EL PASO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Social Emotional Learning (2017-2018)

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Social Emotional Learning Evaluation (2017-2018)

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EL PASO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Executive Summary

The El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) implemented the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) initiative during the 2016-2017 school year. Seven schools were selected to serve as the first cohort of implementation. The schools were represented by six elementary schools (Crosby, Johnson, Lee, Park, Roberts, and Western Hills), and one middle school (Terrace Hills). The seven lead sites were chosen, among other factors, because of their likelihood of implementing the program with fidelity. The middle school had a midyear change in administration and agreed to begin its first implementation year with the Cohort 2 campuses. The remaining 6 Cohort 1 schools showed collective decreases in discipline referrals along with positive campus perceptions during their first implementation year. Those 6 schools were charged with rolling out SEL practices to their students as well as leading Cohort 2 schools as they implement SEL. The incoming Cohort 2 was made up of 11 elementary schools (Alta Vista, Beall, Bonham, Burleson, Collins, Logan, Moye, Powell, Putnam, Stanton, and Zach White), 6 middle schools (Bassett, Henderson, Lincoln, Magoffin, Morehead, and Terrace Hills), and 3 high schools and intermediate schools (Young Women's STEAM Research and Preparatory Academy, Austin, and Chapin). Telles Academy, an alternative campus, received extensive discipline and reintegration training; and Polk elementary began a soft SEL rollout. Cohort 2 schools were selected on several criteria including interest and need. A total of 28, or almost one-third of all district schools, are in the process of integrating SEL into their campus operations, 26 schools officially belong to SEL cohorts.

In addition to a strategic push to include social emotional learning in the academic curriculum of the students at EPISD, the district also made the commitment to make social emotional learning a part of the larger staff culture. As such, the district encouraged central office staff to attend several training sessions aimed at increasing their social emotional competence. During the 2016-2017 year, all central office staff were encouraged to attend the SEL professional learning series. During year 2, each department assigned two staff members to attend the series

and disseminate the information to leadership and staff to encourage ownership of SEL practices department-wide.

The district's decision to implement the SEL initiative is part of the strategic priorities set in EPISD 2020 (EPISD, n.d.). The qualitative data to date suggests that the SEL trainings have been effective in stimulating interest, commitment, and growth from both school cohorts and central office staff at EPISD. The quantitative data is trending in the desired direction. Typically, programs that focus on social and emotional growth show small but stable changes over time. The focus is not necessarily on immediate returns, but on long-term sustained growth that impacts all areas of student development, including academic achievement, over a period of years. The major recommendations stemming from this evaluation are to continue providing extensive professional learning, campus support, and to explore discipline policies for key Cohort 2 schools to ensure the increase in referrals is due to normal or explained circumstances and not due to other issues.

Recommendations

The Social Emotional Learning initiative had a successful second year of implementation. Cohort 1 campuses received five capacity building training sessions along with extensive campus coaching and training and are building on prior implementation success. Cohort 2 campuses have shown gains in several areas during their professional learning series. The initiative has also been successful at the district level with several well-attended and positively-rated capacity building sessions. In order for the initiative to continue building upon its success the following recommendations are made:

- Continue extensive professional learning sessions to enable incoming cohorts to maximize their implementation success, while at the same time ensuring that current cohorts continue building on their learning.
- Continue building on adult SEL as the shift in adult behavior is having a positive impact on student perception.
- Examine the root causes of discipline referral increases in key Cohort 2 elementary schools to ensure observed increases are due to normal circumstances and not other policy or procedural changes.

Program Description

During the 2016-2017 year, the El Paso Independent School District embarked on a mission to improve learning for its students. One of the largest and most ambitious initiatives to come out of the district's 2020 strategic plan was to incorporate social emotional learning (SEL) into every aspect of the district's operations. The vision of the SEL initiative is that all students, teachers, administrators, and staff will become socially and emotionally intelligent individuals that can self-regulate and deal with the stresses of everyday life.

The 2016-2017 school year served as the baseline year to establish indicators to measure implementation success. During the implementation year, the six Cohort 1 schools showed significant decreases in discipline referrals along with positive climate indicators and a strong perception of implementation success at the campus level. During the second year of implementation, Cohort 1 continued to make gains in perception of SEL markers, maintained its discipline referral reductions, and continued to experience continued SEL commitment from its staff. Cohort 2 saw increases in perception overall, including staff perceptions of key SEL markers of implementation. Secondary schools saw a drop in discipline referrals; however, elementary Cohort 2 campuses experienced an increase in discipline referrals, a finding that warrants further exploration.

In addition to the two school cohorts, district staff continued to build on its success by receiving five trainings to incorporate the SEL philosophy into the individual work of employees, departments, and the district as a whole. The SEL capacity building is a collaborative effort between the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and the Department of Student and Family Empowerment. The results so far show trends in a positive direction, especially for Cohort 1 campuses. Preliminary data for Cohort 2 is showing initial signs of positive impact. The presence of positive findings is encouraging because initiatives that focus on whole-child outcomes often lag in tangible signs of progress. The success of SEL initiatives is

measured in long-term, sustained impact. Given the early implementation results there is cause for optimism and celebration for the work being done at EPISD.

Another major milestone reached during the second year of SEL implementation was the selection of an elementary school SEL curriculum, and a decision to pilot a program for secondary schools. All elementary schools implementing SEL will adopt Sanford Harmony, a SEL evidence-based program to facilitate SEL implementation in the classroom beginning in their third year of implementation. Cohort 1 will adopt the evidence-based program during the 2018-2019 year. The selection of the program was made after each available program was extensively researched and vetted by an advisory team of campus staff, teachers, principals, district staff, and parents. One secondary school (Lincoln Middle School) will pilot the Second Step program and a decision on the final evidence-based program to be used in secondary schools is expected to be reached during the 2018-2019 year. Note that the first set of secondary schools will not begin their third year until 2019-2020, giving them ample time to explore programs and make an informed selection.

Program Owner(s)

The Social and Emotional Learning program is housed under the Department of Student and Family Empowerment, Executive Director Ray Lozano oversees its implementation. The SEL initiative is undertaken by 4 SEL coordinators including a Lead SEL Coordinator.

Program Funding

The projected budget for the 2017-2018 school year amounts to $381,330. The budget funds substitutes for Cohort 1 and 2 teachers to attend the professional learning series, consulting by the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), SEL-related travel to conferences and SEL districts, and supplies/materials.

Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

In concert with the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and the Department of Student and Family Empowerment, the baseline criteria for evaluating the Social Emotional Learning initiative through the 5-year implementation period were established. The current evaluation tracks second-year data for Cohort 1 schools, as well as baseline data for Cohort 2 schools.

1- **How was Social Emotional Learning capacity built during implementation year 2?**

2- **How has Social Emotional Learning impacted climate and perception at the Cohort 1 campuses?**

3- **How has Social Emotional Learning impacted climate and perception at the Cohort 2 campuses?**

4- **How has Social Emotional Learning impacted attendance and discipline at the Cohort 1 campuses?**

5- **How has Social Emotional Learning impacted attendance and discipline at the Cohort 2 campuses?**

6- **How do SEL campuses view their implementation success?**

Major Evaluation Questions and Results

1- How was Social Emotional Learning Capacity built during implementation year 2?

Cohort 1 received four professional learning sessions in addition to extensive on-site coaching cycles. Cohort 2 received five semi-monthly professional learning sessions, with extensive on-site coaching cycles. Central office received four professional learning sessions. The six Cohort 1 elementary schools attended training sessions together, Cohort 2 received sessions by level, with elementary schools and secondary schools grouped separately. Central office staff received professional learning sessions as a separate group. All trainings covered topics appropriate to their audience, although themes often overlapped.

Methodology

The evaluator attended the professional learning series and the Department of Student and Family Empowerment provided data on participant evaluations. Similarly, the evaluator conducted unstructured observations at campuses undergoing the coaching cycle. The results for professional learning sessions are presented first, followed by the results from the coaching cycle observations.

Results

There has been observable growth by the schools implementing the SEL initiative at their campuses. The professional learning series differed by cohort. Cohort 1 schools received more specialized training for them to be able to promote SEL to their students. Cohort 2 schools focused on building SEL capacity at their campus, especially with teachers and adults, Table 1.1 depicts the overarching topics for each professional learning session.

During the first session, Cohort 1 campuses and Central Office staff deepened their understanding of the knowledge gained during implementation year 1. Cohort 1 campuses had an extensive training on morning meetings and classroom strategies. Central Office staff engaged in shared agreement creation and established the role of the department ambassador. Department ambassadors will be key personnel charged with promoting SEL within smaller EPISD departments.

Illustration 1.1: SEL Cohort 2: Elementary[1]

Cohort 2 campuses learned basic information about the guiding SEL principles. They were also provided with ample tools including the CASEL School Guide for them to lay the groundwork for implementation at their campus. All campuses are now part of Schoology groups where they have a wide array of tools at their disposal from communication planning guides, to classroom implementation tools. The Schoology groups and the online CASEL School Guide are a new implementation addition for the 17-18 schoolyear. Additionally, every campus cohort participated in role-alike activities to facilitate idea-sharing and specialized planning. Groups were divided by role (e.g. teachers, principals, counselors), and asked to tackle the learning and future steps for their campus.

Table 1.1: Professional Development Series: SEL Year 2[2]

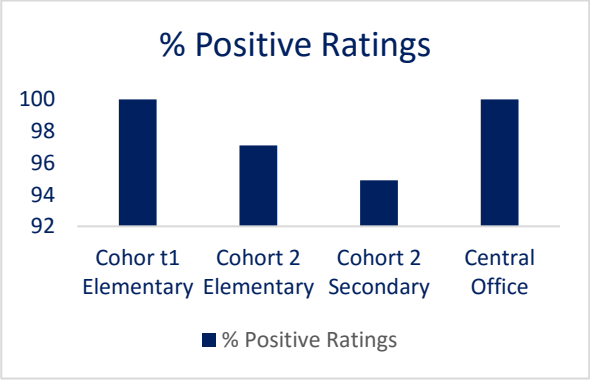
Cohort	Cohort 1: Elementary	Cohort 2: Elementary	Cohort 2: Secondary	Central Office
Session 1	✓ Morning meetings ✓ SEL Competencies ✓ CASEL School Guide ✓ Communication Planning	✓ SEL Overview ✓ CASEL Signature Practices ✓ Classroom Strategies ✓ SEL Team Planning ✓ Role-Alike	✓ SEL Overview ✓ CASEL School Guide ✓ Role-Alike ✓ Team Planning ✓ Suicide Prevention	✓ SEL Competencies ✓ Ambassador roles ✓ Vision Statements ✓ Shared Agreements
Session 2	✓ Teaching children from poverty ✓ Calm Corners ✓ Mindfulness ✓ Role Alike	✓ Theory of Action ✓ Shared Visions ✓ Growth Mindset	✓ Theory of Action ✓ Shared Visions ✓ Growth Mindset	✓ Department Visions and Shared Agreements ✓ Mindfulness ✓ SEL Strengths and Weaknesses

[1] Data Source: Evaluator Observation Photographs

[2] Data Source: Schoology, Evaluator Observations and attendance at Professional Learning Series

		✓ Coaching Cycle ✓ Role Alike ✓ Needs and Resource Inventory	✓ Coaching Cycle ✓ Role Alike ✓ Needs and Resource Inventory	
Session 3	✓ Incorporating Academics into Morning Meeting ✓ Campus Data Reviews	✓ SEL Review ✓ Theory of Action ✓ Amygdala highjack ✓ Shared Agreements ✓ Role Alike and planning	✓ SEL Review ✓ Theory of Action ✓ Amygdala highjack ✓ Shared Agreements ✓ Role Alike and planning	✓ SEL Review ✓ Trauma Informed Practices ✓ Mindfulness
Session 4		✓ Community Circles ✓ Trauma informed care ✓ Mindfulness ✓ Campus Data Reviews ✓ Planning	✓ Community Circles ✓ Trauma informed care ✓ Relationship building ✓ Campus Data Reviews ✓ Planning	
Session 5	All Cohorts and Central Office Ambassadors attended a 3-hour presentation by LaVonna Roth.			

Figure 1.1: Professional Learning Evaluations[3]



Every group was encouraged to fill out an evaluation at the end of the professional learning sessions. Figure 1.1 depicts the percentage of session participants that rated the sessions positively. During year 1, a similar positive response was observed.

The final piece in the professional development series was the coaching cycle. Every campus implementing the SEL initiative received at least one

[3] Data Source: Department of Student and Family Empowerment internal evaluation forms

coaching cycle visit. During the coaching cycle, designated SEL coordinators held a pre-conference with the SEL campus team along with teachers who had volunteered to have their classroom strategies observed. The SEL coordinators then proceeded to observe the teachers engaging in morning meetings or community circles. Every teacher had an opportunity to debrief with the coordinator, develop a strengths inventory, and set goals for improvement of their practice. Finally, the SEL campus team met to debrief. The coaching cycle is an integral piece of the SEL implementation process as it provides campuses an opportunity to have their practices observed in a non-judgmental and non-evaluative manner. In addition to identifying key strengths in campus-based practices, the coaching cycle also allows for early trouble-shooting and tool sharing.

Together the results from participant evaluations and the coaching cycle signal that the SEL team continues to effectively deliver professional learning, support, and tools to the campuses to enable them to implement the initiative effectively.

2- How has Social Emotional Learning impacted climate and perception at the Cohort 1 campuses?

In order to gauge climate and perception at the Cohort 1 campuses, select questions from the EPISD School Climate Survey and the Gallup National Poll were analyzed. Additionally, four focus groups were conducted at exemplary SEL implementation schools to gauge the experiences of students who experience the program consistently.

Methodology

The School Climate Survey is a district survey used to gauge climate at all district campuses. The survey covers topics related to SEL competencies. Select questions are used to establish longitudinal trends for SEL outcomes. Similarly, the Gallup Poll is a national poll conducted every year for districts across the nation. The poll covers a wide range of topics. Nine questions were selected from the Gallup Poll due to their relatedness to SEL competencies. The elementary schools are instructed to administer each of the surveys solely to 5th graders because they are expected to have the understanding to be able to provide valid opinions.

Additionally, to capture student voices in the evaluation of SEL implementation, four focus groups were conducted at two SEL Cohort 1 sites. The sites were selected based on several criteria including fidelity of implementation. In order to participate, students had to have experienced SEL practices in their classroom for at least the 17-18 schoolyear. The focus groups were conducted at Lee Elementary and Western Hills Elementary. Two focus groups included approximately 10 students from first and second grade. The remaining two focus groups included approximately 10 students from fourth and fifth grade. Each school had one first/second grade group of students, and one fourth/fifth group of students.

Results

Cohort 1 saw more positive perceptions in half of the selected School Climate Survey questions (see Table 2.1). Students feel they are learning to respect others more and they feel safer

at school. Conversely, there was a small decrease in the number of students who feel their teachers believe in them. Students continue to feel that teachers get along at their school.

Table 2.1: School Climate Survey Responses: Cohort 1 Elementary[4]

Question	16-17 (Yr. 1)	17-18 (Yr. 2)
I learn to respect others at my school.	90.3%	93.5%
I feel safe at my school.	78.6%	82.8%
I feel my teachers believe in me.	92.4%	88.3%
I see that teachers get along with each other.	93.0%	92.9%

In their Gallup Poll responses, students continued to express positive perceptions about their campuses. Slight increases in perceptions of school safety, school being fun, and having adults at school praise students were observed. Small increases and decreases observed however are unlikely to be significant due to their magnitude and the fact that Cohort 1 schools are almost at ceiling in the positive direction with their responses.

Table 2.2: Name format for table under question 2.[5]

Question	15-16[6]	16-17 (Yr. 1)	17-18 (Yr. 2)
My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.	4.53	4.59	4.52
I feel safe in this school.	4.00	4.27	4.37
I have fun at school.	4.32	4.34	4.35
I have a best friend at school.	4.60	4.74	4.68
In the last seven days, someone has told me I have done good work at school.	3.99	4.19	4.22
The adults at my school care about me.	4.32	4.46	4.43
I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future.	4.47	4.54	4.53
I have a great future ahead of me.	4.53	4.71	4.59
I have a mentor that encourages my development.	3.97	4.21	4.12

Finally, the focus group conducted with Cohort 1 schools showed that students feel a positive impact from the SEL program when it is faithfully implemented (See Appendix A for a

[4] Data Source: El Paso ISD School Climate Survey
[5] Data Source: Gallup Poll Annual School Survey
[6] Roberts and Western Hills ES did not participate in the 15-16 as it was not mandatory district-wide

full review). Students express joy in participating in morning meetings as well as increased awareness about strategies to control and monitor their behavior. Similarly, students expressed knowing the SEL core competencies (self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills) and using them to guide their actions at school and as they move on to other campuses (in the case of fifth graders).

The results from the perceptual data for Cohort 1 shows that students are feeling more positively about the climate at their schools. More importantly, students are voicing early indicators of success for the SEL initiative. During year 2 of implementation the program is focused on laying the groundwork for classroom-based SEL strategies and instruction, students in our focus groups were able to name key components of the program and use the strategies to improve their learning environments.

3- How has Social Emotional Learning impacted climate and perception at the Cohort 2 campuses?

In order to gauge climate and perception at the Cohort 2 campuses, select questions from the EPISD School Climate Survey and the Gallup National Poll were analyzed.

Methodology

The School Climate Survey is a district survey used to gauge climate at all district campuses. The survey covers topics related to SEL competencies. Select questions are used to establish longitudinal trends for SEL outcomes.

The Gallup Poll is a national poll conducted every year for districts across the nation. The poll covers a wide range of topics. Nine questions were selected from the Gallup Poll due to their relatedness to SEL competencies.

Results

Students at Cohort 2 elementary campuses experienced overall positive increases in every School Climate Survey question. Students feel they are taught to respect others, and they feel safer at school. Students also report feeling like their teachers believe in them and seeing that their teachers get along with each other. This result is encouraging for measuring implementation success for Cohort 2 because the focus of year 1 is on adult SEL.

Table 3.1: School Climate Survey Responses: Cohort 2 Elementary[7]

Question	16-17	17-18 (Yr. 1)
I learn to respect others at my school.	91.5%	95.5%
I feel safe at my school.	84.5%	86.8%
I feel my teachers believe in me.	88.3%	91.0%
I see that teachers get along with each other.	92.3%	94.2%

Cohort 2 secondary campuses experienced growth in two areas, students feeling safer at school (a 16% increase), and students feeling like their teachers get along with each other. It is

[7] Data Source: El Paso ISD School Climate Survey

unclear whether SEL brought about the large increase in perceived safety (since the focus in year 1 is on adult SEL), however the finding is notable due to its size. The second finding regarding teacher culture speaks to the success of early SEL implementation. As mentioned for the elementary Cohort 2 schools, one of the main goals for the initiative in its first year is to build adult SEL ownership and commitment.

Table 3.2: School Climate Survey Responses: Cohort 2 Secondary[8]

Question	16-17[9]	17-18 (Yr. 1)
I learn to respect others at my school.	78.5%	78.1%
I feel safe at my school.	70.1%	86.8%
I feel my teachers believe in me.	72.9%	71.3%
I see that teachers get along with each other.	78.3%	81.3%

Cohort 2 elementary campuses saw slight increases and decreases in their Gallup Poll responses. It is difficult to say whether SEL is responsible for these increases since they are small in magnitude. It is notable however that, when combined, the elementary campuses are almost at ceiling in the positive direction, recall that the highest positive response possible is a 5.

Table 3.3: Gallup Poll Responses: Cohort 2 Elementary[10]

Question	16-17	17-18 (Yr. 1)
My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.	4.59	4.59
I feel safe in this school.	4.43	4.48
I have fun at school.	4.39	4.40
I have a best friend at school.	4.61	4.65
In the last seven days, someone has told me I have done good work at school.	4.15	4.11
The adults at my school care about me.	4.49	4.52
I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future.	4.47	4.52
I have a great future ahead of me.	4.57	4.66
I have a mentor that encourages my development.	4.19	4.16

[8] Data Source: El Paso ISD School Climate Survey
[9] Young Women's Academy began participating in the SCS during the 17-18 year
[10] Data Source: Gallup Poll Annual School Survey

Cohort 2 secondary schools did not see dramatic increases or decreases in their Gallup Poll perceptions. Although the responses in general are positive, it is worth noting that across surveys, secondary campuses tend to rate their experiences less positively than elementary campuses.

Table 3.4: Gallup Poll Responses: Cohort 2 Secondary[11]

Question	16-17[12]	17-18 (Yr. 1)
My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.	4.01	4.02
I feel safe in this school.	3.78	3.76
I have fun at school.	3.73	3.71
I have a best friend at school.	4.29	4.31
In the last seven days, someone has told me I have done good work at school.	3.65	3.64
The adults at my school care about me.	3.75	3.78
I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future.	4.17	4.14
I have a great future ahead of me.	4.50	4.44
I have a mentor that encourages my development.	3.58	3.56

The results from the perceptual data for Cohort 2 indicate that students are perceiving a more positive climate among the adults at their campus. The increases in perceived adult SEL demonstrate success in promoting SEL during year 1 implementation.

[11] Data Source: Gallup Poll Annual School Survey

[12] Bassett MS and Young Women's Academy did not participate in the 16-17 Gallup Poll Survey

4- How has Social Emotional Learning impacted attendance and discipline at the Cohort 1 campuses?

One of the academic achievement indicators SEL is thought to have an impact on is attendance. If students feel safe and valued in school, they are more likely to attend on a regular basis (which in turn, over an extended period of time, impacts their academic performance).

Similarly, the earliest quantitative sign of success of SEL implementation at the campus level is a noticeable decrease in discipline incidents. This indicator is typically captured earlier because the program focuses heavily on the social and emotional aspect of the students and teachers. Discipline rates are an important indicator for the success of Social Emotional Learning initiatives because they signal a mind shift in how educators interact with students and how culture, responsibility, and growth mindset is embedded in day-to-day interactions at the schools.

Methodology

Attendance rates were obtained from *TEAMS,* the district's main data and reporting platform, on June 8, 2018. Attendance rates did not consider absence type and instead considered schoolwide attendance. Discipline rates were obtained from *Data Warehouse*, EPISD's live data management system based on TEAMS reporting. Discipline incidents were included irrespective of severity.

Results

Attendance rates at Cohort 1 campuses have remained virtually unchanged. There is an overall 1% average drop in attendance across campuses.

Campus	Crosby	Johnson	Lee	Park	Roberts	Western Hills
Prior to Implementation	92.92%	93.43%	94.78%	90.96%	94.36%	95.82%
Implementation Year	93.43%	93.62%	92.80%	91.15%	92.10%	93.30%
Current	92.00%	92.47%	91.92%	90.10%	91.44%	92.82%

Table 4.1: Cohort 1 Attendance[13]

During implementation year, Cohort 1 campuses saw a dramatic 30% decrease in discipline referrals. During the second year of implementation, the referral rate kept steady with a 5% increase from implementation year. That is, Cohort 1 was able to maintain the dramatic decrease in discipline referrals, although average number of referrals was up slightly from implementation year.

Table 4.2: Cohort 1 Discipline Incidents[14]

Campus	Crosby	Johnson	Lee	Park	Roberts	Western Hills
Prior to Implementation	104	46	35	94	18	47
Implementation Year	90	50	50	43	2	2
Current	47	33	17	86	12	55

The quantitative results for Cohort 1 show that attendance rates have remained stable across years and that discipline decreases were maintained during the second year of implementation. It is worth noting that these quantitative measures are woven into the SEL implementation plan and are expected to change dramatically after 5 years of implementation. Early movement in the discipline referrals is cause for optimism as campuses continue to implement the SEL stages.

[13] Data Source: TEAMS
[14] Data Source: Data Warehouse

5- How has Social Emotional Learning impacted attendance and discipline at the Cohort 2 campuses?

Attendance and discipline baseline rates were obtained for Cohort 2 schools for longitudinal comparison as the schools implement SEL over a five-year period.

Methodology

Attendance rates were obtained from *TEAMS* on June 8, 2018. Attendance rates did not consider absence type and instead considered schoolwide attendance. Discipline rates were obtained from *Data Warehouse*, EPISD's live data management system. Discipline incidents were included irrespective of severity.

Results

Results from Cohort 2 elementary campuses show a virtually unchanged average attendance rate (see Table 5.1). As with Cohort 1, there was a 1% apparent drop in attendance.

Table 5.1: Attendance Rates for Cohort 2: Elementary[15]

Campus	Alta Vista	Beall	Bonham	Burleson	Collins	Logan
Prior to Implementation	92.98%	93.56%	93.57%	93.64%	93.22%	92.66%
Implementation Year	93.29%	92.62%	93.01%	93.01%	91.89%	90.85%
Campus	**Moye**	**Powell**	**Putnam**	**Stanton**	**White**	
Prior to Implementation	92.88%	94.02%	94.32%	93.83%	94.78%	
Implementation Year	89.78%	91.10%	91.87%	92.44%	94.16%	

Results from Cohort 2 secondary campuses similarly show unchanged attendance rates (see Table 5.2).

[15] Data Source: Teams

Table 5.2: Attendance Rates for Cohort 2: Secondary[16]

Campus	Austin	Bassett	Chapin	Henderson	Lincoln
Prior to Implementation	88.19%	89.15%	92.57%	93.06%	90.70%
Implementation Year	87.70%	88.12%	89.68%	88.38%	89.29%
Campus	**Magoffin**	**Morehead**	**Terrace Hills**	**Young Women's**	
Prior to Implementation	91.99%	91.3%	89.52%	-	
Implementation Year	89.70%	81.86%	87.66%	94.84%	

Discipline referral rates for Cohort 2 elementary campuses increased 50% from prior to implementation year (see Table 5.3). All but three campuses (Alta Vista, Bonham, and White) saw increases in their referral rates. Cohort 2 is on its first year of implementation and the focus during that year is on adult SEL and building commitment to SEL. It is unclear why most campuses saw increases; however, it is worth noting that the bulk of the increase is carried by three schools (Collins, Moye, and Powell). While discipline drops are not expected during year 1 of implementation, it is important to keep track of the nature of the referrals to ensure that teachers are exhausting positive interventions first.

Table 5.3: Discipline Incidents for Cohort 2: Elementary[17]

Campus	Alta Vista	Beall	Bonham	Burleson	Collins	Logan
Prior to Implementation	21	10	24	11	52	83
Implementation Year	20	28	15	26	179	85
Campus	**Moye**	**Powell**	**Putnam**	**Stanton**	**White**	
Prior to Implementation	53	109	10	6	69	
Implementation Year	91	148	12	9	52	

[16] Data Source: TEAMS
[17] Data Source: Data Warehouse

Cohort 2 secondary campuses experienced an overall 6% drop in discipline referrals during their implementation year. An early drop in referrals is promising because it indicates that district policies, the implementation of SEL, and adult commitment lead to a discipline policy that is student-centered.

Table 5.4: Discipline Incidents for Cohort 2: Secondary[18]

Campus	Austin	Bassett	Chapin	Henderson	Lincoln
Prior to Implementation	316	59	441	326	352
Implementation Year	257	74	475	303	388
Campus	**Magoffin**	**Morehead**	**Terrace Hills**	**Young Women's**	
Prior to Implementation	154	122	306	-	
Implementation Year	201	192	273	16	

The evaluation plan for SEL tracks different indicators hypothesized to be affected by the program. Attendance and discipline are medium-term outcome goals where change is expected as a result of implementing SEL at the campus. No attendance changes are yet evident across cohorts. Cohort 1 schools experienced a dramatic discipline referral decrease during their first year, and the decrease has remained stable over time. Cohort 2 elementary campuses experienced increases in referral rates, such a trend is not expected and worth exploring. Cohort 2 secondary campuses experienced a 6% drop in referral rates. Together, these results indicate early positive signs for the initiative especially in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 secondary campuses.

[18] Data Source: Data Warehouse

6- How do SEL campuses view their implementation success?

The district collaborates with CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, to implement the Social Emotional Learning initiative at the district. The collaborative works with districts nationwide implementing social emotional learning programs. As part of their support implementing the SEL initiative, CASEL launches a yearly staff survey to gauge implementation success at the campus level. Data from the survey at the district level is presented here to determine how Cohort 1 and 2 schools view their implementation success.

In addition to the CASEL staff survey, the Department of Student and Family Empowerment requested a series of focus groups to determine how principals perceive the process of implementing the initiative.

Methodology

The CASEL Implementation Survey (CASEL, 2018) provided by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning was used to gauge how SEL schools view their implementation success. The survey contains 68 items that measure the 5 key activities of SEL implementation (building awareness, creating a vision, cultivating adult SEL, promoting SEL for students, and using data for continuous improvement). Although specific participation rates are not available as part of the report, 915 respondents participated in the survey. All 26 schools are represented in the sample. Most of the respondents were teachers (74%). Principals, assistant principals, counselors, and other school staff represented the remaining 26% of the respondents.

The second metric to measure implementation success was based on the responses from 4 focus groups. A total of 20 principals (77%) implementing the SEL program at the Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools participated. The focus groups were conversational in nature, and were conducted at the end of the year (July 10-11, 2018). Principals answered questions about how they viewed their implementation success, their greatest strengths, weaknesses, and they offered suggestions for improvement.

Results

CASEL Staff Survey

Overall, the staff across the 26 campuses reported learning about SEL, being committed to promoting SEL, and believing that students' SEL competence has an impact on their academic achievement. The results suggest that the first step of implementation, fostering SEL among campus staff, is successful. Indeed, the major goal for first-year campuses is to promote SEL among adults at the school.

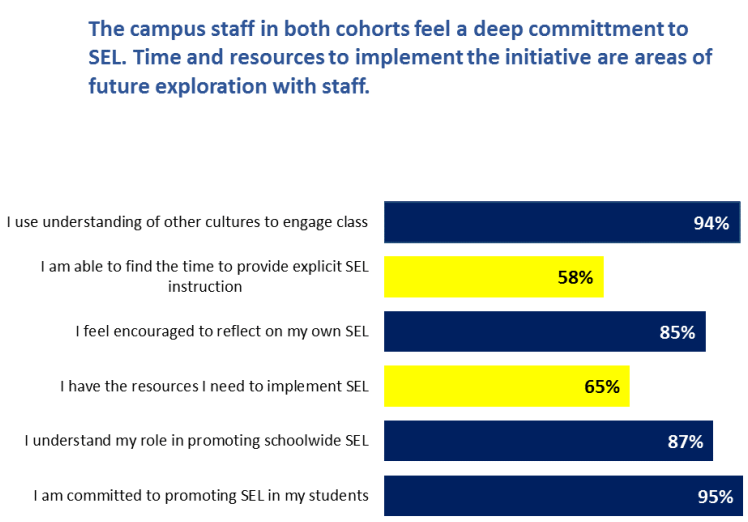


Figure 6.1: Select Responses from the CASEL Staff Survey[19]

Campuses reported variability in the extent to which they created their vision and have administrative support to implement the social emotional learning initiative; however, they nonetheless report having a structured plan in place for implementation. Similarly, campus staff report being supported and encouraged to reflect on their own SEL, a major goal of the initiative during the first two years of implementation.

Cohort 1 schools, those rolling out SEL practices to students in a systematic way during year 2, report successfully integrating instructional strategies to promote SEL, they similarly report having supportive classroom environments, and a greater ease fitting SEL into their instructional day. The goal for Cohort 1 schools is to begin implementing SEL in the classroom ahead of the adoption of an evidence-based program (implemented during year 3).

[19] Data Source: CASEL Staff Survey

The figure on the left represents responses that demonstrate the fostering of adult SEL. The responses also show some areas where school staff might need additional resources. Overall, support for, and understanding of the SEL initiative is evident across the campuses. Staff also feel there is a time constraint to implementing SEL along with several other initiatives in the district. To this effect, the district is exploring advisory periods for secondary schools, and a purposeful alignment of all district initiatives to reduce the burden on campuses as the district strives to achieve its 2020 goals.

Staff similarly reports needing additional resources to implement the initiative. The Department of Family and Student Empowerment has rolled out the SEL initiative in various complementary and additive steps. Campuses are tasked with building adult buy-in during their first year, subsequently, there is a soft roll-out to students during the second year to get staff used to explicit SEL instruction, and evidence-based programming is introduced during year 3. Resources provided during year 1 include several professional learning sessions and campus-based coaching cycles. Campuses in their second year of implementation are provided with books, pamphlets, and all-day training seminars on classroom SEL implementation. In considering the results that campuses feel they lack resources to implement the initiative, the Department of Student and Family Empowerment has requested several administrative focus groups. The focus groups will be aimed at learning what campuses need in terms of resources so that they feel supported and pave the way for future cohorts. The focus groups are expected to be completed in July 2018. Similarly, the department has provided ongoing and incoming cohorts with more detailed and purposeful explanations of implementation so that it is clear that evidence-based programming occurs after adult SEL is cultivated and students are introduced to SEL in the classroom.

SEL Principal Focus Groups

The principal focus groups revealed that the main challenges faced center around lack of funding at the campus and district level to provide all staff with resources and tools to aid the

implementation of the initiative, especially for reluctant teachers (See Appendix B for a full listing of findings). Similarly, principals mentioned that sudden district scheduling changes made it difficult to find time to strategically implement some of the initiative's key practices (e.g., morning meeting or community circles). Principals also recognized the value of the coaching cycles (mentioned earlier in this evaluation), and they similarly expressed a desire for more such campus visits. Although the coaching cycle is proving to be an effective tool for campuses, performing more visits becomes prohibitive as the initiative houses a small staff, and more than 25 campuses are scheduled to come on board during the 2018-2019 year.

In addition to providing feedback on areas where principals faced challenges, principals also provided information on how the initiative could be improved in subsequent implementation years. Principals expressed a desire to have topics and dates in advance in order to plan for key personnel to attend the sessions. Principals were often unable to attend SEL sessions due to multiple mandatory meetings by other district programs and departments. Principals also suggested having a platform for them to share ideas and tips on how each campus implements the initiative. The Department of Student and Family Empowerment is planning to include a section on Schoology where principals can share successes and struggles for the 2018-2019 year.

Finally, principals spent the vast part of the sessions discussing their implementation strengths. Almost every principal at the sessions noted the profound impact SEL had on their campus culture. Principals in secondary schools noted that, for teachers who adopted the practices early, the effects on their classroom environment were evident. Similarly, principals praised the SEL Lead team for the professional development sessions and suggested that the initiative would be unsuccessful without those sessions. Relatedly, principals were very motivated by the slow rollout of the initiative and suggested that the pace ensured fidelity of implementation. They were similarly pleased that the counseling department was now housed under Mr. Lozano because now all staff was using the same language to address children, culture, and adult SEL. Principals noted

that when their campus administration was committed and continuously monitoring implementation of the initiative, the changes and improvements were evident immediately.

Taken together, the results from the CASEL staff survey and the focus groups suggest that Cohort 1 and 2 are working through challenges to implement the program with fidelity. Early success is evident as adult SEL takes hold of campuses. Principals similarly seem to understand the importance of close monitoring and strategic planning.

Summary

The 2017-2018 SEL program evaluation tracked key short- and long-term implementation measures. Cohort 1 campuses continue to experience positive student perception, have maintained discipline referral reductions, and show signs of implementation fidelity. Cohort 2 schools are beginning their SEL implementation trajectory with increased perceived adult SEL, and early signs of campus-wide adoption. No changes in attendance are yet evident for any cohort, nor are they expected at this early stage. Cohort 2 elementary schools showed increased discipline referrals which should be examined, and Cohort 2 secondary schools showed a modest referral rate decrease. All Cohort campus staff expressed a deep commitment to promote SEL for their students and most report using SEL strategies to create engaging learning environments. Key recommendations from this evaluation include continuing extensive professional development and campus support, as well as examining the discipline policies in place at certain Cohort 2 elementary schools.

References

Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (2018). *El Paso Independent School District CASEL Implementation Survey.* Retrieved from: https://secure.panoramaed.com/episd/understand/3756284/summary

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Appendix A: Cohort 1 Focus Groups

Appendix B: Campus Principal EOY Focus Groups