

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program Description

The goal of the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) initiative is to provide campus staff members with SEL training and implementation support at all grade levels. In the Dallas ISD, SEL is defined as a mixture of practices, including SEL and additional strategies from other behavior management methods including Restorative Practices and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The district implemented the five SEL competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) as defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), including their 2020-21 update to incorporate a greater focus on equity. The budget for the SEL Department in 2021-22 was \$4,112,273.50¹, an increase from \$3,210,455 in 2020-21 (Hinkley & Carson, 2021).

SEL in the Dallas ISD²

In 2017-18, the Dallas ISD began participating in the multi-year PSELI Study (funded by the Wallace Foundation). The study was designed to examine the impact of consistent SEL implementation during in- and out-of-school time (OST). Seven PSELI Study and seven PSELI Comparison campuses participated in the two-phase study. District SEL staff members began initiative implementation by training campus staff members to understand SEL, practice SEL, and model appropriate behaviors for their students.

In 2018-19, campus-staff-member SEL training continued with a new focus on introducing SEL concepts to students. Six components of the SEL initiative occurred across all campuses implementing SEL. Additionally, some SEL partnership campuses began using the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) curriculum, an SEL curriculum designed to assist with the transition to high school.

To integrate SEL across central staff departments, SEL central staff members began working in 2019-20 to try and increase the role of SEL in districtwide thinking, planning, and expectations. SEL also was embedded into the math and science curricula.

In December 2020, the SEL Department updated the elements of the district approach to SEL to include climate and culture (engagement with signature practices, respect

agreements, and calming areas/strategies), explicit skills instruction (a dedicated time and curriculum to teach SEL), content integration (integrating SEL into core curricula), and family engagement. Focus on these four areas subsequently made up the day-to-day work of the SEL Department staff members, who directly supported campuses with SEL implementation efforts. Starting in 2020-21, the SEL Department staff members also worked to foster SEL at the community level.

PURPOSE AND METHODS OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation report was to summarize the 2021-22 context, process, and outcomes of the SEL initiative.³ Various context and process data were utilized including information about program components and support provided to campus staff members and students, and perception regarding quality of professional development (PD) sessions. Outcome data include analyses of student (Student Experience and SEL Student survey, and academic) and campus staff member (Climate Survey) data by implementation level. Additionally, the evaluation examined Title I and II workscope goals and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund activity goals set by SEL staff members when applicable. The evaluator used frequencies to summarize all outcome data by implementation level.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the SEL initiative implemented in 2021-22?

SEL Partnership Campuses (SEL Partners)

Prior to 2020-21, only some campuses were formally involved in the SEL initiative. In 2020-21, all campuses were required to select one of three levels of SEL support (Intensive, Moderate, or Consultation Only). A full description of each level of support can be found in Hinkley and Carson (2021). In 2021-22, this framework changed, such that the level of SEL support provided to campuses became determined by their local accountability ratings (Accomplished, Breakthrough, Competing, Developing, or Focus). Support for campuses included campus coaching and training on SEL implementation, but the frequency with

¹ The total included \$584,944.50 from the Wallace Foundation; \$1,021,813 from Title II, Part A funds; \$855,516 from Title IV, Part A funds; \$50,000 from ESSER funding to support the Student Leadership Summits; and \$1,600,000 in additional ESSER funding.

² For a more detailed description of the context of the initiative from 2017-18 through 2020-21, see Weir (2018), Hinkley (2019), Hinkley (2020), and Hinkley and Carson (2021), respectively.

³ Portions of this report were adapted from Hinkley and Carson (2021).

which support was provided varied according to the campus's accountability rating.

- Focus campuses received support weekly, Developing campuses received support biweekly, and Competing campuses received support monthly.
- Breakthrough campuses could select any of the levels of support described for Competing, Developing, and Focus campuses.
- Accomplished campuses could also select any of those levels of support but were not required to do so.
- In addition, Developing and Focus campuses received supplies and furniture to equip their campus-based calming centers which complimented classroom calming centers.

Systems for Effective Implementation

The SEL Department continued to recommend the following systems and supports for effective implementation: campus steering committees, campus champions, district SEL coordinator support, designated times and methods for teaching SEL, and embedding SEL within instruction. These recommended systems and supports for effective SEL implementation were suggested across all campuses; however, in 2021-22, they were implemented at varying levels at campuses that received more support, but content integration was consistently an area for continued growth. Implementation was supported by campus steering committees, campus champions, and district SEL coordinators. In 2021-22, all campuses had a district SEL coordinator assigned via network as a potential support. However, the services and time that coordinators provided to individual campuses varied based on support level, though Focus, Developing, and Competing campuses received priority.

In 2021-22, all campuses were expected to conduct explicit SEL instruction for 45 minutes each week.

- Most elementary campuses continued using the Harmony SEL curriculum to teach SEL while middle school campus staff members had access to lessons twice per week using Random Acts of Kindness.
- High school campuses used one of two curricula: Community Matters: A Facing History Approach to Advisory from Facing History and Ourselves or Everfi, though there was a preference for the Facing History Approach.
- SEL continued to be embedded into the social studies and reading and language arts curricula, however, SEL Department staff members reported that teachers were still being trained on intentional integration of the SEL standards and skill-building into the academic curricula.
- Finally, efforts to integrate SEL across central staff departments continued in 2021-22 (see full report for details).

PSEL Study and Comparison Campuses

All 14 PSEL campuses continued to receive SEL support in 2021-22. All PSEL campuses received biweekly support at minimum and Phase II campuses were expected to engage with recommend systems and supports for effective implementation, however, this was optional for Phase I campuses. See full report for additional details about the PSEL study.

COVID-19

In 2021-22, coordinator visits were provided in-person after being provided remotely in 2020-21. Training sessions were provided in a hybrid model, with districtwide training occurring remotely, but some campuses received in-person training upon request. In 2021-22, the SEL Department staff members continued to update the department website with announcements and resources, including districtwide and CDC health guideline updates related to COVID-19. Additionally, the SEL Department offered summer PD training to principals in 2021-22 as well as optional SEL summer training for teachers.

To support students and families, the SEL Department posted daily activities for all grades on the At-Home Learning website beginning spring 2020. The activities remained available and applicable in 2021-22. The SEL Department and family engagement coordinator also created videos on a range of topics including making friends in school, sensory pathways and videos with family-focused content. Department staff also offered online resources and virtual discussion groups/activities to share information/resources with parents and caregivers. In 2021-22, the SEL Department began implementing a digital check-in app (Rhithm) for campuses to support and monitor students.

ESSER Summary

In 2021-22, the SEL department received \$1,600,000 in ESSER funding and an additional \$50,000 to support the Student Leadership Summits. The SEL department met two ESSER activity goals including 1) campuses with students who engaged in student leadership development opportunities participated in, on average, two student-led initiatives, and 2) maintain a 90 percent satisfaction rate with department-led training sessions during the 2021-22 school year (based on post-training surveys). The SEL department did not meet the ESSER activity goal of having 40 high implementation campuses and 50 medium implementation campuses that receive weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly levels of support by May 2022. By May 2022, there were 26 high implementation campuses and 99 medium implementation campuses across those support levels.

What was the relationship between levels of implementation fidelity and SEL-related outcomes in 2021-22?

A rubric was developed by Evaluation and Assessment and SEL central staff members to measure SEL implementation

by campus.⁴ Overall, the mean score was 68.7 out of a possible 105 points (standard deviation = 16.3; range: 21 to 103). The rubric was found to be reliable (21 items; $\alpha = .90$).⁵ Implementation tended to be lower at elementary and high schools compared to elementary/middle, middle, and middle/high schools.

What were the perceptions of SEL PD participants in 2021-22?

The SEL Department provided 36 types of PD across six categories to 1,986 campus staff members across the district over the course of the year. Overall, most attendees (at least 91% across categories and questions) rated the PD they received positively (agree or strongly agree). The department met the Title II workscope goal that 90 percent of teachers who participate in SEL-Department led trainings will commit to implementing at least one practice shared in that training session, with 93 percent of teachers reporting that they will implement at least one practice.

How did 2021-22 student outcome data vary by SEL implementation level?

Results provided mixed evidence of an advantage for higher SEL implementation campuses on student non-assessment outcomes. Results from the 2021-22 SEL student survey and Student Experience Survey (Table 1) showed that:

- High implementation campuses across all campus levels had higher favorable response rates than low implementation campuses on Social Awareness.
- High implementation campuses had higher favorable response rates than low implementation campuses on Self-efficacy (elementary and high school levels), Self-management (middle and high school levels), Supportive Relationships (elementary and middle school levels), and Student Experience (high school level).

On the 2022 *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* 3-8 and *End-of-Course (EOC)* assessments,

- High implementation campuses had higher Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) rates and higher Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+) rates than medium and low implementation campuses on Grades Three through Five Reading and Mathematics, Grades Six through Eight Reading, and English I and English II.⁶
- Medium implementation campuses had higher Approaches+ rates and higher Meets+ rates than low

implementation campuses on Grades Three through Five Reading, Algebra I, and English I and English II.

- With some exceptions, across implementation levels and assessments, students demonstrated one-year rate increases at both the Approaches+ and Meets+ standards.

Table 1: 2021-22 SEL Student Survey and Student Experience Survey Favorable Response Rates by SEL Implementation Level

Outcome	2021-22			1-Year Change		
	High	Med	Low	High	Med	Low
Elementary Schools						
Self-eff (%)	62.6	58.0	55.9	7.8	1.1	-0.3
Self-man (%)	64.9	65.2	67.8	2.4	0.5	6.7
Soc Aw (%)	68.4	67.2	67.3	2.6	0.4	4.0
Sup Rel (%)	87.6	87.4	85.7	4.3	3.2	3.1
Stu Exp (%)	81.5	79.9	85.5	-1.3	0.0	11.9
Middle Schools						
Self-eff (%)	50.0	49.7	51.9	-7.2	0.4	2.3
Self-man (%)	70.1	68.8	68.0	-6.1	-1.3	0.9
Soc Aw (%)	60.6	60.0	57.6	-6.0	-2.4	-1.9
Sup Rel (%)	83.5	81.6	81.9	2.2	2.6	3.6
Stu Exp (%)	66.6	67.8	N/A	-7.4	-3.3	-
High Schools						
Self-eff (%)	54.0	46.6	49.5	17.0	9.1	-
Self-man (%)	77.0	73.3	73.5	5.0	1.5	-
Soc Aw (%)	67.0	61.2	63.7	4.0	-1.4	-
Sup Rel (%)	76.0	79.7	83.0	-2.0	1.7	-
Stu Exp (%)	73.5	75.1	72.2	-3.5	0.9	-2.4

Source: PEIMS demographic data: 10/30/20 (2020-21) and 11/01/21 (2021-22). SEL Survey data: 11/16/20 (2020-21) and 11/05/21 (2021-22). Student Experience Survey data: 07/12/21 (2020-21) and 06/23/22 (2021-22).

Note: Med = medium. % = percentage points. Eff = efficacy. Man = management. Soc Aw = social awareness. Sup Rel = supportive relationships. Stu Exp = student experience. - = no prior measure was available for change calculations.

How did 2021-22 campus-level Climate Survey data vary by SEL implementation Level?

Some support was found for a relationship between higher SEL implementation and higher Climate Survey favorable response rates for campus staff members.

- High SEL implementation campuses generally had higher Climate Survey favorable response rates than low and medium implementation campuses at elementary and middle schools, however, low SEL implementation campuses had higher rates than medium and high implementation campuses at the high school level (Table 2).

⁴ In 2020-21, an OST rubric was developed for PSELI campuses participating in OST work; because of the small number of campuses involved, those data were not reported.

⁵ Cronbach (1951); 0.70 is considered acceptable, 0.80 is considered good, and 0.90 or higher is considered excellent. Only campuses implementing SEL were included in analyses.

⁶ Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic data files dated 10/30/20 (2020-21) and 11/01/21 (2021-22). STAAR data files dated 06/28/21 (2020-21) and 06/27/22 (2021-22). STAAR EOC data files dated 06/17/21 (2020-21) and 06/27/22 (2021-22).

- Some changes over time also showed greater increases in favorable response rates over one year for high implementation campuses at the elementary and middle school levels compared to medium implementation campuses.

Table 2: 2021-22 Campus-level Climate Survey Favorable Response Rates by SEL Implementation Level

Outcome	2021-22			1-Year Change		
	High	Med	Low	High	Med	Low
Elementary Schools						
Clim PCE (%)	81.2	74.7	74.8	2.6	-0.3	-2.4
Clim TTT (%)	91.0	84.4	86.3	15.5	1.8	0.7
Clim TPT (%)	81.4	79.9	83.1	-0.5	3.2	-9.8
Middle Schools						
Clim PCE (%)	62.9	60.0	N/A	3.2	-2.2	-
Clim TTT (%)	69.6	73.8	N/A	-9.1	3.4	-
Clim TPT (%)	67.9	64.5	N/A	11.7	2.7	-
High Schools						
Clim PCE (%)	54.6	55.8	64.3	-40.7	-8.2	5.5
Clim TTT (%)	70.1	73.6	75.3	-14.9	-0.5	3.2
Clim TPT (%)	57.7	59.1	75.0	-42.3	-9.4	32.5

Source: Climate Survey: 07/23/21 (spring 2021) and 06/15/22 (2021-22).

Note: Med = medium. % = percentage points. Clim = climate survey. PCE = Positive Culture and Environment. TTT = Teacher-Teacher Trust. TPT = Teacher-Principal Trust. - = no prior measure was available for change calculations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to provide support to schools to maintain the increase in overall implementation. In 2021-22, the number of high implementation campuses increased to 28, up from 8 campuses in 2020-21. The department should continue to consistently support campuses with SEL implementation so that campus staff members and students can continue growth in their SEL skills.

As recommended in previous years, continue working to improve students' self-efficacy across campus levels. Overall, students' self-efficacy as measured on the SEL Student Survey improved in 2021-22 (range: 47%

medium implementation high schools to 63% high implementation elementary schools) compared to 2020-21 (range: 37% high implementation high schools to 57% medium implementation elementary schools and high implementation middle schools). SEL Department staff members should continue supporting teachers in improving the self-efficacy of their students.

Maintain efforts to improve implementation practices.

As the SEL department continues the shift to using campuses' local accountability ratings to determine levels of support, it will be important to ensure campuses are receiving the appropriate amount of support and areas of growth in implementation practices (e.g., content integration) are improved.

Monitor campus staff satisfaction in the fall. High implementation campuses had lower Climate Survey favorable response rates at the high school level compared to medium and low implementation campuses, while medium implementation campuses had lower Climate Survey favorable response rates at the elementary school level compared to high and low implementation campuses. SEL Department staff members should monitor campus staff satisfaction levels to address possible areas of concern early in the school year.

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