

*Leading for Change*  
**THROUGH WHOLE-SCHOOL  
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING**  
*Strategies to Build a Positive School Culture*



Jennifer E. Rogers

CORWIN

*Thank you*

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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *LeadingforChange Through Whole-School Social-Emotional Learning* by Jennifer Rogers. These figures list some of the currently most relevant studies that you can discuss with stakeholders.

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## Powerful Evidence Supporting the Impact of Enhancing Students' Social Emotional Skills

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Research has demonstrated that SEL can have many positive outcomes. All types of stakeholders may be interested in how SEL impacts them. Whether you are working with parents, teachers, administrators, or mental health practitioners, you need to provide them with the evidence that speaks to them. New studies on the efficacy of SEL are being done every year. Figures 2.1 through 2.5 list some of the relevant studies that you can discuss with stakeholders without being too over-whelming.

## Figure 2.1 Evidence for Teachers

1. Students who participated in quality SEL instruction demonstrated improved attitudes and behaviors (Durlak J., Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Students showed greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork, and better classroom behavior.
2. The lead teacher is the best provider of direct instruction of social skills to students (Pelco & Reed-Victor, 2007). The lead teacher is the adult who is most often available throughout the school day to provide the students with the ongoing practice they need before they can independently demonstrate the learning-related social skills that they have learned during explicit lessons. This practice can include modeling, role-playing, and acknowledging examples of positive student behavior.
3. Students will learn best from interventions if they are done in the classroom environment. (Lynch, Geller, & Schmidt, 2004). Classrooms are particularly appropriate for the implementation of prevention programs for young children, because the structured, supportive environment creates a protective factor.
4. Teacher implementation of SEL curriculum can lead to the experience of less stress, greater teaching efficacy, and greater job satisfaction (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). This study investigated whether and how teachers' perceptions of SEL and climate in their schools influenced three things—teachers' sense of stress (workload and student behavior stress), teaching efficacy, and job satisfaction. It was found that SEL has an important impact not only on students but on teachers. "In the short-term, learning new skills for SEL appears to be stressful; however, in the long term—once teachers' confidence for implementing SEL increases—they are likely to experience less stress, greater teaching efficacy, and greater job satisfaction" (p. 1198).
5. Social skills can be generalized by embedding them in lessons. (McIntosh & Mackay, 2008). To create an efficiency of efforts, attention should be paid to lesson design and delivery so that multimodal prevention (behavior management, social skills, and learning strategies) is intentionally embedded within the lesson delivery of classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and tutors.
6. Students need opportunities to practice and apply SEL skills in actual situations (Lane, Menzies, Barton-Atwood, Doukas, & Munton, 2005). To increase their mastery of social skills, students need to be provided skill instruction, and they need sufficient opportunities to master the skills that they learn, become fluent in their use, and adapt the use of these skills to a wide variety of social settings. Students are more likely to generalize the social skills they are taught if the social skills instruction focuses on targeted social behaviors that are valued and likely to be reinforced in students' natural settings. Generalization is enhanced when the social skill instruction is provided across persons and settings that the student is likely to encounter daily.

What does this evidence mean to me? And my students in class?

## Figure 2.2 Evidence for Administrators

1. Students who participate in quality SEL instruction demonstrated fewer negative behaviors. (Durlak J., Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). This included decreases in disruptive class behavior, noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, and disciplinary referrals.
2. Learning and behavior are interconnected, and schools that systemically address both academic learning and SEL have shown increased student achievement (Elliott & Kushner, 2007). Schools that use a proactive, systematic process for identifying and addressing student needs through universal and early screening across both academic and social/behavioral areas are better able to provide supports and promote skill development in the key areas before many students develop a more serious or prolonged problem that requires intensive, formalized, and expensive supports.

3. SEL enhances students' knowledge about empathy, anger management, impulse control, and bullying prevention (Edwards, Hunt, Meyers, Grogg, & Jarrett, 2005).
4. SEL programs return eleven dollars on every dollar spent (Belfield et al., 2015). This cost-benefit analysis included the reductions in aggression, substance abuse, delinquency, depression and anxiety and their resulting costs to the education system.
5. School environments high in connectedness promote a sense of security (Blum, 2005). A report supported by a grant from the US Department of Defense demonstrated the importance of a school environment that promotes a feeling of security through connectedness (Blum, 2005). A sense of belonging and relationships with other students and teachers were important in feeling connected to school, and nonacademic aspects of school were a significant contributor to those feelings. This report revealed seven qualities that influence students' positive attachment to school: had a sense of belonging, liked school, perceived that teachers were supportive and caring, had good friends within the school, were engaged in their current and future academic progress, believed discipline was fair and effective, and participated in extracurricular activities.

What does this mean for my school?

### Figure 2.3 Evidence for Parents/Families

1. Students who participate in quality SEL instruction perform better academically. (Durlak Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Their achievement scores are an average of 11 percentile points higher than those of students who have not received SEL instruction.
2. Classrooms high in emotional support may be particularly helpful for children whose temperamental characteristics are not well matched with the demands of the classroom (Rudasill, Gallagher, & White, 2010). Highly supportive classroom climates (teacher is in tune with the needs of the students and readily responsive to them) may buffer children from lower academic achievement associated with poor attention, and children's temperamental attention and classroom emotional support work together to predict academic achievement.
3. SEL is a good return on investment (Belfield et al., 2015). The overall goal is for children to identify and understand their emotional state and to manage and communicate their emotions appropriately and so increase social competence and reduce aggressive and delinquent behaviors. The overall result suggests a good return on an SEL investment under a variety of assumptions.
4. Programs that promote academics, social skills, and school connectedness have long-term positive outcomes (Lonszak, Abbott, Hawkins, Kosterman, & Catalano, 2002). Longitudinal gains from theory-based programs that promote academic success, social competence, and bonding during elementary school can prevent risky sexual behavior and adverse health consequences in early adulthood.
5. Social competence in kindergarten predicts future wellness (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015). A longitudinal study that followed students for 20 years determined that those rated high in social competence in kindergarten were more likely to graduate from high school, attain a college degree, and have a full-time job at the age of 25.
6. SEL competencies of middle school students predict current and future grades and test scores (Fleming et al., 2005). Results of this study indicated that higher levels of school connectedness and better social, emotional, and decision-making skills were related to higher test scores and higher grades.

What does this mean for my child?

## Figure 2.4 Evidence for College/Career Readiness

1. Kindergarteners' social emotional skills are a significant predictor of their future education, employment, and criminal activity (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015). Kindergarten teachers were surveyed on their students' social competence. Researchers used that data and compared it to follow-up data collected 19 years later, when these same students were approximately 25 years old. It was found that students rated as having higher social competence in kindergarten were more likely to have graduated college, to be gainfully employed, and to not have been arrested than students rated as having lower social skills.
2. SEL can improve the factors known to help students through college (Taylor, Oberle, Durlack, & Weissberg, 2017). This study analyzed results from 82 different programs involving more than 97,000 students from kindergarten through middle school in the US, Europe, and the UK. The effects were assessed at least six months after the programs completed. The researchers found that SEL continued to have positive effects in the classroom but was also connected to longer-term positive outcomes. Students who participated in programs graduated from college at a rate 11 percent higher than peers who did not. Their high school graduation rate was 6 percent higher. Drug use and behavior problems were 6 percent lower for program participants, arrest rates 19 percent lower, and diagnoses of mental health disorders 13.5 percent lower.
3. The top five attributes that employers seek in their applicants include leadership, ability to work in a team, communication skills (written), problem-solving skills, and communication skills (verbal). (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2016). Four of these attributes are intentionally taught through SEL.
4. The US Department of Education has an "Employability Skills Framework" that includes effective relationships through interpersonal skills and personal qualities, critical thinking skills, and communication skills (Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, 2018) These skills are improved using SEL practices.
5. Students with high self-efficacy or self-awareness appear to adapt more successfully to college than students without these attributes (Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2011). This study found that learning to be self-aware and self-sufficient before entering college helped students to adjust to the first year of college

What does this mean for your student's future?

## Figure 2.5 Evidence for Mental Health Practitioners

1. Students who participate in quality SEL instruction have fewer emotional distress and conduct problems than students who have not participated (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). This meta-analysis found fewer reports of student depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal. Students who participated in SEL programs implemented by their teachers showed these gains in diverse communities across K-12 grade levels and locations.
2. Integrated approaches of PBIS (positive behavior interventions and supports) and SEL produced greater improvements in overall mental health than either approach alone. (Cook, Frye, Slemrod, Lyon, & Renshaw, 2015). Findings from this study speak to the power of implementing a more comprehensive structure of universal supports by integrating PBIS and SEL interventions together using a blended approach both theoretically and practically speaking. This combined approach produced additive effects on mental health outcomes, including internalizing and externalizing behavior problems, beyond changes that occurred when implementing only one intervention.
3. SEL is an effective component in bullying prevention (Smith & Low, 2013). Skills taught in SEL programs contribute to the prevention of bullying at school.
4. The school environment offers an ideal setting in which to work with child survivors of trauma, as all students have accessibility to school mental health resources (Thompson & Trice-Black, 2012). Children exposed to the trauma of domestic violence tend to experience difficulties with internalized and externalized behavior problems, which

can include deficits in social skills and academic functioning. Domestic violence can be a hidden issue that the school may not be aware of, so school staff cannot provide individual support to students who are living through this trauma. Whole-school SEL approaches can support those students who are experiencing trauma at home that the school and mental health practitioners are not privy to.

5. Students with disabilities can benefit from small group social instruction (Ledford & Wolery, 2013). Small group instruction provides multiple opportunities to observe social and other behaviors performed by peers, which may increase the ability to understand and perform the social skills that are reinforced at the school.
6. Nurturing environments promote well-being and reduce the impact of mental and emotional disorders (Biglan, Flay, Embry, & Sandler, 2012). Environments that are nurturing have impacts in the following ways: They minimize biologically and psychologically toxic events; teach, promote, and richly reinforce prosocial behavior, including self-regulatory behaviors; monitor and limit opportunities for problem behavior; and foster psychological flexibility—the ability to be mindful of one’s thoughts and feelings and to act in the service of one’s values even when one’s thoughts and feelings discourage taking valued action.

What does this mean for student mental health?