented in isolation have little effect.
- Focus on both the individual and the school

CASEL Framework



Developmentally Supportive School Climate Model



Models for School Climate Improvement

- Louisiana Safe, Supportive Schools Initiative, Louisiana Department of Education
 - 42 high schools statewide, 2011-2014
- National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments

Other Strategies

- Professional Development
 - Train teachers to teach and staff to reinforce
 - Instruction for how to build healthy learning environments; classroom management practices.
 - Ensure adults are good models and coaches
 - Adults need SEL too!
- Leadership
 - Principals need to take instructional leadership role to ensure instruction happens as required by SEL program
- Start with universal SEL in the primary grades – get quickest buy-in — and build in each grade.

Parent/Community Strategies

- Provide parent education and tips for home and coordinate with community programs (e.g., after-school) and activities.
- Provide coordinated mental and physical health services.

Effective SEL Programming

- Multiyear
- Provides for adult professional development, modeling and coaching
- Provided direct instruction
- Enable students to practice competencies in specific problem areas and real-life situations.
- Are school-wide with a focus on school climate, rather than focus only on “improving” the individual student.
 - Whole-school community-building practices

Effective SEL Programs

SAFE Criteria:

- **Sequential:** Uses a connected and coordinated activities to teach skills
- **Active:** Active learning to practice skills
- **Focused:** Devoted to skill development
- **Explicit:** Explicit targeting of specific skills (vs. positive development in general)

Evidence-based SEL Programs (Randomized Controlled Trials)

- PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies)
- Incredible Years Teacher Training
- I Can Problem Solve
- Good Behavior Game

Implementation Steps

- Principal commitment and engagement of key stakeholders in steering committee
 - Develop and articulate a shared vision
- Conduct school-wide needs and resource assessment
- Develop an action plan for SEL and school climate implementation
- Review and select evidence-based programs/strategies that address identified needs
- Conduct professional development
- Launch SEL instruction in classroom
- Expand into integrated school-wide program
- Monitor and adjust

Strategies for District-wide SEL

- Assess SEL-related needs and resources
- Develop SEL vision and long-term plans
- Communicate with stakeholders
- Align budgets and staffing
- Implement professional development
- Develop SEL learning standards and assessments
- Adopt evidence-based SEL programs that integrate with district and school priorities
- Coordinate SEL with family and community initiatives
- Monitor implementation process and student outcomes
- Participate in learning community with other districts

Getting Started with Needs Assessment: Louisiana Healthy Kids Survey

- Developmental Supports (Environmental Assets, Protective Factors) that Promote Resilience and SEL
 - Caring Adult Relationships
 - High Expectations
 - Opportunities for Meaningful Participation
- Personal Strengths (Resilience Traits/ Social Emotional Capacities / Internal Assets)
 - Cooperation and communication
 - Self-efficacy
 - Self-esteem
 - Empathy
 - Problem-solving
 - Goals and aspirations
- School Connectedness

Personal (Social-Emotional) Strengths

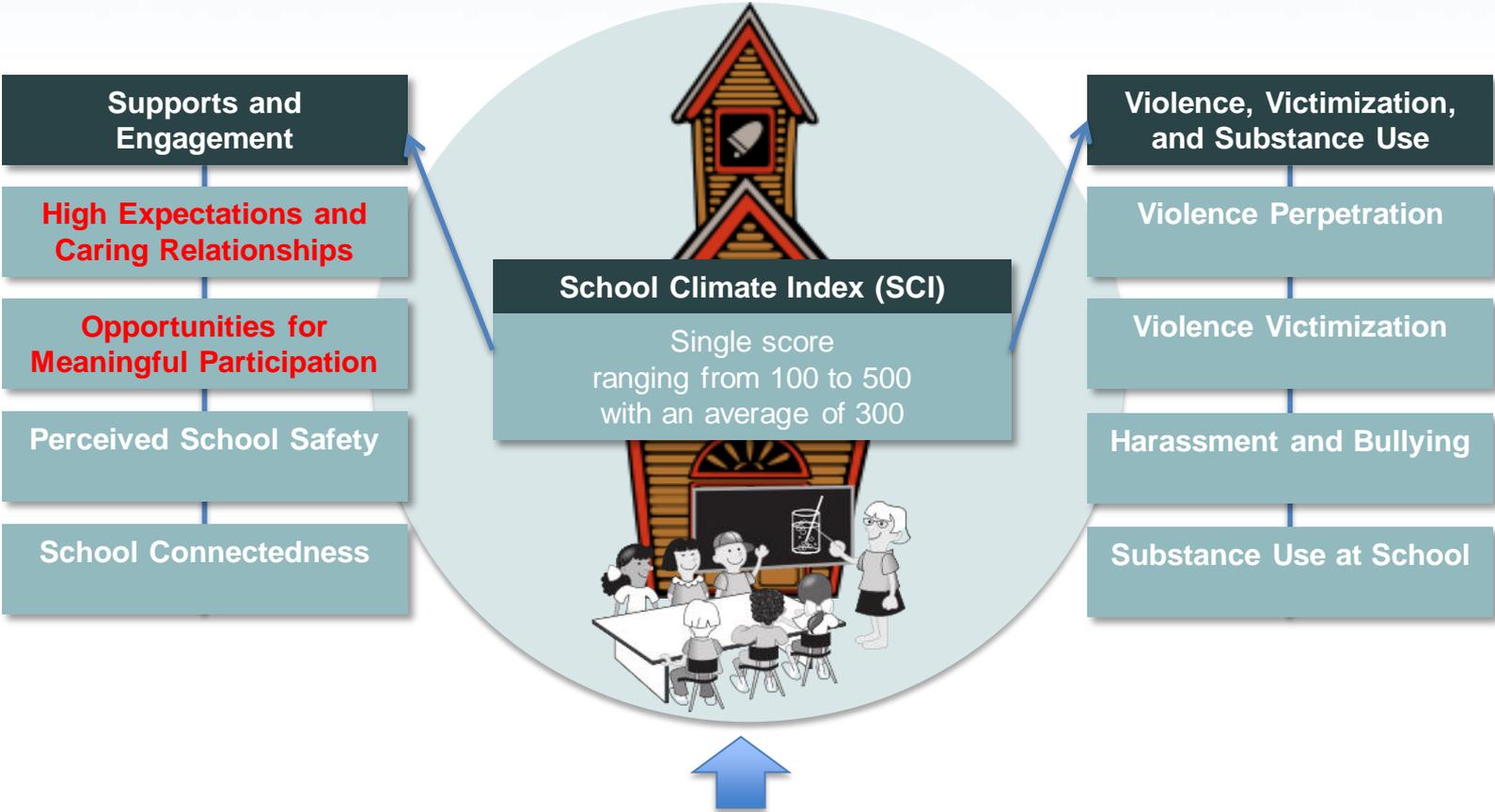
Trait	Measure		
Cooperation and Communication	I can work with someone who has different opinions than mine.	I enjoy working together with other students my age.	I stand up for myself without putting others down.
Self-efficacy	I can work out my problems.	I can do most things if I try.	There are many things that I do well.
Empathy	I feel bad when someone get their feelings hurt.	I try to understand what other people go through.	I try to understand what other people feel and think.
Problem-solving	When I need help I find someone to talk with.	I know where to go for help with a problem.	I try to work out problems by talking about them.
Self-awareness	There is a purpose to my life.	I understand my moods and feelings.	I understand why I do what I do.
Goals and Aspirations	I have goals and plans for the future.	I plan to graduate from high school.	I plan to go to college or some other school after high school.

Social Emotional Health Module

- Self-efficacy*
- Self-awareness*
- Persistence
- Emotional regulation
- Empathy*
- Behavioral self-control
- Gratitude
- Zest
- Optimism
- School support*
- Family coherence
- Peer support*

Download: <http://chks.wested.org/administer>

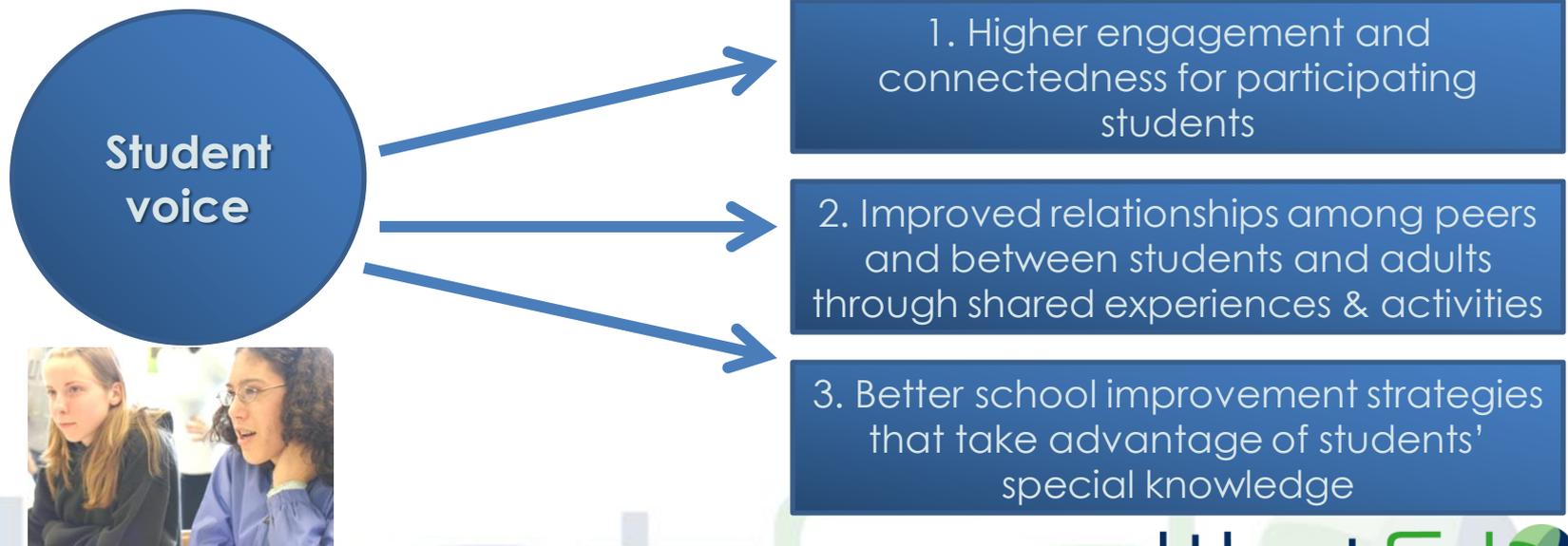
LSSSI School Climate Index



Getting Started: Student Listening Circles

Facilitated focus group that incorporates student voice in the interpretation of data and school improvement planning and promotes youth development.

- Discuss key survey topics with representative group of students with adults in surrounding circle listening.
- Students and staff dialogue over how to address issues raised and incorporate into school improvement Action Plan.



For More Information

- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning: casel.org
- National Center on Safe, Supportive Learning Environments: safesupportivelearning.ed.gov
- On the Louisiana Healthy Kids School Climate Survey
 - Dr. Barbara Dietsch, WestEd
bdietsc@wested.org
- On Student Listening Circles:
 - Dr. Meagan O'Malley, WestEd
momalle@wested.org

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