

# Social and Emotional Learning

Summary of Accomplishments, 2011-2012 through  
2015-2016





## Executive Summary

In 2011–2012, with an initial support of funding from the NoVo Foundation, St. David's Foundation, Buena Vista Foundation, Tapestry Foundation, Jeanne and Michael Klein, and RGK Foundation and by partnering with the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) (CASEL), the Austin Independent School District (AISD) began to phase social and emotional learning (SEL) into schools, with the goal of implementing SEL districtwide by 2015–2016. To that end, AISD became part of CASEL's [Collaborating District Initiative](#) (CDI), which helped support the implementation and evaluation of the initiative.

Throughout the tenure of SEL in AISD, the program has gone through many changes. Importantly, AISD's SEL Department met its goal of district-wide implementation by 2015–2016. Now that SEL has been implemented districtwide, it is important to document the changes and highlight the accomplishments the program has made from its inception in 2011–2012 through full implementation in 2015–2016. This report, prepared in collaboration with the AISD Office of Innovation and Development (OID), summarizes the accomplishments of SEL in AISD.

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## Introduction

In 2011–2012, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) set out to implement social and emotional learning (SEL) in all schools by 2015–2016. With the help of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL); participation in CASEL’s Collaborative District Initiative (CDI); and funding provided by the NoVo Foundation, St. David’s Foundation, Buena Vista Foundation, Tapestry Foundation, Jeanne and Michael Klein, and RGK Foundation, AISD’s SEL Department has met this goal. As AISD’s SEL program moves beyond the focus of district-wide implementation, taking note of the program’s accomplishments can help define how AISD’s SEL program can continue to grow. This report summarizes the accomplishments of SEL in AISD, based the following areas: executive leadership, alignment with policies and practices, assessment and evaluation, the role of SEL specialists, professional development opportunities, model schools, SEL approaches, and parental and community engagement.



## Executive Leadership

This section of the report describes accomplishments SEL made with district leaders from 2011–2012 to 2015–2016.

### Building the Movement

Over the last five years, AISD has expanded SEL to all 130 schools through a deliberate and thoughtful deployment that has steadily deepened capacity each year. This expansion occurred throughout transitions in executive leadership positions, including the superintendent and board of trustees. Despite these transitions, the importance of SEL remained integral to the mission and values of AISD and to each individual school.

Strong district-level leadership of SEL sends a message to schools that SEL is an important part of the AISD community. This purposeful attention to SEL gave SEL program staff the support necessary to implement SEL in all schools. Indeed, schools across AISD infused SEL into their school's identity, making the implementation of SEL unique to the needs of each school. For example, Baldwin Elementary incorporated SEL in its school mission statement: "The mission of Baldwin Elementary is to promote a learner-centered education, where the unique and whole development of each child is nurtured in a shared partnership between caring, creative staff, parents, and community....This learner-centered education inspires children to achieve their potential academically, physically, socially, emotionally, and artistically; fostering a life-long desire to learn." School staff are willing to integrate SEL because district leaders have continued to make SEL a priority for the district in spite of leadership changes. In doing so, school staff understand that SEL is not just another initiative that will go away in a year or two; instead, SEL is front and center in everything AISD leaders do, ensuring that SEL is not "what we do," but rather "who we are."

More evidence of the integration of SEL into the district fiber is apparent in the creation of a new AISD-funded position: executive director of academics and social and emotional learning. The new staff member will join AISD in the 2016–2017 school year and will report directly to the chief officer of teaching and learning. In the role as executive director of academics and social and emotional learning, the staff member will oversee not only the academic side of a students' education in AISD, but also SEL, English language learners/dual language, AVID, physical education, and student services. In doing so, the district recognizes that open communication must exist between all departments that directly serve students. Importantly, having the leader of academics also serve as leader of social and emotional learning sends a strong message that SEL is on equal footing with academics, and underscores AISD's goal to shift SEL from "what we do" to "who we are."

Additionally, the superintendent demonstrated his support for SEL in public comments, attendance at regional conferences, budgetary decisions, organization chart structuring, and internal leadership meetings. For example, the superintendent joined CASEL's chief knowledge officer and SEL director in a national Education Week webinar on September 2, 2015, sharing nationwide the experience of integrating SEL into the fiber of a large urban school district. In February 2016, the superintendent, chief officer of

## SEL at a Glance

### Implementation

In 2011–2012, with help from CASEL, AISD implemented SEL at 26 schools. By 2015–2016, SEL had expanded to all 130 schools. In the first year of implementation, two SEL specialists were hired to support the initiative. In 2015–2016, 13 specialists and two parent specialists supported SEL implementation, shared best practices, and trained parents on fostering SEL skill development at home.

### Research

In 2012–2013, funding for 50% of an evaluation analyst was provided to the Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) to analyze descriptive data for SEL. In 2013–2014, funding was expanded to 100% to provide support necessary to formally evaluate SEL. DRE staff also serve on CASEL's national assessment team to identify best ways to measure SEL skills. Reports from DRE's ongoing evaluation can be found [here](#).

### Innovation

The Office of Innovation and Development (OID) supports SEL with a blend of public and private funding. Since 2010–2011, approximately \$3.8 million has been donated by individuals, foundations and other external partners (e.g., St. David's Foundation, NoVo Foundation, Buena Vista Foundation, Jeanne and Michael Klein, Tapestry Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, RGK Foundation, Lowe Foundation, Stratus Properties, Mary & Howard Yancy, MFI Foundation, Sandy & Lisa Gottesman, Allergan Foundation, AK Reynolds Foundation, and One Skye Foundation). In addition, SEL has been selected as a signature initiative of the Austin Ed Fund.

teaching and learning and two board members attended CASEL's annual CDI cross-district conference in Reno, NV. SEL program staff and key donors were also in attendance. During the conference, SEL program staff had several conversations with executive leadership members to determine how to continue to support and grow SEL in AISD beyond district-wide implementation.



### **Executive Leadership Commitment**

In addition to the SEL program weathering executive leadership changes, AISD's board of trustees and superintendent have taken action toward a public commitment to support implementation of the SEL vision as a priority for students' learning. AISD has allocated general operating funds to support about half of the district's SEL Department budget each year since 2010.

A milestone for the sustainability of SEL occurred on December 2, 2015, when the AISD board of trustees revised its policy, AE (LOCAL) educational philosophy, to include core values such as the "social, and emotional health and safety" of students. The policy also detailed the district's instructional theory of action, which now includes language that affirms support of students' development of social and emotional learning competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. The policy commits the district to "engage authentically with students/parents/guardians, teachers, and community." To ensure follow-through, the board embedded the requirement that the superintendent include these values and core beliefs in the district comprehensive strategic plan.

### **Strategic Plan**

The importance of SEL in the district's long-term vision is clear from its inclusion in the strategic plan. Beginning in Fall 2014, more than 150 diverse stakeholders, (e.g., parents, students, community and business members, teachers, principals, counselors, librarians, and central administrators) collaborated with the superintendent and board of trustees to develop a comprehensive, 5-year strategic plan: [\*AISD Strategic Plan 2015-2020: Reinventing the Urban School Experience Together\*](#). The strategic plan consists of a framework that includes statements of the district's vision, core beliefs and commitments, values, and a 5-year implementation plan. Additionally, a scorecard was created with performance indicators and targets related to each of the core beliefs that is used to measure the extent to which the district is meeting the goals outlined in the strategic plan.

Importantly, SEL is integrated throughout all elements of the strategic plan. Among the district's values are Whole Child, Every Child, as well as physical, social, and emotional health, and safety. Key action steps for ensuring all students graduate college-, career-, and life-ready (core belief 1) include providing services and supports for every student on every campus such that each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community, and that each student learns in a physically and emotionally safe environment. Additionally, a number of SEL-related outcomes are part



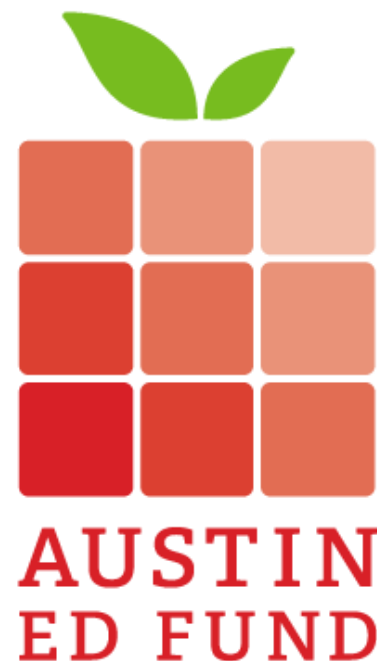
of the annual scorecard, including (a) the percentage of students who feel safe in their schools, (b) the percentage of students who say they like to come to school, and (c) the number of students with discretionary removals or emergency placements. In doing so, AISD executive leaders publicly stated the importance of SEL and are committed not only to ensuring that students and staff espouse SEL skills, but also to measuring the degree to which students and staff meet SEL-related goals.

### **Austin Ed Fund**

In addition to executive leadership formerly integrating SEL into the climate and culture of AISD, executive leadership also integrated SEL into the creation of a proactive fundraising entity, the [Austin Ed Fund](#).

An independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit, Austin Ed Fund exists to support excellence and innovation in AISD. In partnership with OID, its board of business, education, and community leaders have identified SEL as a signature initiative for which they generate private revenue and serve as community champions for SEL and the district's many accomplishments.

Austin Ed Fund transformed into a more proactive fundraising entity in 2015, supporting AISD's SEL program. At its inaugural *Inspire the Future Luncheon* in November 2015, the Austin Ed Fund generated more than \$217,000 in revenue. In total, the Austin Ed Fund contributed nearly \$700,000 to AISD in 2015 through fundraising and its fiscal agent role. The majority of these funds will support SEL, in addition to innovation grants for teachers and small campus-level grants.





## Alignment With Policies and Practices

This section of the report describes accomplishments SEL has made to change existing policies and procedures to have an SEL lens. These accomplishments are in addition to those described earlier related to executive leadership.

### Academic Alignment Meetings

The chief officer of teaching and learning has begun convening a monthly “academic alignment meeting” of representatives from various central office departments to ensure the disparate pieces of the Whole Child approach are aligned with academics, SEL, and all current and future initiatives.

### Data Collection Pilot

To further the goal of cross-department collaboration, using funding provided by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF), key AISD departments are collaborating to provide easy access to data regarding internal and external services for students, enable a more efficient system for tracking students’ disciplinary referrals, and monitor and analyze the services of external providers. As part of the pilot, AISD Learning Support Services (LSS) and Information Management Support Services (MIS) have created a “data bucket,” or index to be included in the district’s e-Child Study Team (eCST) system. The Reliable Integrated Trend Score (RITS) is based on weighted scores determined by failing grades, unexcused tardies, unexcused absences, and office discipline referrals or suspensions. AISD will grant permission for service providers to use this index when assessing the student-level impact of their programs on SEL outcomes.



### Teacher and Principal Evaluations

Another exciting way SEL has become infused in AISD policy is in the development of the [Professional Pathways for Teachers](#) (PPfT). PPfT is a newly designed teacher appraisal and compensation system that includes years of service, performance, leadership, and professional development opportunities. SEL staff are working with AISD’s Department of Educator Quality to embed SEL in the observation and appraisal rubrics.

Doing so ensures that all teachers are held accountable for developing and using SEL skills in the classroom. Additionally, teachers will be provided with training to improve their SEL skills in areas identified as deficient. Similar activities are being undertaken for the Campus Administrator Performance Review (CAPR).



## Assessment and Evaluation

This section of the report describes accomplishments made as a result of the DRE's ongoing evaluation of SEL.

### Assessments of School SEL Implementation

In 2013–2014, DRE analyzed the properties of AISD's SEL tri-level Implementation rubric. SEL specialists and principals used this rubric to determine the quality of SEL program implementation at the school level. Based on DRE recommendations ([Lamb, 2014b](#)), and accompanying research brief [Lamb, 2014bRB](#)), the rubric was revised to reflect five levels of implementation and was refined to include more specific indicators of SEL program implementation. Subsequent analyses, including findings released by [Lamb, \(2015b\)](#) suggest that program implementation is positively related to a variety of academic and behavioral outcomes, and that implementation is more related to outcomes than is longevity in the SEL program (additional information is included in the accompanying [research brief](#), and [executive summary](#) for that report). Planning is under way to refine the implementation rubric in Summer 2016 to better align with the SEL specialist logic model (p. 17). The sidebars provide highlights from analyses conducted over the past 5 years.

### Assessments of Teachers' Perceptions of SEL Implementation

In Spring 2016, DRE added the following new items to the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) AISD [survey](#), which gathers information about school conditions from the educators working in schools. Descriptive analyses found that more than 75% of school staff agreed or strongly agreed that, “the school's discipline practices promote social and emotional learning (e.g. developmentally appropriate consequences, restorative justice).” Similarly, more than 80% of school staff agreed or strongly agreed that they “received sufficient training regarding how to use the social and emotional learning approach at this school,” but only 75% of school staff agreed or strongly agreed that they “have enough time to implement the social and emotional learning approach at [their] school.” Finally almost all teachers agreed or strongly agreed that “professional learning communities support students' social and emotional competence.”

Additionally, in 2015–2016, staff from model SEL schools were asked to participate in CASEL's staff SEL survey as part of the ongoing CDI evaluation. Analyses from this survey will be conducted by CASEL and shared with school staff. DRE will continue working with CASEL to develop and refine assessments of teachers' SEL skills.

### Assessments of School Staffs' and Principals' SEL Competence

In 2016, DRE also added new items to the TELL AISD survey assessing school staffs' and principals' SEL competence. Descriptive results found that more than 80% of school administrators agreed or strongly agreed that “all campus staff interact with one another in a way that models social and emotional competence.” When asked if their principal modeled social and emotional competence “in the way that he/she deals with students and faculty on an everyday basis,” 90% of elementary school and high school

## Highlights From DRE's Evaluation of SEL

Elementary schools with high SEL integration ratings had **7% more students pass** the State of Texas Assessment for Academic Readiness (STAAR) **reading and math** in 2015 than did elementary schools with low SEL integration ratings.

**Discipline** referral rates **decreased 45%** at **elementary** schools with 3-4 years of SEL experience, and decreased **29%** at **middle and high schools** with 3-4 years of SEL experience.

### SEL Implementation

- SEL integration ratings on AISD's SEL implementation rubric predicted 2014–2015 State of Texas Assessment for Academic Readiness (STAAR) math performance, regardless of length of time in SEL ([Lamb, 2015b](#)).
- Middle and high schools where more staff received regular, ongoing SEL professional development activities and training had lower chronic student absenteeism in 2014–2015 than did schools where fewer staff received ongoing SEL professional development activities ([Lamb, 2015b](#)).
- Elementary schools with higher ratings on implementation of peace areas, SEL integration, principal communication of SEL integration, and the implementation subscale of AISD's SEL implementation rubric had more students reporting that they felt safe at school than did schools with lower ratings on these domains ([Lamb, 2015b](#)).

## Highlights From DRE's Evaluation of SEL

### SEL competencies

- Teachers' ratings of their 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade students' SEL competencies were positively related to several of students' ratings of school climate ([Lamb, 2016a](#)).
- Seventh- and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students' SEL competencies were strongly related to their ratings of school climate ([Lamb, 2016b](#)).
- Teachers' ratings of their 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade students' SEL competencies were positively related to students' performance in STAAR reading and math ([Lamb, 2016a](#)).
- Seventh-grade students' ratings of the SEL competency item "I have strong self-control" were positively related to their STAAR performance in reading and math ([Lamb, 2016a](#)).
- Elementary school students with fewer disciplinary infractions received higher teacher ratings of SEL competency items "respects the property of others" and "gets along well with adults" than did students with more disciplinary infractions ([Lamb, 2016a](#)).
- Seventh-grade students with fewer disciplinary infractions had higher ratings of "I pay attention when I do things," "I stop and think before doing anything when I get angry," and "I have strong self-control" than did 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students with more disciplinary infractions ([Lamb, 2016a](#)).

teachers agreed or strongly agreed, whereas only 76% of middle school teachers agreed or strongly agreed.

Additional questions concerning principals' SEL competence were included on CASEL's staff SEL survey. Analyses from these survey items are forthcoming. DRE staff will continue to work with CASEL to create an assessment of teachers' SEL skills.

### Assessments of Students' SEL Competence

The report card for elementary students in pre-kindergarten through grade 6 was revised in Summer 2012 to include a personal development skills section designed to reflect SEL competencies. Since 2013–2014, DRE staff have incorporated personal development skills as an outcome measure for the SEL program evaluation. Initial analyses ([Lamb, 2014a](#)) found that students' personal development skill ratings were higher for students with more years of SEL experience in kindergarten, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade than for students with fewer years of SEL experience in those grades. Analyses also found that students' personal skill ratings were positively related to the percentage of students meeting the state standard in STAAR math ([Lamb, 2014](#)).

Most recently, DRE conducted analyses demonstrating correlations between AISD's elementary personal development skill report card ratings and CASEL's CDI teacher assessments of students' SEL competencies ([Lamb, 2016a](#)). Relationships between the two assessments were strong, and AISD's personal development skill report card ratings were more strongly related to other outcome measures than were the CDI assessments of students' SEL competencies. Highlights from the report are presented in the sidebar. Complete analyses are included in the [full report](#), [research brief](#), and [executive summary](#).

In 2014–2015, DRE assumed responsibility for administering the CDI student self-assessment of SEL competencies for 7<sup>th</sup>- and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students, as well as 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade teachers' ratings of their students' SEL skills. DRE linked data from this self-assessment with other academic and behavioral outcome data as part of the ongoing evaluation of SEL in AISD. To obtain longitudinal SEL student self-assessment data, DRE administered a revised CDI student self-assessment to all students in grades 6 through 11 in Spring 2016. Additionally, in Spring 2016, DRE revised the annual AISD Student Climate Survey to include items assessing each of the five CASEL SEL competencies. Results will be reported to schools by the end of the 2015–2016 school year. The aim is to have all surveys administered online in subsequent years to allow for the capability to create dynamic online reports displaying students' school climate and SEL skill data. DRE is currently working with SEL and LSS to begin building a data framework in which teachers, principals, and support staff can have access to detailed student climate and SEL skill data.



## Involvement in Cutting-Edge SEL Assessment Work

In addition to providing SEL program staff and external partners (e.g., CASEL and the American Institutes for Research [AIR]) with timely reports and analyses, DRE representatives are participating in CASEL's SEL assessment workgroup. This workgroup is a 3-year effort to convene experts and practitioners from around the country to address issues related to social and emotional (SE) assessment. The Work Group to Establish Practical Social-Emotional Competence Assessments seeks to develop a framework that provides guidance about which intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies are most important to measure, how to best measure them, and how to use SE competence data effectively to inform planning and practice. Establishing this framework will meet one of the most pressing challenges facing educators who are dedicated to enhancing students' SE competencies and will lay the foundation for the next generation of SE competence assessments.



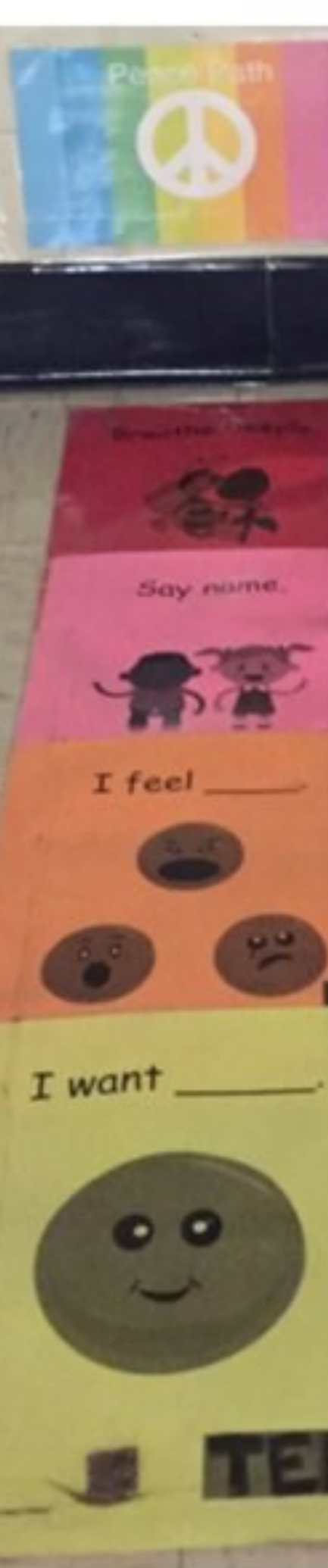
## Highlights From DRE's Evaluation of SEL

- Tenth-grade students with fewer disciplinary infractions had higher ratings of "I care about other people's feelings and points of view" than did 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students with more disciplinary infractions. ([Lamb, 2016a](#)).

### Longevity in SEL:

- Attendance rates at middle and high schools with more years in SEL improved slightly more than did attendance rates at other secondary schools ([Lamb, 2016b](#)).
- Compared with Spring 2012, higher percentages of elementary school students met the state standard in reading in 2015, especially at schools with more years in SEL ([Lamb, 2016b](#)).
- Decreases in discipline rates were greater at middle and high schools with more SEL experience than at schools with no SEL experience ([Lamb, 2016b](#)).
- Middle and high schools with more years in SEL showed a greater reduction in campus discretionary removals than did schools with fewer years in SEL ([Lamb, 2016b](#)).
- Middle and high schools participating in SEL for more years experienced a greater decrease in chronic absenteeism than did schools participating in SEL for fewer years ([Lamb, 2016a](#)).





## SEL Approaches

This section of the report describes accomplishments AISD has made in dissemination of SEL content to all 130 schools.

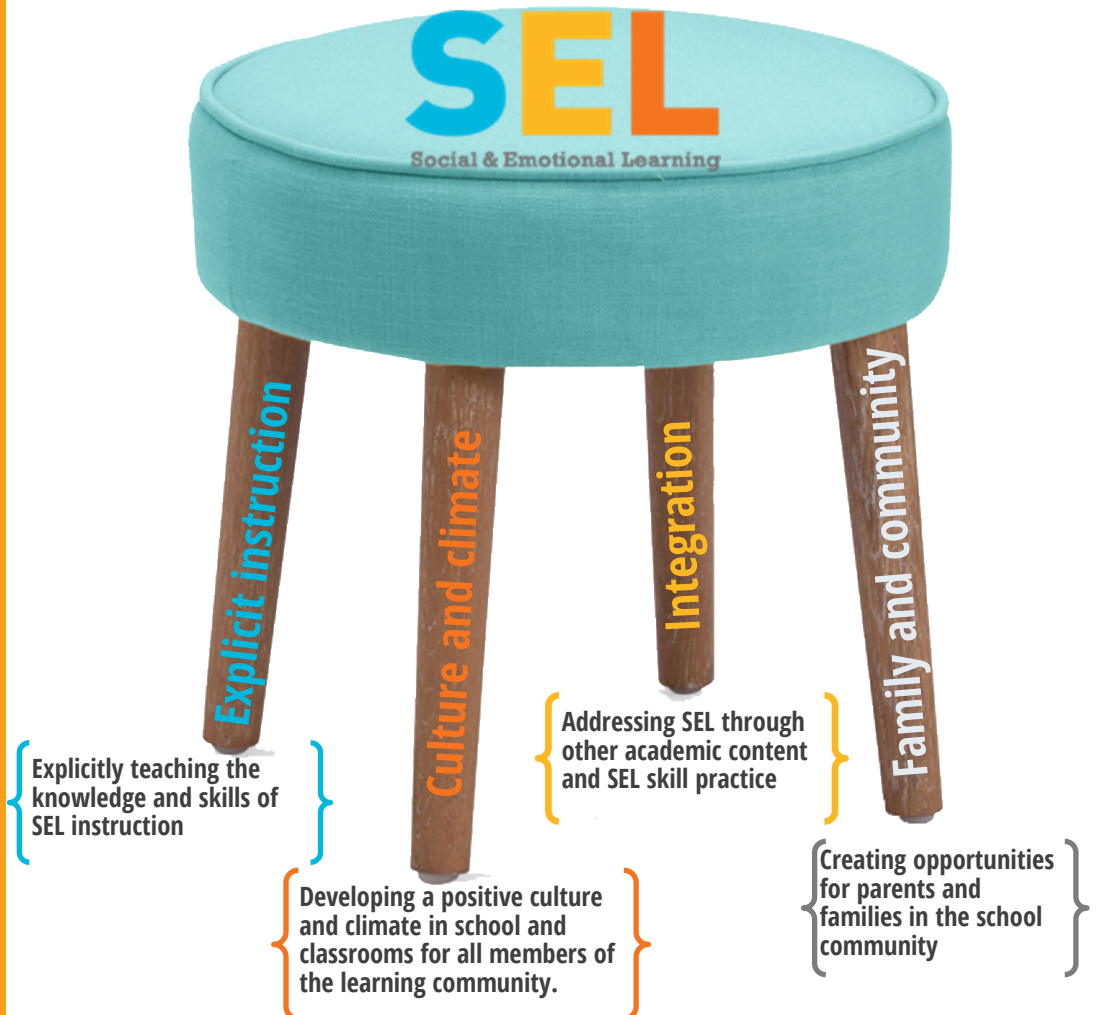
### Four-Pronged Approach to SEL Implementation

AISD has focused on four areas of SEL implementation: explicit instruction, climate and culture, integration into academics, and family and community engagement (Figure 1).

#### Explicit Instruction

To ensure that all students receive explicit instruction in SEL skills, the SEL design team reviewed existing SEL curricula and selected [Second Step](#) from the Committee for Children for elementary and middle schools, and [School-Connect](#) for high schools. In 2012–2013, in partnership with School-Connect, AISD staff developed of a year-long [Methods for Academic and Personal Success \(MAPS\)](#) for 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students. MAPS was initially offered at one high school and has expanded to six high schools by 2015–2016. An evaluation of MAPS ([Hutson, Beland, and Douglass, 2016](#); [Lamb 2016c summarizes the report](#)) found that students participating in MAPS experienced fewer disciplinary incidents than did their matched non-MAPS peers.

Figure 1.  
AISD's four-pronged approach to SEL implementation



## Highlights Related to Culture and Climate From DRE's Evaluation of SEL

Students enrolled in School-Connect also received higher average passing rates across core academic subject areas than did their matched non-School-Connect peers. These resources were purchased for campuses by the SEL Department, and training and ongoing coaching support were provided for implementation.

### Culture and Climate

One of the main ways SEL works to effect change is by positively influencing school climate and culture. With the help of the SEL specialist, schools learn specific ways to embed SEL throughout the day in both classroom- and non-classroom-based activities. Turning SEL skills from “what we do” to “who we are” begins with school staff modeling SEL skills and encouraging SEL skill development in discipline discussions. To further reinforce SEL skills into the culture of their school, facilitators and/or the steering committee work with their SEL specialist to employ a variety of evidence-based and research-based programs to complement and support their growth and development in SEL. Schools are encouraged to find programs and approaches that best meet the needs of their students, parents, staff and communities. The sidebar provides key findings from DRE reports as they relate to culture and climate. Additionally, the following schools are exemplars for successfully integrating supportive programs to improve school culture and climate:



#### Akins High School

AKINS HIGH SCHOOL  
AUSTIN Independent School District

*Restorative practices:* Restorative practices teach students experiencing a disciplinary issue strategies (e.g., community building and problem-solving circles) to help them remain in class and on campus. Recently, DRE conducted a focus group at Martin Middle School and wrote a [report](#) that highlights the benefits of engaging in restorative practices ([Lamb, 2015a](#)).



#### Mendez Middle School

MENDEZ MIDDLE SCHOOL  
AUSTIN Independent School District

*Capturing Kids' Hearts:* Transformative staff training develops safe, trusting, and self-managing classrooms.



#### Maplewood Elementary School

*Responsive Classroom:* Training focused on adult language and developing community in the classroom and school. Ten schools and more than 120 teachers have received training in the responsive classroom.

- Middle and high schools with higher SEL integration had more favorable 2014–2105 ratings of “students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/taunted, threatened by other students)” than did schools where peace areas were implemented with less fidelity ([Lamb, 2015b](#)).
- Elementary schools where peace areas were implemented into more classrooms had students who provided higher 2014–2015 ratings of “I feel safe at my school” than did schools where peace areas were implemented with less fidelity ([Lamb, 2015b](#)).
- Elementary schools with more frequent principal and SEL coach meetings had higher ratings of “overall, my school is a good place to work and learn” than did schools with less frequent principal and SEL coach meetings ([Lamb, 2015b](#)).
- Middle and high schools with more frequent explicit SEL instruction had higher staff ratings of managing student conduct than did schools with less frequent explicit SEL instruction ([Lamb, 2015b](#)).

## Integration

To ensure that students connect SEL skills to situations outside the classroom, SEL specialists work with schools to embed SEL skills into daily activities. Currently, in addition to teachers using Second Step, School-Connect, or MAPS, SEL skills are included in AISD's curriculum road maps (CRMs). Doing this offers support and guidance for all teachers about how to effectively integrate SEL into daily lesson plans. Beginning to integrate SEL skills into the fabric of the district community has also been a major focus of SEL program staff over the course of 5 years. In Summer 2016, principals' and administrators' training will stress the importance of SEL skill development in district operations.

## Family and Community

SEL skills do not begin and end in the classroom. To ensure that students connect SEL skills to family situations, AISD's two SEL parent specialists offer trainings, workshops, and communication tools specifically designed to help parents understand SEL and how to reinforce SEL skills and behaviors in the home. SEL parent specialists also work with SEL school specialists and community members to find ways integrate SEL skills into family and community partnerships. In 2016, SEL parent specialists received a grant to conduct a book study with parents with the hope of expanding in subsequent years. AISD is also in the process of training out-of-school service providers and collaborators on SEL skills so these skills are embedded in all after school and community activities.







## SEL Specialists

This section of the report describes the ongoing evaluation of the SEL specialists as part of the larger evaluation of SEL.

### Role of SEL Specialists

Each school is assigned one of 13 SEL specialists. The SEL specialists support the four-pronged (Figure 1, p. 9) implementation of SEL competencies by working with principals to determine strategies to integrate SEL into the school culture, partner with educators to customize and integrate lessons to meet the unique needs of their students, and identify ways to incorporate SEL throughout the day. Because the role of the specialist is to help each school develop its own unique implementation of SEL, SEL specialists visit each of their assigned schools at least once every 2 weeks to provide classroom support, build school capacity for SEL integration, and encourage community engagement. During these visits, SEL specialists observe explicit lessons, provide resources on SEL integration, and provide professional learning and feedback for all staff to improve campus climate. Each vertical team SEL specialist facilitates deeper implementation of SEL, while developing campus leadership for sustainability.

### New Teacher Center (NTC) Coaching Model

All SEL specialists are currently participating in the evidence-based coaching model provided through the New Teacher Center (NTC). NTC trainers have provided SEL specialists with intensive and AISD-specific training on listening skills, giving feedback, and mindsets for learning. SEL specialists take three online modules, and then meet to reflect and process what they are learning. NTC has tailored their trainings for SEL specialists; for example, they have focused on facilitation for groups and meetings and the adaptation of the NTC peer-to-peer individual coaching model to larger group coaching, given the scope of the SEL specialists' workload.

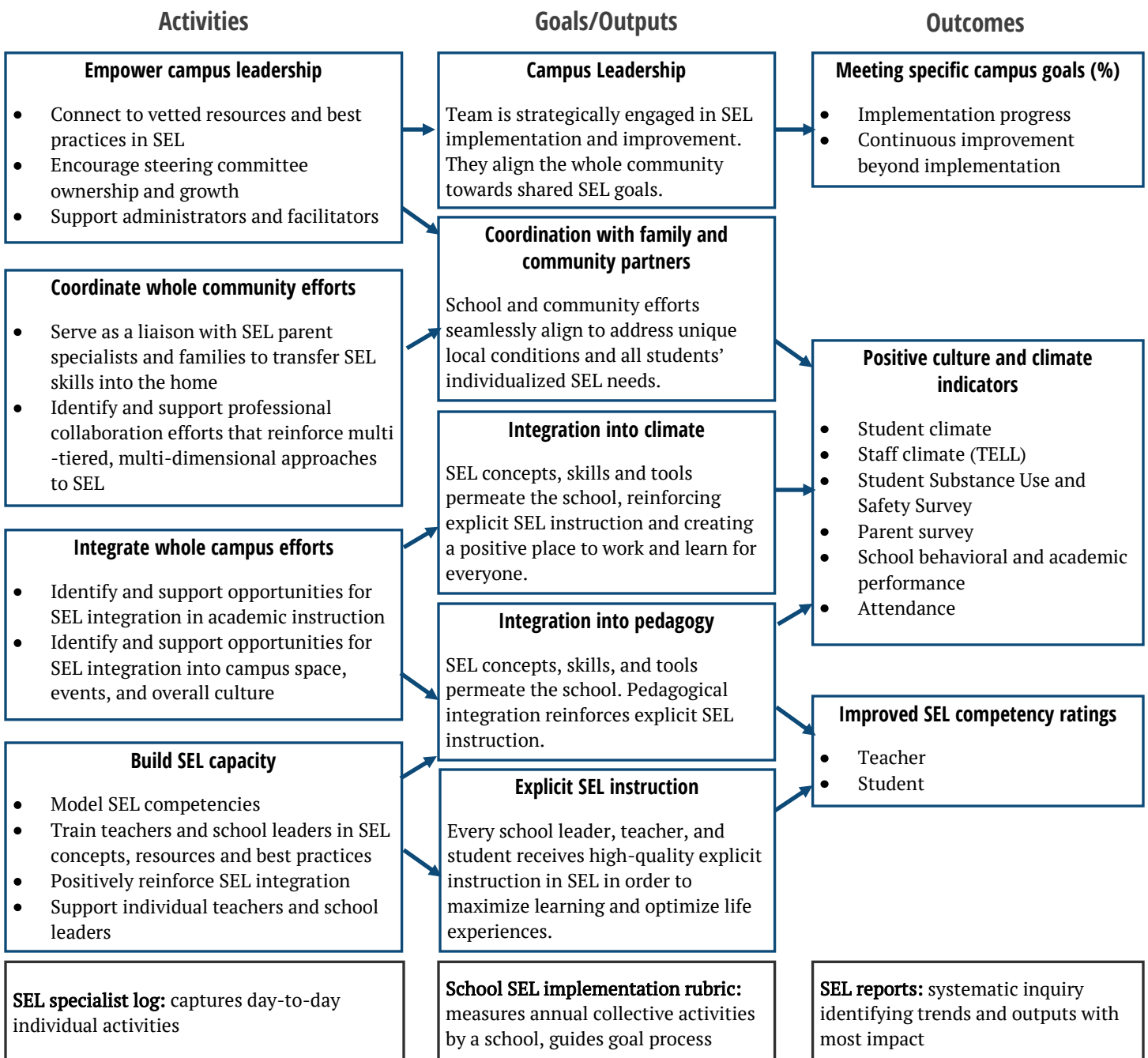
### SEL Specialists' Theory of Action and Logic Model

To help identify the activities that are most critical to the role of SEL specialists, DRE staff have conducted focus groups in which specialists and campus-level SEL facilitators revised the activity log to best capture the work of SEL specialists. Additionally, DRE staff have worked with SEL specialists to calibrate how specialists categorize their work to ensure that specialists track their work similarly. Another revision of the activity log will occur in Summer 2016. The hope is to refine the existing log to ease the burden on specialists and to ensure that all activities critical to their work are included in the log. DRE and SEL program staff also aim to include this log in AISD's eCST system so all data regarding student support services are tracked in one location. Doing this will also allow for deeper dives into school- and student-level data.

To further this work, in 2015–2016, an intern from the University of Texas Department of Educational Psychology worked with DRE to develop a logic model for SEL specialists. She shadowed SEL specialists to conduct observations of their practice and met with the SEL director and DRE staff to develop a theoretical framework and logic model (Figure 2) for the SEL specialists. Based on this work, the role of the SEL specialists has been

delineated into four categories: (a) empowering campus leadership, (b) coordinating whole community efforts, (c) integrating whole campus efforts, and (d) building capacity. SEL specialists work toward improvements in five key outcome areas: (a) campus leadership, (b) coordination with family and community partners, (c) integration in campus climate, (d) integration into pedagogy, and (e) explicit SEL instruction. The following logic model provides an overview of the specialists' role and describes the relationship between the specialists' activities and outcomes. The activities of the specialists are gathered in the activity log, and the goals are captured in the campus implementation rubric. Both the activity log and the implementation rubric will be refined in Summer 2016 to reflect consistency with the SEL specialist logic model.

**Figure 2.**  
**AISD's SEL Specialist Logic Model.**







## Professional Development Training

This section of the report describes accomplishments made related to professional development training.

### Pre-service

To ensure that all newly hired teachers understand the importance of integrating SEL skills into the classroom, and are trained in how to do so, AISD has partnered with the University of Texas at Austin's Department of Education to help train incoming teachers in social and emotional skill development. This partnership was forged because a vast majority of AISD teachers graduate from the University of Texas at Austin's Department of Education.

### New School Implementation

During the first 5 years of district-wide SEL implementation, as new vertical teams joined the initiative, school leadership teams (consisting of teachers, administrators, and counselors) participated in a 2-day training. School leadership teams of three to 12 staff members completed in-depth professional development training on the basic principles of SEL, fundamental strategies, and best practices for incorporating SEL in the classroom and throughout the general campus culture. Building on the momentum of the trainings, these leadership teams became the foundation for each school's SEL steering committee. Each steering committee also included a SEL facilitator (often the school counselor) who was responsible for SEL implementation and was the primary campus contact for the SEL specialist. SEL campus facilitators participated in 6 to 9 hours of additional professional development training annually. In focus groups with SEL facilitators, facilitators spoke highly of the training they received and likened it to NTC training. SEL facilitators also said they appreciated the training they received on how to use the school implementation rubric to help plan their work. SEL facilitators also liked connecting with other facilitators to build connections across schools.

### New Principal Induction

As part of their training, new principals participated in approximately 2 hours of SEL professional development activities, focused on building climate on campus and supporting teachers in explicit SEL instruction. In Summer 2016, all principals, assistant principals, and district leaders will participate in SEL professional development training.

### New Teacher Induction

Because new teachers join schools with SEL already in place, in August 2015, SEL specialists began offering newly hired teachers campus- and district-level orientations. As part of the district-level orientation, teachers attended professional development training on SEL and physical wellness. Of the 371 teachers surveyed, 92% reported the training to be very useful or somewhat useful. One teacher wrote in a response that "the SEL training was wonderful." Another wrote, "I would have loved for this session to be much longer, possibly a whole day professional development. SEL is the hinge to our academic success. More training for teachers, counselors and administration would be

greatly appreciated.” And one teacher said, “This was my favorite PD...I was sad when it was over.”

### **Ongoing Professional Development Training**

Specialists are on every school campus at least once every 2 weeks to provide resources, support, and guidance. During these visits, SEL specialists observe classrooms and provide feedback, assist schools with methods to improve integration, offer professional development activities tailored to each school, and offer resources for all staff to improve school climate. As part of their work, SEL specialists work with the school SEL facilitator and SEL steering committee to identify areas of need for the school. SEL specialists work with school staff to provide relevant and school-specific professional development activities to the whole school or to select staff. Doing so helps SEL specialists build the program from within each school by developing school leadership for ongoing sustainability. Additionally, SEL specialists facilitate deeper implementation of SEL within each vertical team to strengthen connections across schools.



## Model Schools

This section of the report describes accomplishments SEL has made in developing model campuses.

### Current Model Schools

In an effort to build SEL beyond district-wide implementation, SEL program staff began the process of identifying model SEL schools. In 2015–2016, the SEL Department designated 11 model elementary, middle, and high school schools that demonstrated explicit skills instruction and integration of SEL skills in academics within a positive school climate and culture. SEL staff scored schools using a rubric adapted from Nashville Public Schools, which measures SEL integration within three areas: (a) school-wide environment, (b) classroom instruction, and (c) classroom environment, management, discipline (see Appendix for rubric). Schools submitted an initial letter of intent and their SEL implementation rubric scores (of at least 3) to apply as a model school.

Model school principals committed to a variety of criteria to maintain this 2-year designation, including a willingness to host visitors, willingness to participate in a quarterly meeting with other principals to design SEL 2.0, willingness to pilot new portions of SEL, continued commitment to SEL explicit instruction and integration, and commitment to renewing the designation every 2 years or relinquishing designation. In return, campuses received increased SEL campus funds, recognition on the SEL website and in SEL publications, a banner for campus display, and invitations to participate in professional development opportunities and conference presentations. The 2015–2016 model schools are:

**Elementary:** Blazier, Lee, Highland Park, Baldwin, Pease

**Middle:** Sadler Means YWLA, Fulmore, Covington, O’Henry

**High:** Akins, Crockett

### Model School Evaluation

In addition to helping build SEL 2.0 and pilot new program elements for SEL, in Spring 2016, DRE worked with CASEL to administer an SEL staff survey. Using the resulting data, CASEL will create online dashboards and provide training to staff to ensure usability of the data. The SEL program staff aim to have model schools use this data to help drive campus improvement plans (CIPs), identify areas of strength and weakness in SEL implementation, and help identify which pilot SEL programs might best benefit the school. A more in-depth analysis of schools using the CASEL SEL staff survey, school climate, and student SEL competency data is planned.

## Appendix. AISD’s SEL Model Schools Initiative Site Visit Walk-Through Protocol

Observers were asked to observe various grade levels and common areas (e.g., school office, cafeteria, hallways, playground, peace area/path, other). Observers were instructed to record evidence by entering the classroom number or school area, to provide a rating, and include a brief description. Ratings ranged from 1 = *problematic*, to 5 = *positive* with 3 = *neutral*.

SCHOOL-WIDE ENVIRONMENT	Classroom or Area      Rating
<p>School entry, main office, &amp; common areas are cheerful &amp; well maintained; school staff is friendly and welcoming.</p> <p>Displayed vision/mission/values statements reflect commitment to SEL &amp; creating community.</p> <p>Recent student work, personal and/or academic, is prominently displayed in common areas.</p> <p>Students are friendly, orderly, respectful to each other &amp; adults in common areas.</p> <p>Adults are friendly, orderly, respectful to each other and students in common areas.</p>	
<p><b>CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT, MANAGEMENT, DISCIPLINE</b></p> <p>Classroom is cheerful and welcoming.</p> <p>Seating arrangements enable students to see/talk/work directly with one another.</p> <p>A variety of students’ recent work is displayed.</p> <p>Teacher interacts warmly, respectfully, equitably with students; engages in many rather than few students; affirms students’ contributions.</p> <p>Students follow class rules/norms, routine tasks and transitions.</p> <p>Teacher handles individual behavior problems quickly, discreetly, respectfully; promotes and allows time for self-regulation.</p> <p>Students are responsive to teacher guidance and feedback.</p> <p>Students have developmentally appropriate voice, choice, and leadership opportunities.</p>	
<p><b>CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION</b></p> <p>Teacher engages students about purpose and expectations of lesson.</p> <p>Teacher and students connect lesson to prior learning, personal experience, and /or community.</p> <p>Teacher embeds SEL skills development in academic lessons.</p> <p>Teacher uses interactive/collaborative pedagogies that enable practice of SEL skills.</p> <p>Teacher explicitly teaches/models/discusses SEL standards, dispositions and skills.</p> <p>Teacher teaches for conceptual understanding as well as skills development; provides tailored feedback.</p> <p>Teacher actively monitors students’ engagement throughout the lesson.</p> <p>Teacher uses open-ended questioning and “wait time;” facilitates discussion well.</p> <p>Students engaged in the lesson; interact attentively, respectfully and productively.</p> <p>Students collaborate efficiently and respectfully with each other.</p> <p>Teacher uses reflection practices with students to debrief academic/social learning; effectively brings closure to the lesson.</p>	
<p><b>CAMPUSWIDE INDICATORS</b></p> <p>Met academic standard</p> <p>Rating from AISD’s SEL implementation rubric—explicit instruction</p> <p>Rating from AISD’s SEL implementation rubric—integration</p> <p>Rating from AISD’s SEL implementation rubric—parents/community</p> <p>Peace Area/self-regulation and/or problem-solving processes evident in classroom</p> <p>Professional development session focused on SEL</p>	

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May 2016

Publication 15.43