

EXPANDING THE DEFINITION OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Hamilton Southeastern Schools



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Learners succeed and thrive when their school environments fully support them. At Hamilton Southeastern (HSE) Schools, we are committed to educating the whole child which must include support for students' social and emotional growth.

As a forward-thinking, world-class school district, HSE pays attention to cutting-edge research in neuroscience and cognitive psychology, including new findings on teaching and learning. Listening to the voices of leaders in colleges, communities, and careers where our students will learn, live, and work, we hear increasing demand for graduates who possess strong social-emotional skills. In fact, academic and future successes for students are tied directly to their social-emotional strengths. We also cannot ignore data indicating that children and adolescents are under higher levels of stress than in years past. Nationally, for adolescents ages 15-19, suicide is the second leading cause of death (Shain, 2016). Our own student data shows multiple stressors among HSE children and teens. Providing support for social-emotional wellness is essential if we want healthy, successful graduates prepared for life beyond HSE.

WHAT RESEARCH SAYS

Studies of the brain are continuing to yield confirmation of the toxic effects stress has on learners. Stress impacts the brain's ability to absorb, recall, and process information. "Science says to us that, in fact, the way the brain functions and grows, it needs safety, it needs warmth..." explains Stanford professor Linda Darling-Hammond. "We actually learn in a state of positive emotion much more effectively than we can learn in a state of negative emotion. That has huge implications for what we do in schools." (Edutopia, 2019).

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a meta-analysis of 82 studies was conducted, looking at over 97,000 students who experienced SEL programming. They found that not only was academic performance significantly higher in students exposed to SEL programming, but "conduct problems, emotional distress, and drug use were all significantly lower for students... and development of social and emotional skills and positive attitudes toward self, others, and school was higher" (CASEL, 2021c).

Similarly, a 2011 meta-analysis of 213 studies involving more than 270,000 students showed "SEL interventions that address CASEL's five core competencies increased students' academic performance by 11 percentile points, compared to students who did not participate in such SEL programs. Students participating in SEL programs also showed improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school" (CASEL, 2021a). The 2019 Social and Emotional Learning Report from McGraw-Hill found "81% of parents believe that SEL is just as important as academic learning" (CASEL, 2021a). Six of the Top 10 skills identified by the World Economic Forum involve social and emotional competence (CASEL, 2021a).

In 2016, the Aspen Institute launched the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, uniting leaders from education, research, business, health, and the military "to re-envision what constitutes success in our schools." (Aspen Institute 2019). In January 2019, the Commission released its final report and recommendations. The Executive Summary says simply, "Children learn best when we treat them as human beings, with social and emotional as well as academic needs." (Aspen Institute, 2019). The report continues,

“More specifically, children require a broad array of skills, attitudes, character traits, and values to succeed in school, careers, and life....(T)he promotion of social, emotional, and academic learning is not a shifting educational fad; it is the substance of education itself. It is not a distraction from the ‘real work’ of math and English instruction; it is how instruction can succeed.” (Aspen Institute, 2019).

It is a mistake to label social emotional learning as a soft skill. In fact, this integrated approach strengthens rigor and serves as a booster rocket for academic performance. Consider the following from A Nation at Hope (Aspen Institute, 2019):

- More than 9 in 10 parents think that schools have a role in reinforcing the development of what they typically call life skills.
- 2/3 of current and recent high school students agree that SEL would help their...learning of academic material and preparation for college, careers, and citizenship.
- 9 in 10 teachers believe social emotional skills can be taught.
- 97% of principals believe a larger focus on SEL will improve students' academic achievement.
- 8 in 10 employers say SEL skills are the most important to success and are also the hardest to find.
- SEL benefits all children, but disproportionally benefits vulnerable students who may have experienced trauma.

“Students participating in SEL programs also showed improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school.”

-Durlak, Weissberg, et al-

WHAT IS SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING?



"Social emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions" (CASEL, 2021b). Social and emotional skills are often referred to as one's emotional intelligence or EQ. These skills give youth and adults the framework to do these things:

- Cope with anger and stress
 - Recognize their own and others' emotions
 - Express emotions appropriately
 - Solve their own problems
 - Think critically and make good decisions
 - Develop effective listening and communication skills
 - Handle emotions without violence
 - Reduce power struggles and resolve conflicts constructively and collaboratively
 - Give positive feedback to others
 - Dialogue rather than debate with others
 - Act according to their values, not their emotions
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WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH

A recent U.S. Surgeon General report indicates that one in five children and adolescents will face a significant mental health condition during their school years.

Supporting mental health in students can remove barriers to learning and shift focus to the success of the whole child. Hamilton Southeastern Schools defines mental health as a person's overall emotional, psychological, and social well-being.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS IN EDUCATION

A Nation at Hope claims "the promotion of social, emotional, and academic learning is not a shifting educational fad; it is the substance of education itself." This national report produced by the Aspen Institute identify the following six categories that accelerate efforts to impact student outcomes (Aspen Institute, 2019).

1. **Set a clear vision that broadens the definition of student success to prioritize the whole child.** This begins by articulating the social, emotional and academic skills that graduates need for success in school, the workforce, and life.
2. **Transform learning settings so they are safe and supportive for all young people.** Build settings that are safe and foster bonds among children and adults.
3. **Change instruction to teach students social, emotional, and cognitive skills; embed these skills in academics and school-wide practices.** Intentionally teach competencies and infuse them in academic content and in all aspects of the school setting (lunchroom, hallways, extracurriculars), not just in stand alone programs or lessons.
4. **Build adult expertise in child development.** Ensure educators develop expertise in child development and the changing science of learning.
5. **Align resources and leverage partners in the community to address the whole child.** Partnerships between schools, families, and the community support healthy learning and development in and out of school.
6. **Forge closer connections between research and practice by shifting the paradigm for how research gets done.** Bridge the divide between scholarly research and what is actionable in schools.



HSE SCHOOLS MILESTONE 1

School Counseling and Integrated Efforts

A district team (Student Success Team) focuses solely on equity/inclusion, social-emotional learning in schools, and mental health partnerships/supports in the community. To learn more about our district's ongoing equity work, click here: [Equity and Excellence](#)



All HSE Schools have one or more licensed school counselors on staff. School counselors provide academic advising, guidance regarding college and career readiness, and support for mental health and social emotional learning.

All school counseling programs have been awarded the Indiana Department of Education Gold Star Award for demonstrating they have “a comprehensive and accountable school counseling and guidance program, aligned to Indiana School Counselor and Student Standards, as well as national standards.”

Anti-bullying training occurs annually for all students, staff, and volunteers.

HSE SCHOOLS MILESTONE 1, CONT.

School Counseling and Integrated Efforts

College and Career Academies opened in 2015 in both high schools with extended hours available beyond the traditional school day for counselors to meet with students and families.

In the fall of 2019, the district implemented the use of an online program, Naviance, centered around college and career readiness. Through the integration of this program in the school curriculum, 7th and 8th graders engage in career exploration through activities such as career interest surveys. Naviance allows high schoolers to research colleges, apply to multiple colleges through one application, and apply for financial aid and scholarships.

The district additionally works with J. Everett Light Career Center, creating high school courses centered around hands-on career experience such as welding and auto-mechanics. Internships for school credit are additionally available for high schoolers to continue their career exploration. The district has expanded its high school curriculum to include more opportunities for students to gain college credit and real-world experience through AP, ACP, and dual-credit course offerings and programs such as Project Lead the Way.

In 2017, the Hamilton Southeastern School Corporation received a Comprehensive Counseling Initiative grant award from the Lilly Endowment to respond to stakeholder needs assessment with outcome based strategics impacting student success through both academic and social emotional learning achievements.

In 2020, the district additionally received the three-year Project AWARE federal grant award from the Indiana Department of Education in order to increase the district's capacity to meet students' mental health needs. This grant allows the district to carry on critical work, such as fund ongoing SEL work, solidify tier 1 supports for all students, expand tier 2 supports, increase family knowledge and engagement around mental health, and increase the school's crisis preparedness.

MILESTONE 2

Community Health Partnerships

HSE has a District Mental Health and School Counseling Coordinator who coordinates services with community-based mental health organizations and oversees a partnership with Community Health Network. Additionally, she supports student led clubs, such as Bring Change to Mind.

The school district plays an integral role in the City of Fishers Stigma Free Initiative.

Student tip lines and assistance teams have been created to identify and proactively support at-risk students.

Community Health Network provides behavioral health services to students on-site in each of our schools. This effort eliminates barriers to students receiving critical support while also minimizing the impact to instructional time and missed work time for parents. Student impact from this partnership during 2019/2020 includes:

- 754 students were served in 19/20 with parent permission.
 - 76% of discharged students who received treatment showed improvement.
 - 23 full time therapists were assigned to schools along with a crisis intervention specialist.
 - 3,567 telehealth services occurred during the COVID shut down.
 - 76% of students who received treatment in both 18/19 and 19/20 had zero behavioral offenses.
 - 54% of students who received treatment in both 18/19 and 19/20 had an increase in attendance
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MILESTONE 3

Data, Outcomes, and Panorama Survey

During the 18/19 academic year, the Hamilton Southeastern School Board of School Trustees set a goal to become a more data-centric educational system. Data can be utilized in a variety of ways including classroom instruction, staff development, operational efficiency, and student outcomes. Two new analytics positions and a district data team were created to bring multiple, reliable, and valid data systems together and begin to provide a more holistic view of student success. Successes include:

- Administration of Panorama Education stakeholder surveys including 89% teacher response rate, 91% student response rate, and 32% family response rate in the spring of 2019. The response rate in the fall of 2020 was approximately 60% .
- Alignment of district discipline codes to enhance data mining and building level support.
- Development of corporation dashboards for real time data access and progress monitoring.
- Exploration of how to measure student success beyond standardized test and traditional methods.

One success in particular highlighted the growth that occurred as a result of the school district's SEL implementation. A second stakeholder Panorama Education survey was sent out to students in the fall of 2020. The survey measured student strength in the five SEL competencies, student favorability of school support and environment, and teacher-student relationships. Significant growth was shown across the board for all grades. Considerable increases include:

- 23% increase in students grades 6-12 who felt that all or most of their teachers would be concerned if they walked into class upset.
 - 10% increase in students grades 3-5 who were frequently or almost always able to pay attention and ignore distractions while working.
 - 10% increase in students grades 3-5 who were often or routinely able to disagree with others without starting an argument
 - 8% increase in students grades 6-12 who were often or routinely able to disagree with others without starting an argument.
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WHAT IS NEXT?



SEL strategies & We Got This

Despite the progress already made, our district has committed to continued growth in the area of social-emotional learning and inclusion/equity for all students. Two important efforts are beginning in 2019 to advance student success.

The first was a pilot in 2019 of intentional and integrated social emotional learning curriculum in every building grades K-8. After 15 months of thoughtful research with a diverse group of stakeholders, the district used a combination of curriculum from MindUp, Second Step, and Common Sense Media. The scope and sequence taught fundamental concepts such as neuroscience, goal setting, problem solving, and disagreeing respectfully. In 2020, the curriculum was fully rolled out to all buildings in grades K-8, with each classroom receiving a weekly SEL lesson. In 2019, a committee of dedicated high school teachers began researching and planning for SEL at the high school level. A second SMART period was added weekly in 2020 to every 9th grader's schedule, and the SEL curriculum was piloted during this time. Full rollout of the HS SEL curriculum will occur in the fall of 2020.

The second is a communication campaign, #WeGotThis, designed to work collaboratively with parents and community organization to enhance social emotional learning. This effort an invitation for all adults in the community to come along side these efforts to benefit students. A team of community stakeholders – parents, teachers, and community members – works to help lead this work. During the 19/20 school year, the district launched several neuroscience videos, followed by a series of self-care videos during the COVID-19 shutdown. During the 20/21 school year, the distract plans to launch a series of SEL 101 videos to show what SEL work looks like inside of our schools. Working together, we can create an environment where every student can leave HSE for a successful future saying, "I've got this."

RESOURCES AND REERENCES

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