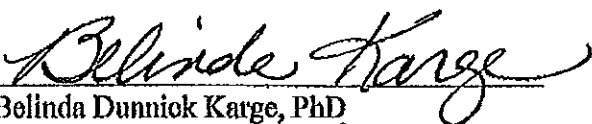
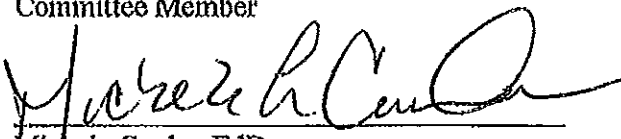


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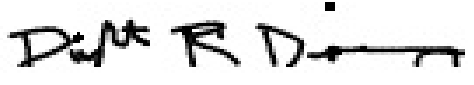

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EXAMINING EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM DESIGN AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL
LEARNING ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

by

Walter Nixon II

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation study gathered quantitative and qualitative data, as well as extensive research examining educational system design and the impact of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) on high school student achievement. The primary research question of the study asked How does educational system design embed and measure Social Emotional Learning (i.e., instruction and support to include self-awareness, social awareness, growth mindset, and self-efficacy) that improves student wellbeing and student achievement? The secondary research question inquired Does SEL impact the wellbeing of marginalized students at the same rate as the general population of students?

Quantitative secondary data obtained from student responses to a district-wide social-emotional well-being survey were utilized to illustrate student perceptions of social-emotional learning, student achievement, and school. The impact of SEL on student achievement cannot be precisely measured, however, examining how an educational system incorporated SEL into the district's comprehensive plan proved to be an indicator of a coherent, student-centered, educational system design. Qualitative interviews of site level stakeholders were conducted using collective case study interview protocol to gather perspectives of system design and program implementation as they relate to the impact of SEL on student achievement. The goal of interviewing site level stakeholders was to gather perspectives from those serving and being served within the high school community to determine how they have experienced SEL contributing to student achievement and who they felt was responsible for teaching and learning SEL. Identifying exactly how SEL is being taught and which experiences participants thought were most helpful for student achievement was the result.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The efficacy of a process is reliant upon evidence. The idea of enacting a plan based on observations and specific goals stemming from the analysis of that data produces a cycle of continuous improvement. This process can be established as a method with consistent evidence. It has been this researcher's personal goal as an educator, more specifically as a special educator, during the past twenty years of teaching and learning to become an effective methodologist. Specifically, designing relational classroom experiences for a variety of learners, all deemed unique and having specialized needs, for the express purpose of meeting those personalized academic and social-emotional learning needs while maintaining the relational goal of community.

In a similar manner, this study aimed to examine an educational system from within to evidence the necessary community commitment and comprehensive district plan required to meet the learning needs that lead to student achievement for all. Given the overwhelming evidence identifying disproportionality in education, from funding measures to categorical programs all backed by policy, legislation has not proven effective (Skiba et al., 2011). However, with California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) producing a model of both flexibility and local accountability, districts are able to provide more resources but are also required to be more transparent and accountable (Wolf & Sands, 2016). The aim of this study was to investigate how a district forges coherent system design, based on evidenced theoretical/educational frameworks and protocols, to develop and implement a district plan that continuously focuses to improve overall student well-being and thereby student achievement.

Research indicates that secondary and post-secondary outcomes for marginalized/at-risk students are poor when compared to dominant students despite educational policy targeting

improved outcomes (Skiba, 2016). Nationally, attention has been fixated on accountability, standardized testing, and policy development, all with little evidence to support improved outcomes. Locally, communities compete for district funding while school sites vie for their individual stakes and a voice within local government to influence political outcomes and funding. Contributing to the competition are disproportionate discipline and referral rates for nondominant students, producing inequity in education during school and limited earning potential after school (Gregory et al., 2017). The goals of this mixed methods study were:

- a) To examine educational system design through the lens of student self-perception, specifically how implementation of Social-Emotional Learning impacts social emotional wellbeing and student achievement.
- b) To identify SEL experiences that improved wellbeing and were perceived to contribute to student achievement as well as outcomes after high school.
- c) To determine how SEL experiences at school impacted marginalized students who achieved diplomas.

Statement of the Problem

National Level Educational Perspective

Secondary and post-secondary outcomes for marginalized/at-risk students are poor across the United States despite educational policy targeting improved outcomes through scholarly research, evidence-based theoretical frameworks, and policy recommendations (Skiba, 2016). According to Lac (2017), all students and specifically marginalized/at-risk students, benefit from improved social-emotional learning (SEL) experiences that foster self-awareness and improve self-regulation. School systems that have not implemented SEL standards are further contributing to disproportionality in educational policy and practice which will continue to stifle

academic outcomes for marginalized students if not addressed and corrected soon. In fact, such educational policy designed to offset overrepresentation will not ever properly address this problem as it pertains to the at-risk/marginalized student (Voulgarides et al., 2017). The evidence, when disaggregated, demonstrates significant issues due to increasing policy problems as a result of targeting disproportionality (Artiles, et al., 2010).

State Level Response to National Educational Data

Considering failed educational policy reform and impending social justice practices designed to abate inequity, states like California have led the way toward equity by completely modifying the funding formula for education. results from an applied science practice study were replicated by Allen et al., (2013). The purpose of the study was to determine if student achievement could be predicted or gauged by the quality of teacher interventions. The results showed that emotional and instructional supports were of the greatest predictive value for student achievement in smaller classrooms compared to larger ones. Should these best classroom practices be implemented, given the evidence supporting positive teacher-student interactions and positive student engagement on achievement (Finn & Zimmer, 2012), then there will be a reasonable expectation of an increase in student outcomes on a scale from immediately to over a period of years for all students.

District Level System Design

Considering results from Allen et al. (2013) indicating the predictive value of emotional and instructional supports on student achievement, districts that have not yet implemented plans to analyze what emotional and instructional supports positively contribute to student achievement are at a deficit. In California, districts that have begun incorporating more transparent, flexible, and accountable methods of planning, spending, and collecting data to meet

the educational needs of their communities are implementing funding policy as intended according to scholars (Wolf & Sands, 2016). Recently formulated funding policy took subjective data of the population into account, like the design of the Race to the Top federal grant. These alternative funding strategies coupled with the longstanding body of research forged by Bandura's theoretical framework based on social cognitive theory, which later influences emotional intelligence, could be a game changer if models for implementation are developed and then generalized to other populations while still proving to be effective for addressing motivation, determination, and student achievement. "Accountability works in whole-system reform by increasing collective capacity and shared responsibility and reinforcing it through the use of transparent data and positive intervention" (Fullan, 2010, p. 56). Collective accountability in the workplace manifests as emotional intelligence when self and social awareness produce norms that become standard practice for the collaborative process. This premise is apparent in the critical conclusion asserted by Fullan holding that "the solution is not a program; it is a set of strong focused practices and norms" (Fullan, 2010, p. 56).

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to research, analyze quantitative data, and then qualitatively examine how an educational system design embeds, implements, and measures Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) that has been evidenced to improve student achievement and overall social emotional wellbeing. The secondary purpose was to determine if and how SEL has impacted marginalized students who sought high school diplomas. As a mixed methods study, the dissertation design included quantitative analysis of students self-reporting their social emotional wellbeing, considered the result of social-emotional learning. At this stage of research social-emotional learning, instruction, and support are defined as the lessons, activities and

systemic design aimed to enhance self and social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, and self-management (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017).

SEL outcomes will be generally defined and measured along four constructs: self-awareness, social awareness, growth mindset, and self-efficacy (Meyer et al., 2018). Analysis of student feedback provided from a customized student survey produced by Panorama Education known as the Well-being Survey illustrates student perceptions of the four constructs at three different times during the 2020-21 school year. These outcomes were analyzed in relationship to student achievement, in the form of grade point averages (GPA) and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) scores at various intervals during the school year. The researcher posited that determining how educational policy and system design account for SEL is the foundational question policymakers and educators must ask when social justice and equitable practices warrant systemic overhauls to improve educational outcomes for all students in the 21st century. Effective backwards planning relative to the causes and effects of SEL on student achievement entails evaluating student feedback relating to their experiences and understanding of SEL and considering all possible implications of that feedback to inform policy development and implementation.

The secondary purpose of this study design intended to constructively impact the district, site, and community level educational design plans. By disseminating current data relating SEL to student achievement and discussing SEL best practices from current scholarly research, an increased level of awareness present with all stakeholders consciously impacted teaching, learning, and relational experiences. Interviews of leadership as well as stakeholders, like recent graduates and parents, inquired about familiarity with SEL practices, programs, and supports.

Collective Case Study Interview Protocol (CCSIP) and the method of online data collection, FlipGrid.com, supported a reflective process that enhanced the emotional intelligence of all participants. Policy development and system design modeled after the work of the partnership of Policy Analysis for California Education and the CORE Districts have already laid a foundation.

California's CORE Districts are at the forefront of the national SEL movement. The CORE Districts are a consortium of eight California school districts—Fresno, Garden Grove, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Santa Ana that collectively serve more than one million students attending roughly 1,800 schools. In 2013, CORE received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education that allowed its member districts to waive key requirements of the No Child Left Behind school accountability system. Under this waiver, CORE sought to implement an accountability system that incorporated school performance across a broader range of outcome measures, rather than looking solely at standardized test scores and graduation rates. CORE's measurement system focuses on non-academic measures such as SEL and school culture/climate, alongside traditional academic indicators, to inform a more holistic index of school quality. Since then, CORE has transitioned to a support network focusing on continuous improvement based on the data it collects from the districts, and now seeks to leverage its SEL work in this mission (Meyer et al., 2018, p. 2).

Each district committed to the CORE foundational principle. This was a huge undertaking that required systems shift under the guidance of self-aware leadership and community stakeholders.

Theoretical Frameworks

Frank Lloyd Wright, architect and designer, made popular the notion that the design of something must not fit only its use, but also its environment (Ricci, 2020). According to Frank Lloyd Wright, beautiful architecture had to connect to, with, and from the place of location. Like the architectural design employed by Wright, educational system design must consider all factors impacting student performance for greater potential in education to be manifested in today's diverse, urban, and rural classrooms. Content and method of instruction, teacher and student relationship, as well as constructs of social-emotional learning must be incorporated in whole system design.

The four constructs of social-emotional learning, growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, and social awareness are all supported by “broad agreement among educators, policy makers and the public that educational systems should graduate students who are proficient in core academic subjects, able to work well with others from diverse backgrounds in socially and emotionally skilled ways...” (Durlak, 2011, p. 406). Incorporating these constructs into standard educational policy and practice marries thinking and feeling with daily classroom instruction and personal outcomes for learning. Including internal factors (i.e., implicit theories, feelings, and motivation) when developing and instructing curriculum will implement SEL at the planning level which will model the strategy, improve the application of knowledge in practice, and contribute to student achievement, in theory. Conversely, “the failure to achieve competence in these areas can lead to a variety of personal, social, and academic difficulties” (Durlak, 2011, p. 406).

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive or Social Learning Theory provided a framework connecting a person's thinking (cognitive, internal factors) to the environment (social and

cultural factors) and then ultimately to their own behavior or feelings (affective factors, external results) while drawing upon the quality of motivation as a factor. His body of work has proved to be the foundation for developing self-efficacy models in education, which have undergirded self-monitoring, self-regulation/management, as well as motivation. From this starting point comes a plethora of evidence supported by the further work of Bandura and Carol Dweck on implicit theories and motivation which have recently been coined as a growth mindset (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

This practical understanding between feeling (motivation) which influences thinking (cognition), and vice versa, is being posited as a theoretical framework for designing and developing SEL experiences to immediately improve academic outcomes for urban and rural high school students. With recent policy changes at the federal and state level there is a greater consideration given to the whole child, and a holistic view of education that now includes SEL factors (Date, 2019). Developing means to most effectively measure SEL is now a matter of accountability since Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 required state accountability systems to include at least one indicator of school quality or student success other than students' cognitive abilities. At the state level, all 50 states have integrated some degree of social and emotional content into their learning standards; many have legislative bills and policies in place to support statewide SEL implementation from preschool through 12th grade (Dusenbury et al., 2015). In addition, some districts are also moving toward a systematic process to measure students' SEL learning and incorporate SEL into applied settings (Oakland Unified School District, 2015). It is possible to conceive that the way Wright produced design plans should be the way policymakers develop policy and educators produce site and lesson plans, by

incorporating social-emotional learning into each design to serve its particular purpose - a thinking as well as a feeling process (Wright, 2008).

Significance of the Study

Research published in 2011 by Durlak et al. analyzed the impact of enhancing students' social-emotional learning in a meta-analysis of 213 school-based intervention programs. The review of data spanned from 1955 to 2007, making it a broad scan of clinical trials with numerous conclusions, the most significant of which equaled an academic achievement gain of 11 percentile points. Research recommendations from the meta-analysis were to continue experimenting through ongoing studies to further evidence the positive effects of SEL and to identify what strategies, curriculum, or best practices specifically work at various levels (i.e., early childhood, primary, and secondary). The Durlak study could be generalized to a larger population of urban high school students with similar demographics. Utilizing data obtained from a large-scale survey allows path analyses which show that students with an incremental theory of intelligence have mastery or learning oriented goals, and positive effort beliefs and effort attributions that lead to mastery strategies (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Initiating the use of a psychological intervention to change a student's implicit theory of intelligence from entity (fixed) to incremental (growth) can have a "snowball" effect that positively impacts students' achievement. To understand the variance in the effectiveness of psychological interventions, analyze the classroom context and Growth Mindset strategies that could mediate the impact of the intervention (Yeager & Walton, 2011).

Potential significance of this study lends itself to a method, or process, for examining an educational system's design with the goal of increasing social-emotional learning experiences that have been proven to improve student wellbeing and achievement, as well as the emotional

intelligence of a community. Considering the results of a national teacher survey in 2013, 93% of current teachers believe that “SEL is very or fairly important for the in-school student experience” (Bridgeland et al., 2013, p. 5). Yet, there is still a problem with programming, standards adoption, and curricular decision-making. Presently there is a gap between the existing research, funded programs, curriculum selection, professional development, and teaching practices in classrooms. Despite widespread recognition of the importance of SEL among teachers, parents, employers, and researchers, SEL is still considered “the missing piece in the educational puzzle” (Bridgeland, et al., 2013, p. 12). The relatively sparse research on development and measurement of SEL for educational purposes has slowed the adoption of best practices due to the lack of generalizability of findings for smaller scale studies that included convenient samples of students, classrooms, and schools.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in this study:

Growth Mindset: Holds people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. (Dweck, 1986).

Relationship skills: When one is able to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017).

Responsible Decision-Making: To make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety, and social norms (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017).

Self-Awareness: To know your strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a growth mindset (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Self-Management: To effectively manage stress, control impulses, and motivate yourself to set and achieve goals (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017)

Social Awareness: to understand the perspectives of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017).

Social Emotional Learning: How children and adults learn to understand and manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Eklund et al., 2018).

Limitations

Collective case study sample size may be too small to draw large comparisons. One norm-referenced achievement test, the Northwest Evaluation Association Measure of Academic Progress, was administered three times annually (NWEA MAP, 2019). The other data source, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium - Math and ELA Tests, are issued once annually to high school juniors however due to COVID-19 were suspended for 2019-2020. Grading policies have also been altered due to state and federal guidelines for distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. GPA may not be reliable compared to prior school years.

Measuring the impact of SEL as an isolated variable cannot occur outside of self-reporting which relies on the self-perception of the subjects. In addition, students familiar with SEL may be biased toward impacts on achievement, whether that produces a positive or negative correlation, which will limit the value of the data.

Delimitations

Hispanic students make up the majority (96%) of the students in the school district for this sample. Similar to all students in California, there is an achievement gap in this sample

between the White and Hispanic students, even when controlling for low socioeconomic disadvantaged (SED) status (Tecker, 2018). Stereotyping and the stereo-type threat are considered as delimitations. Therefore, the impact of ethnic identity and stereotype threat on students' academic achievement must be considered. Researchers and educators can now plausibly reason that intellectual competence is not an innate quality inside a person's brain, but rather a product comprised of interactions with others.

Researchers Steele and Aronson (2007) introduced the term "stereotype threat" to describe how people cope with negative stereotypes about their group, specifically those related to intelligence. They argue that the achievement gap is partly caused by the "psychology of stereotyping and stigma, namely, the way people are influenced by stereotypes of intellectual inferiority" (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 798). For example, people affected by stereotype threat may wonder about the validity of the stereotype, worry about how their performance may confirm the stereotype and may begin to believe that the stereotype correctly points to an innate lack of ability in members of their group. Even if the person does not believe the stereotype, simple awareness can affect academic achievement. The research shows that "a student need never encounter actual prejudice or differential treatment . . . to be meaningfully affected by stereotypes. Just the mere knowledge of a stereotype can influence [their] thinking and behavior" (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 798). Children can be significantly affected by negative stereotypes about their group's intellectual abilities around the age of 11 or 12 (Good et al., 2003). For example, by middle childhood, "most American children have learned that blacks and Latinos are less intelligent than whites, that Asians are good at math, while girls are not, that blacks are better athletes than whites, and so on" (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 797). Students affected by stereotype threat experience self-doubt and anxiety that undermine their achievement.

Stereotypes about low ability can cause students to attribute poor performance or difficulty with a task to an internal, fixed characteristic rather than to a surmountable challenge that can be addressed with increased effort and strategy. During challenging tasks, stereotyped-threatened students' attention splits between accomplishing the task itself and wondering about what their performance says about them (Hudley et al., 2007). The stereotype threat creates an extra cognitive burden and consumes valuable cognitive resources and energy needed for self-control, memory, and organization (Alter et al., 2010).

Summary

Chapter 1 provided findings from the largest meta-analysis study conducted on the effects of SEL in the United States, (Durlak, 2011), establishing a firm case for utilizing SEL as a predictor to student achievement and future success. Educational policy, implementation, and system design must be the force of change that produces equitable pathways of human development and learning that is balanced and proven. Based on a model of data collection for continuous systemic improvement, student well-being could be precisely measured so that identified SEL needs could be addressed in a uniform manner. Utilizing data obtained from a large-scale survey allows path analyses which show that students with an incremental theory of intelligence have mastery or learning oriented goals, and positive effort beliefs and effort attributions that lead to mastery strategies (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of literature includes historical analysis of social learning theories, including personal-behavioral-environmental factors, as they have been researched through the lenses of cognitive and implicit learning processes. It begins by investigating the ideas inherent in social-emotional learning, which is the newest framework of reference in educational and now global cultural/social issues, resulting from rapidly evolving world politics which all revolve around equity. From Bandura to Dweck, the social cognitive learning theory to the growth mindset, this review of literature encompasses ideologies and the larger trends emerging from them on political and environmental stages, seeking to assess how they impact educational policy, implementation, and ultimately the educational opportunities and outcomes for all students.

As social-emotional learning has existed in education research for decades, the formal, educational ideology emerged twenty-five years ago. Since then, it has evolved, been extensively researched, and evidenced to be a contributing factor to greater student success in drastically changing times. The formal leader in research and practice is known as the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). The thinktank presents five competencies that comprise the framework: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

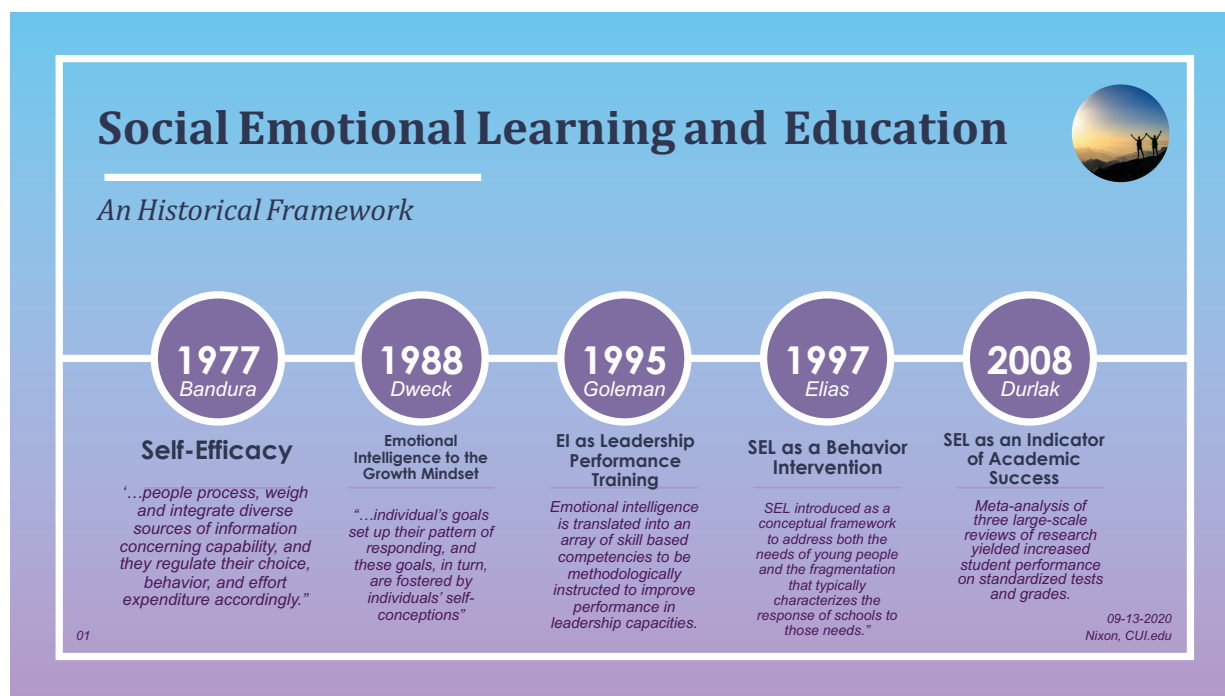
Targeting alternatives to sweeping policy change in education, particularly for marginalized/at-risk students, is proving to be the natural evolution of education. A key component of inclusive special education is the use of teaching strategies or interventions that have strong evidence of effectiveness and the avoidance of interventions that lack evidence of effectiveness (Hollins, 2011). To accomplish this, teachers need to make sure that they use

instructional strategies and interventions that have proven effectiveness for addressing learning difficulties and managing behavioral challenges. Additionally, facilitating the learning of academic skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as the broader communication, social, and vocational skills necessary for independent living.

Given the advancements in psychological interventions in education specifically targeting marginalized/at-risk students, student achievement, and institutional improvement through social-emotional learning, this research seeks to further determine how high school math students have experienced social-emotional learning. Previous findings support growing empirical evidence regarding the positive impact of SEL programs. Specifically, the framework significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance that reflected an 11- percentile point gain in achievement (Payton et al., 2008).

Figure 2. 1

Historical Framework of SEL and Education



An Historical Framework of Social Emotional Learning and Education

Self-Efficacy

In 1977 Albert Bandura proposed a theoretical framework that self-efficacy could affect behavioral change. He proved through experimental means that self-efficacy could be built up and improved through behavior treatments (Bandura,1977). In short, the theory maintains that “people process, weigh and integrate diverse sources of information concerning their capability, and they regulate their choice behavior and effort expenditure accordingly” (Bandura,1977, p. 212).

Recommendations from the study, which essentially unified previous theories on behavioral change, predictability, and determination, included further research on cognitive processing of efficacy information. He noted additional attention should also be given to the operative process involved in the relationship between efficacy expectations and action, for example, “to measure the intensity and duration of effort subjects exert in attempts to master arduous or insoluble tasks as a function of the level and strength of their efficacy expectations” (Bandura,1977, p. 212). Bandura’s work has been the cornerstone for altering behavior through a self-reflective process.

Self-Efficacy to Emotional Intelligence

The first use of the term “emotional intelligence” is often attributed to A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence (Payne, 1985). However, prior to Wayne Payne’s research, subsequent doctoral thesis, and book title, the term “emotional intelligence” had only been published in the German periodical Praxis der Kinderpsychologie und Kinderpsychiatrie. The article is titled: “Emotional intelligence and emancipation. A psychodynamic study of women” (Leuner, 1966).

Social scientists studying populations looking to advance social learning theory termed numerous frameworks, like Bandura's first widely respected publication of the same name, Social Learning Theory (1977). Self-efficacy was the cornerstone of the theory, which when further explained holds that self-efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to influence events that affect their lives.

Children's beliefs in their efficacy to regulate their own learning and academic attainments, in turn, contributed to scholastic achievement both independently and by promoting high academic aspirations and prosocial behavior and reducing vulnerability to feelings of futility and depression (Bandura et al., 1996, p. 1206).

This core belief in self-efficacy establishes the foundation of human motivation, performance accomplishments, and emotional well-being.

The study of behavior and cognitive traits has influenced educational psychology along the lines of self-efficacy and has since been posited as a component of emotional intelligence (EI).

Stanley Greenspan (1989) also put forward an EI model, followed by Mayer et al. (1990), and Daniel Goleman (1995). Another study published in 1996 was designed to investigate the effects of social skills training on reading and mathematical achievement of young African American males and revealed quantifiable reading and mathematical achievement gains for urban male students who participated in a social skills year-long training (Taylor & Nixon, 1996).

From that same study titled Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions toward the Affects of Social Skills Training on Reading and Mathematical Achievement of Young African American Males, the authors, both higher education professors in special education, state:

many young African American males have not been exposed to appropriate social models or do not possess enough prerequisite skills, such as maturity and self-control, to successfully perform the social skills. Development of social skills in African-American males as well as all children, require that they have appropriate models to copy and imitate, to recognize non-verbal clues and to adjust their behaviors accordingly (Taylor & Nixon, 1996, p. 4).

Goleman's model (1998) focuses on EI as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance, and consists of five areas: Self-Awareness is when you know your emotions, strengths, weaknesses, drives, values and goals and recognize their impact on others while using gut feelings to guide decisions; Self-Regulation is to manage or redirect one's disruptive emotions and impulses and adapt to changing circumstances; Social Skill is when one can manage other's emotions to move people in the desired direction; Empathy is to recognize, understand, and consider other people's feelings especially when making decisions; Motivation is when one can motivate oneself to achieve for the sake of achievement. What was once a singular idea for what drives achievement, self-efficacy and how it influences motivation, now becomes a set of skills or competencies termed emotional intelligence. This new battery is applied in many fields in addition to education.

Emotional Intelligence to Growth Mindset

Carol Dweck's research dating back to the 1970s, often in tandem with Bandura's social cognitive theory of learning, developed direct correlation between cognitive behavior patterns,

namely maladaptive processes versus mastery-oriented processes. Studies on motivation and personality form the foundation for the growth mindset. Such experimentation with animals and children led to a research-based model presented by Dweck and Leggett (1988). The model explored and evidenced causes of helpless (maladaptive) responses versus mastery-oriented (adaptive) responses in children, which stemmed from earlier research on animals (Diener & Dweck, 1978). In addition, the notion of working for goals led to more specific types of goals, performance versus learning – which was then tested and supported by evidence that “different goals foster the different response patterns” (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p. 256). Trials illustrated “those who avoid challenge and show impairment in the face of difficulty are initially equal in ability to those who seek challenge and show persistence” (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p. 256).

SEL as a Behavior Intervention

Further research led to the question, “Why would individuals of equal ability show such marked performance differences in response to challenge?” Such a unique question began even greater testing of implicit theories, then Bandura and Dweck (1985) proved that conceiving of one's intelligence as a fixed entity was associated with adopting the performance goal of documenting that entity whereas conceiving of intelligence as a malleable quality was associated with the learning goal of developing that quality” (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p. 256). Findings such as these presented a model where “individual's goals set up their pattern of responding, and these goals, in turn, are fostered by individuals' self-conceptions” (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p. 257). In summary, Dweck's research on patterns of cognition-affect-behavior have led to implicit theories of motivation and personality which make up the tenets of a growth mindset. Teaching students that the significance of their own motivation and personality traits for learning, including the specific types of goals- performance and learning- could lead to a growth over fixed mindset.

Successful schools ensure that all students master reading, writing, math, and science. They also foster a good understanding of history, literature, arts, foreign languages, and diverse cultures. However, most educators, parents, students, and the public support a broader educational agenda that also involves enhancing students' social-emotional competence, character, health, and civic engagement (Rose & Gallup, 2000). In addition to producing students who are culturally literate, intellectually reflective, and committed to lifelong learning, high-quality education should teach young people to interact in socially skilled and respectful ways; to practice positive, safe, and healthy behaviors; to contribute ethically and responsibly to their peer group, family, school, and community; and to possess basic competencies, work habits, and values as a foundation for meaningful employment and engaged citizenship (Elias et al., 1997).

Through experimentation with various subjects in numerous settings, emotional intelligence is built up to be a precursor to success, which can be summarized by the idea of having or employing a growth mindset. Such a necessary characteristic is then tested to determine if it is a measurable quality. Over the course of two decades, researchers exploring educational psychology discovered another key finding demonstrating psychological interventions can be redesigned and applied to improve academic outcomes for at-risk students. Since the institutional policy problem was the core academic performance of 9th-grade students in public high schools in the U.S., the goal of this study was to determine what could be done to impact a large number of students failing 9th grade and thereby seriously disrupting their chances for future positive outcomes after graduating high school.

According to Yeager and Walton (2011), self-administered psychological interventions can start a chain reaction which yields lasting improvements for student outcomes. "By changing

initial construals and behaviors, psychological interventions can set in motion recursive processes that alter students' achievement into the future" (Yeager et al., 2013, p. 16).

This study aimed to produce a method for designing psychological interventions utilizing a design thinking approach that has not been fully developed, tested, or proven yet. Yeager et al. stated that the inherent value of developing a new methodology such as using a design thinking approach developed by practicing scientists in conjunction with teachers of the at-risk population would provide a vehicle (whether educational or psychological) not yet experienced in education. The results proved to be valid, quantitatively, after results from the two subsequent studies were compared to the original mindset intervention.

By reproducing the growth mindset study with a redesigned presentation, taken directly from the growth mindset study reflection, Yeager (2013) made multiple comparisons within and across the findings. The data tables produced from the 2016 study's results further illustrate consequential differences due to variables such as race, gender, and levels of intervention received. Such conclusions support designing and producing psychological interventions for educational purposes, given the direct correlation to higher engagement and greater positive student outcomes after completion of high school.

SEL as an Indicator of Academic Success

The Fetzer group first introduced the term social and emotional learning (SEL) as a conceptual framework to address both the needs of young people and the fragmentation that typically characterizes the response of schools to those needs (Elias et al., 1997). They believed that, unlike the many "categorical" prevention programs that targeted specific problems, SEL programming could address underlying causes of problem behavior while supporting academic achievement. An organization, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

(CASEL), also emerged from this meeting with the goal of establishing high-quality, evidence based SEL as an essential part of preschool through high school education (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2003).

Through developmentally and culturally appropriate classroom instruction and application of learning to everyday situations, SEL programming builds children's skills to recognize and manage their emotions, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish positive goals, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations effectively (Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000). It also enhances students' connection to school through caring, engaging classroom and school practices (McNeeley et al., 2002).

Learning social and emotional skills is like learning other academic skills in that the effect of initial learning is enhanced over time to address the increasingly complex situations children face regarding academics, social relationships, citizenship, and health. Therefore, skills must be developed for negotiating diverse contexts and handling challenges at each developmental level (Greenberg & Weissberg, 1998). This outcome is best accomplished through effective classroom instruction; student engagement in positive activities in and out of the classroom; and broad student, parent, and community involvement in program planning, implementation, and evaluation (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017). Coordinated, ongoing, systematic, SEL instruction should begin in preschool and continue through high school. Such continuous development of emotional intelligence will impact performance, productivity, and overall outcomes (Pittman et al., 2003).

A Need for Equity and Equality in Educational Policy and Practice

Disproportionality, the educational phenomenon illustrating an overrepresentation of Black and Latino students placed in special education and assigned discipline referrals at a higher rate, has been historically documented back to 1968 (Ahram et al., 2011).

Resulting from numerous case studies on disproportionality and research in the United States since 1975, the year the U.S. federal government passed the Education for All Handicapped Act, evidence suggests that if schools implemented fair practices that were free of bias, there would be proportional representation of minority students in special education compared to the total population. However, because data has consistently shown a disparity between the intent and result of policy, research has also heavily suggested that “disproportionality may be related to social and political inequalities that operate in school districts and society as a whole” (Ahram et al., 2011, p. 2236).

Educational Policy Reveals Disproportionality and Inequality in Global Education

In Debates, Disputes and Consultations – race, equality and teaching, spring and summer 2013, Robin Richardson took a broad view at the Equality Act of 2010, its implications and impact on education in England in 2012 (Richardson, 2013). Educational equality in England has many detractors, most of which are inaccurately aimed at curriculum disparities and disagreements. The greater issues arising from national conversations are those stemming from the proposed history curriculum, which is very contentious and not favored by the National Union of Teachers due to the difficulty of teaching. Evidence rendered from the Children’s Commissioner of England indicated no school has explicitly mentioned the need to pay attention to equality duties when designing behavior systems or making decisions on exclusions.

When asked if they had been made aware by their school of the Equality Duties, 40% of teachers responding to the National Foundation for Educational Research's Teacher's Voice survey said they did not know, while 37% said they had (Richardson, 2013). The report recommended:

Despite a strong document and theoretical support for equality in education in England the government should become involved in matters to produce guidelines that include the following: the relationship between the general duty and the specific duties; the concept of due regard for schools, as clarified by case law; the difference between eliminating discrimination on the one hand and advancing equality of opportunity on the other; good practice in the publishing of information; good practice in the writing of measurable objectives; the distinction in schools between equality outcomes and equality outputs; the relationships and overlaps between fostering good relations, as explained on the face of the Act, and the statutory requirement for schools to provide for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the duty schools have to promote community cohesion (Richardson, 2013, p. 15).

This government report was a compilation of facts and figures subjectively produced and compiled by the Children's Commission of England and the Department for Education. While there were numerous objective sources listed, the accompanying perspectives were only briefly mentioned. Gaining perspective on education from an international or multi-national perspective is daunting and overwhelming due to the amount of information available. However, the timeframe and narratives of this argument echo this storyline in American education, politics, and system reform.

American Educational Policy Revisions Target Best Practices

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) has been amended and revised to ensure policy revisions warrant best practices and improve outcomes. According to the U.S. Department of Education, a fact sheet published December 12, 2016, clarified Part B of IDEA, stating the main purpose of “promoting equity by targeting widespread disparities in the treatment of students of color with disabilities The regulations will address several issues related to significant disproportionality in the identification, placement, and discipline of students with disabilities based on race or ethnicity. In addition to the final regulations published, the U.S. Department of Education has also published a letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Civil Rights preventing racial discrimination in special education (U.S. Dept. of Education , 2016).

Russell et al. (2013) compared the written policies of No Child Left Behind and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to determine whether their policy alignment constituted coherence in educational policy and practice or incoherence. This qualitative study spanned three states over three years and included 300 educators. The two-part qualitative study included feedback from school leaders and teachers as to how effective the policies enacted their objectives and if they too were aligned during implementation. With such a careful look at the policies as they were written and aligned, then how implementers conceptualized their alignment, the authors were able to reveal that perception of alignment between No Child Left Behind Act and IDEA played a key role in how educators did their job. While the findings from school leaders and teachers were mixed, the overall findings regarding the need for coherence in reform policy is essential to its implementation. How that information can help to shape future policy remains the problem. The study clearly demonstrated that the perception of policy

alignment is critical to how educators implement practices. It also showed that NCLB and IDEA are relatively in alignment.

Currently, the field of special education is focused on interventions and remedies that are individualized, discreet, and proven effective through rigorous randomized control experiments. Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) has quickly become the primary means of providing behavioral support and “is the only schoolwide model specifically mentioned in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act” (IDEA, 2004), (Bal, 2018, pp. 1-2). According to the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT), “Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) arose from the need to respond to the pervasive racial disparities in behavioral outcomes for students with, and at-risk, for disabilities” (Gadd & Butler, 2019, p. 1). This educational intervention targets unwanted behavior by design, with the intent to reduce suspension and expulsion rates in general. Therefore, logically, these interventions should also reduce disproportionality in discipline.

Educational Practices and Race Considerations

Skiba et al. (2008) explored patterns of office disciplinary referrals in a nationally representative sample of 436 elementary and middle schools that had been implementing schoolwide PBIS for at least one year. Aggregated results appeared to show that schools that have been implementing PBIS tend in general to use an efficient, graduated system of discipline (e.g., minor infractions receive less severe punishments and more severe consequences are reserved for more serious infractions). Although PBIS has proven to be a generally promising intervention for creating changes in school discipline and behavior management, implementation of a single strategy has not counteracted systemic racial and ethnic disparities as well as explicit/implicit bias in school discipline practices (Bradshaw et al., 2010). “Though PBIS is a

promising practice intended to produce positive outcomes for everyone; it seems less effective for some students due to its race-neutral principles” (Vincent et al., 2011). A dramatically different pattern was exhibited, however, when the data were disaggregated. Across the national sample, African American and Latino students were up to five times more likely than White students to receive suspension and expulsion for minor infractions (Skiba, 2016).

Bal and Trainor (2014), in their review of intervention research on transitions for students with disabilities, found there are very few studies that consider culture and context when an “effective” intervention is validated. This is highly problematic because IDEA legislation has an explicit peer review requirement that encourages states and districts, educational leaders, and practitioners to rely on rigorous peer-reviewed research to improve outcomes for students with disabilities (Etscheidt & Curran, 2010). Such data make a strong case for the need for equitable practices, extensive professional development, and explicit adaptations to ensure that all interventions, including Positive Behaviors Intervention and Supports, are culturally responsive (Bal & Trainor, 2016).

Levenson et al. (2019) defined culturally responsive PBIS as including: (1) Identity, (2) Voice, (3) Supportive Environment, (4) Situational Appropriateness, and (5) Data for Equity (p. 2). A more nuanced approach is needed that allows for systemic factors (Kozleski & Smith, 2009), and culture (Artiles, 2014) and context (Thorius & Maxcy, 2014) to be included in efforts to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. To address deep-seated and systemic special education inequities such as disproportionality, researchers and practitioners should actively engage with the implications of culture, context, and difference on practice (Sullivan & Artiles, 2011). Work conducted by principal investigators and staff of the National Center on Culturally Responsive Educational Systems, which is a U.S. Office for Special Education Programs funded

technical assistance and dissemination center charged with eliminating special education disproportionality, take this perspective. Kozleski and Zion created a systemic assessment of policies and practices related to special education disproportionality to be utilized by multiple stakeholder teams at the district level (Kozleski & Zion, 2016).

Emotional Intelligence in Teacher Education Emerges

Sleeter (2016) analyzes teacher education through the lens of critical race theory, specifically arguing the impossibility of the majority White workforce of teachers reversing the current trends of disproportionality, and the lack of attention to diversity in teacher education programs as a systemic factor. The difficulty that educators, especially White educators, have in openly talking about race and racism has been extensively documented (Haberman, 1991; Henze et al., 1998; King, 1991; Pollock, 2004; Skiba, 2016). The typical understanding of racism, that one is either seen as “racist” or “nonracist” (Trepagnier, 2006), provides a strong motivation to avoid the topic, since any indication of a lack of cultural responsiveness induces a fear that one could be seen as racist (Pollock, 2004). The case is also argued that without a focus on cohorts of culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse students, teachers will remain unprepared to serve more than half of the students that make up their classes (Sleeter, 2016).

More recently a new generation of scholars, many of whom studied under the National Center on Culturally Responsive Educational Systems’ principal investigators, have continued and extended this earlier work. Thorius and Tan (2015) described how under the auspices of a regional equity assistance center, they and other center staff worked with a state department of education to apply and refine the use of Zion and Kozleksi’s (Kozleski & Smith, 2009) earlier work, including how such application shapes the identification of local priorities and professional learning with regard for eliminating special education disproportionality.

In addition, Bal has led a group of colleagues (Bal et al., 2014; Bal et al., 2012) in the application of formative intervention (Engeström, 2011) and more broadly, cultural historical activity theory (Foot, 2001; Gutiérrez, 2008; Gutierrez, 2016) in the creation of learning laboratory methodology within local enactments of PBIS, to generate points of praxis for practitioners to facilitate systems change, and address disproportionality in discipline. From this research and collaboration came culturally relevant positive behavioral interventions and supports or CRPBIS, a researched method based on a culturally responsive positive behavioral interventions and supports framework, which has demonstrated results. The goal of CRPBIS is to promote positive social behaviors and support students' learning, engagement, and need for safety, belonging, and affirmative identification. (Bal, 2018). Efforts like these must continue in order to disrupt disproportionate outcomes.

Additional research of policies, practices, and outcomes conducted by Talbott et al. (2016) presented a research-based model of leadership designed for special education to improve the effectiveness of the Individualized Education Plan. The intent of the research was to target a particular outlier subgroup of special education students. Prior research indicated "students with academic and behavioral disabilities typically need additional individualized, intensive interventions in order to meet their individualized education program (IEP) goals and make substantial academic and social progress" (Cooley, 2014). The model presented is distributed in that the leadership roles previously relied upon to enact an IEP are now function based. The functions relate the leaders (principals, case managers, etc.) along with other key players (teachers, therapists, etc.) to the student needs. Such leadership behavior stems from earlier research (Yukl et al., 2002; Yukl et al., 2011) and can be described in three categories: task, relations, and change. The research-based model has not yet been put into practice; however, the

case built the need for more effective multi-tiered system intervention is conclusive. Within education reform, particularly special education, the research points at what is working clearly, however, making policies and forming practices seemingly takes much longer. Researching special education reform, practice, and policy provides insight to where the industry focal point and attention may go and continues to work for assurance that moral purpose is pertinent in the current reform agenda.

The largest scale study on SEL in the United States provided cornerstone evidence that social-emotional learning embedded in educational support may be the critical missing link for some systems (Durlak, 2011). In the recommendations, the Durlak (2011) study quotes from the US Surgeon General speaking at a conference in 2000 on the children's mental health:

“Fostering social and emotional health in children as a part of healthy child development must therefore be a national priority” (National Center for Health Statistics, 2019, p. 3). From there, the study reveals, after reviewing 213 universal social and emotional learning programs operating in kindergarten through high schools, an 11 percentile-point gain in achievement. The unbiased review was designed to examine published and unpublished studies that included universal interventions that: emphasized the development of one or more SEL skills; targeted students between the ages of 5 and 18 without any identified adjustment or learning problems; included a control group; reported sufficient information so that effect sizes could be calculated at post and, if follow-up data were collected, at least six months following the end of intervention of research.

The findings also included a recent review of U.S. school practices revealing more than half of schools in the U.S. already have in place programming to address the development and support of children's social and emotional competencies (Green, 2021). This is significant

progress over the past 20 years but is also a critical indicator to ensure that these efforts are informed by theory and research about best SEL practice. Legislation, policy, and regulation guide this process. “Furthermore, there are active efforts in some states (e.g., Illinois, New York) and internationally (e.g., Singapore) to establish and implement SEL standards for what students should know and be able to do” (Durlak, 2011, p. 420). The meta-analysis provided one example in Illinois, the first state to pass such legislation, where every school district will develop a plan for the implementation of SEL programming in their schools. This Illinois State Board of Education:

recently incorporated SEL skills as part of their student learning standards, identifying three broad learning goals: (a) develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success, (b) use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships, and (c) demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts (p. 420).

From here Durlak (2011) purports how policymakers at all levels respond to research, legislative and educational trends, and the need to embrace a vision of schooling in which SEL competencies must be espoused to reform. Along with policy implications, the study asserts the need to monitor the types of SEL programs that are being implemented, the money being earmarked for such programs, and what needs to be done to ensure ongoing data-informed decision-making. The notion is clear that oversight of SEL policy/programming for K-12 schools would be beneficial to address disproportionality, equity, and social justice. It may also further evidence the commitment within society to make informed, emotionally intelligent decisions for the betterment of all.

Emotional Intelligence as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Geneva Gay's research in 2002 led to a book titled *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice*, where a case is made for improving the school success and academic outcomes of ethnically diverse students by teaching through familiar frames of reference. The article, *Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching (2002)*, won an Outstanding Writing Award from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in 2001. The primary claim of both holds that when teachers are trained in culturally responsive teaching methods, to be included in preservice education programs, and can demonstrate the skills needed to do this then outcomes will improve. Gay (2002) defines culturally responsive pedagogy as a means of actively being aware of diversity as an integrated practice that must be idealized as a way of thinking about planning and teaching in order to engage all students in learning.

“Culturally responsive teaching is defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002, p. 106). In short, teaching students about the redacted culture they have experienced living in a predatory, capitalistic society that steals and then resells said culture is culturally responsive teaching. A framework of

25 assumptions that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly (Gay & Howard, 2010, p. 4).

Geneva Gay's research and references on cultural responsiveness date back to 1995 and the definitions and terms used to define and describe the theoretical framework are foundational

to cultural responsiveness, also called Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)/Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT). The purpose of this study was to draw from the limited body of quantitative research currently supporting CRP/CRT in educational settings where at-risk populations benefit substantially, per extensive theoretical frameworks and qualitative literature.

“The fundamental theoretical argument for CRP is that instructional practices are substantially more effective when differentiated to align with the distinctive cultural priors that individual students experience outside of school and when they also affirm both cultural identity and critical social engagement” (Dee & Penner, 2016, p. 1). From Dee and Penner (2016) came the use of ethnic studies curriculum as a cultural intervention with results indicating that participation in this course increased ninth-grade student attendance by 21 percentage points, GPA by 1.4 grade points, and credits earned by 23. These surprisingly large effects are consistent with the hypothesis that the course reduced dropout rates and suggest that culturally relevant teaching, when implemented in a supportive, high-fidelity context, can provide effective support to at-risk students.

Molina (2016) purports that today’s classrooms are no longer monochrome. America’s classrooms are full of students with varying colors, languages, and backgrounds. Culturally and linguistically diverse students are becoming the norm in places where they never would have in the 1900s. Foundational reasons for cultural shifts in American education have been extensively researched, with diversity becoming the norm and, therefore, people determined to educate future leaders must work harder to develop a deeper understanding of how students acquire language and exchange knowledge and ideas (Ladson-Billings, 1995). With such a confluence of language and culture comes new means of understanding communication on a deeper level.

Molina (2016) states, “The framework of constructive-developmental theory (Kegan & Noam, 1982) was drawn upon to assess how teachers’ make sense of their experiences, and the framework of cultural intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003) was used to determine their cultural competence” (Molina, 2016, p. 1). Given the foundational nature of teacher-student relationships coupled with the complex cultural and linguistic contexts that frame communication, greater attention must be placed on understanding the complex ways in which teachers understand and approach their work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Molina’s research lends itself to shaping frameworks for understanding teacher -student interactions such as negotiation and self-reflection. Other reform research asserts the adoption of educational policy measures to close the achievement gap and serves as an indicator of concern in education (Schmeichel, 2012). Additionally, there is a significant amount of scholarship dedicated to the tremendous concern in education about the academic performance of students of color (Artiles, 2015; Alter et al., 2010; Artiles et al., 2010; Bradshaw et al., 2010; Cooley, 2014; Good, et al., 2003; Henze et al., 1998; Kozleski & Zion, 2016; Lac, 2017).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is aimed at promoting equitable practices in education and that culturally relevant teaching has emerged as a good teaching strategy to improve achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The purpose is to inform teachers of their active roles, as opposed to conforming to dominant standards being imposed on cultural proficiency simply by abstaining from teaching about such issues. By comparison, theoretical approaches are deemed ineffective if they do not hold the best interests of the students they are supposed to serve, and so the research goes. Built on the early work of Ladson-Billings (1995) comes an operationalized framework combining CRP and PBIS. In *Culturally Responsive Positive Behavioral*

Interventions and Supports: A process-oriented framework for systemic transformation, Aydin Bal (2018) posits:

forming reciprocal and productive family-school-community coalitions as a solution for building positive, supportive, effective, and adaptive schoolwide behavioral support systems. CRPBIS takes a culturally mediated object-oriented collective activity system (e.g., school, district, and PBIS team) as the unit of intervention (p. 156).

The ideal outcome for participants in CRPBIS is for learners to act as social agents who transform their social and material environment and their own behaviors, cognition, and emotions. The expectation for school, like society, is to increase all students' participation in socially positive, academically rich, and inclusive learning activities. Diversity in experience, practice, interest, language, and ability that learners bring to the school is necessary for facilitating a systemic change. Students are empowered in determining the content, direction, and outcome of their activities, leading to learner-driven personal and social change. Working with a diverse group in determining desired outcomes encourages members to examine their own biases, specifically about the purpose of schooling and the goals of promoting certain ways of behaving within that setting (Bal, 2018).

Emotional Intelligence in Educational System Design

Educational system design that promotes creativity as part of the emotional intelligence quotient as an emotional regulator has an advantage. "Creative work can in itself be a means of influencing and changing one's emotions" (Ivcevic, 2019, p. 273). Qualitative examples of how artists use a creative process to enhance their emotional outcomes lend support for creativity as an emotional regulator. One specific reference to a painter who is working on a series of daily

pieces holds that the painter reports that as he commits to the process his fear and anxiety subside. His personal testimony holds “I am calmer, more self-aware, more open to joy, more in touch with my emotions” (Ivcevic, 2019, p. 274).

While for others, Hoffman’s research indicates that emotions must be regulated in advance for one to best perform the work. A sculptor, for example, reported needing to create a zone while working on a painted clay mask, “Before renewing the initial inspirational emotions, I had to create a 'zone' in which they could be evoked without the distraction of my current fluctuating emotion” (Ivcevic, 2019, p. 275). This self-awareness referred to is a component of emotional intelligence, which when applied in various settings can enhance performance. These examples support emotional intelligence as a factor for better outcomes in all environments where cognitive and non-cognitive skills are utilized for performance-based tasks. Artists are not the only ones whose work benefits from emotional intelligence. Zhou (2003), while studying creativity and innovation in the workplace, describe the emotional intelligence of organizational leaders and how it can influence their employees during all stages of the creative process. Emotionally intelligent leaders exist in all fields and demonstrate support for others by teaching others how to recognize and channel emotions into creating improvements at work (Zhou, 2003). “They can recognize the emotions employees experience when they are gathering information, generating, and evaluating ideas” (Zhou, 2003, p. 413). Finally, emotionally intelligent leaders can help employees manage these emotions to achieve the best outcomes.

Making Equity Attainable: Returning Educational Decisions to Educators

How will the field of education span the gap between “Academy” standards and “Community” practices? Given the current world climate of social justice protests and the global outcry for equity stemming from police brutality and systemic racism, as evidenced in the

murder of George Floyd and other recently well publicized violent crimes against people of color, the time is now for academic theory to transform into community practice (Prier, 2017). Prier (2017) holds “doing community engaged work in educational leadership means bridging the gap between different life worlds, along racial lines, in ways that foster mutual reciprocity in teaching, learning, and research between academy, schools, and the community” (Prier, 2017, p. 1). He continues by laying out an approach to establishing effective pedagogy acceptable for use in and between the academy of knowledge purveyors and the community in which such knowledge is applied. Doing community engaged work in educational leadership means bridging the gap between different worlds. The idea is to connect along racial lines in ways that foster mutual reciprocity in teaching, learning, and research between layers of stakeholders in the community. Prier’s research holds that students and educational leaders alike must become familiar with community institutions and how they influence, teach, and challenge us. The prior relationship between academy and community that had been established through practice was too top down and biased to be effective for both the academy and the community. Typically, the benefits were lopsided as a result, often leaving the academy with valuable data and results while the community perished anyway. Given the fact that community engagement has always been a matter of survival for Black people. Prier (2017) points that the struggle for equal rights, equitable access to resources, and community empowerment has been an integral part of Black people’s educational philosophies, program development, curricula, and pedagogy.

Schmeichel (2012), in a critique of educational policy measures, compared relatively new curriculum at the time which failed to include culturally relevant teaching to “curriculum being used to inform historical perspectives that are least discussed as a means of practicing equity and, to an extent, social justice” (Schmeichel, 2012, p. 16). The research surmised that poor outcomes

for students of color resulted from limited perspectives within the curriculum. Schmeichel's research purpose was to inform teachers of their active roles, as opposed to conforming to dominant standards being imposed on cultural proficiency simply by abstaining from teaching about such issues. By comparison, theoretical approaches are deemed ineffective if they do not hold the best interests of the students they are supposed to serve, and so the research goes. The study looked at how teachers must further dialogue between educational leaders and policymakers in order to continue "good teaching" which will then provide solutions for how to get out of the current mess we are in, yet the author steers clear of policy solutions or framework building to address the current deficits in equity. By employing up to 28 culturally relevant teaching strategies in a learning environment rather than a framework, teachers no longer must take a stand or present one dominant standard, perspective, or ideal. Schmeichel, by comparison, deems policy aimed at theoretical approaches as ineffective if they do not hold the best interests of the students.

The Impact of Effective Site Level Leadership

According to Kimberly White-Smith (2004), principals of public schools that are considered atypical because they uncharacteristically achieve and maintain high test scores should be studied to "give voice to the perspectives of principals in high performing, high poverty schools regarding good teaching and how it is assessed" (p. 7). These principals have managed to defy the odds by consistently producing positive test results, the traditional indicator of student achievement, despite serving minority and underprivileged students. This research found that good teachers are successful because they are prepared. "The findings suggest that good teachers have high expectations for students, assess student progress continuously, encourage student engagement, and possess a larger repertoire of teaching strategies" (White-

Smith, 2004, p. viii). Further exploratory questions lead to more precise actions that leadership, particularly site leadership such as principals, must explore to ensure the most high-quality teaching for student success. For example, a principal's capacity to hire and maintain the right teachers for the unique circumstances typically imposed on schools in impoverished areas is a critical soft-skill (White-Smith, 2004). Additionally, how a principal provides ongoing professional learning is thought to be of critical importance for readying teachers, new and seasoned, for addressing the current needs of students -especially those facing such challenging circumstances relating to the communities in which they live. In short, leadership must be adept in the very competencies that SEL comprises (Dussault et al., 2008).

Considering instructional practices, White-Smith (2004) cites Shulman (1986), holding that effective instructional practice is typified by lessons that demonstrate understanding of content and student abilities, "so that instruction unfolds in a logical and sequential manner thus meeting students' learning and developmental needs" (White-Smith, 2004, p. 10). She quotes Colton and Sparks-Langer (1993), "reflective decision-making is the key to improving teacher practice" (White-Smith, 2004, p. 10). Finally, in her analysis of leadership that supports high quality teaching, White-Smith (2004) also asserts "there is evidence that teachers should be culturally competent and utilize the knowledge and diversity of their students to enhance the curriculum" (White-Smith, 2004, p. 11). This is where the emotional intelligence of leadership within the district, school sites, and the community, plays a key factor. Emotionally intelligent people engaged in site level leadership to execute culturally responsive, positive behavior intervention and support through social-emotional learning experiences aim to meet the learning needs of all students (Zeichner et al., 2009). "To be effective, schools must concentrate on their

fundamental mission of teaching and learning. And they must do it for all children. That must be the overarching goal of schools in the twenty-first century” (Ravitch, 2000)

Individual and Community Behavior as an Indicator of SEL Needs

Characteristics of Successful SEL Programs

According to Kregel, director of social and emotional learning for Metro Nashville Public Schools, in Tennessee, buy-in for SEL and restorative approaches to discipline among staff has been an ongoing challenge due in part to larger groups of veteran teachers who teach the way they were taught (2011). Many of those veteran teachers are holding on for this trend to pass, while others resist the change being implemented simply out of disbelief of a restorative approach to discipline procedures (Korby, 2018). In an interview with Edutopia.org, Kregel recounts a story from a principal who once admitted to her during professional development training that although she completely agrees with social-emotional learning, the idea of hugs as an intervention or other misappropriated strategies are not viable options at her school. There is consensus that frameworks and even evidenced practices that target emotional outcomes do not solve the problems schools, students, and communities are facing.

Kregel acknowledges that pivoting from zero tolerance discipline policies to no consequences is troublesome to a school district. Changes that are implemented too quickly will warrant resistance and likely fail or even worse, backfire. Poor implementation of SEL programs across the west coast in places like Seattle and Los Angeles, errant planning, and implementation of SEL programs and restorative justice became smear campaigns for effective, research-based methods. In Los Angeles, after an ill-attempted policy and procedure shift, the district suffered a 12.7% loss of teachers, which was attributed at least in part to the rollout and miserable staff morale accompanied by the training, or lack of prior preparation (Watanabe & Blume, 2015).

On the contrary, SEL proponents argue that relationship-based discipline techniques do not mean student actions will go without consequences—and can actually help teachers manage their classrooms. Barbara Stengel, professor of secondary education at Vanderbilt University, asserts that implementing interventions like SEL and restorative justice contributes to a common sense of order. Stengel believes,

Order doesn't simply mean obeying rules or tossing challenging kids out of a classroom—it means figuring out what we can do for students... The most productive order comes in classrooms that are communities, where kids know that they are secure and cared for (Stengel, 2018, p. 4).

In “Taking the Moral Nature of Teaching Seriously” Barbara Stengel poses a series of questions in response to calls for recent reform in teacher education that extend past demands of professionalization by insisting on moral obligation. By incorporating an emotional or moral component in the preparation and planning of a lesson, with the intent and vision of students becoming caring, competent, compassionate teachers, Stengel posits teachers would absolutely do things differently. The article addresses the matters that change drastically when the intent, or underlying beliefs for teaching stem from a moral basis, which has only recently become more of a matter of concern in academia. In plain terms, when we set our minds on moral implications of curriculum and the moral climate of the classroom, we will see the shift in administrator, teacher, and lastly student social-emotional learning that can undergird the paradigm shift in both policy and practice, in the academic world and, eventually, in the real world.

Durlak (2011) asserts that for SEL to develop state and local capacity to encourage widespread evidence-based programming, funding must first be allocated and “with adequate funding, capacity can be built through providing policy supports, professional development, and

technical assistance to promote educator knowledge and motivation for the best ways to identify, select, plan, implement, evaluate, and sustain effective SEL interventions” (Devaney et al., 2006; Osher et al., 2004). Further determining what SEL programs are most cost effective and efficient will require effective leadership. From policy, leadership, and planning improvements comes the need to establish assessment and accountability systems for SEL programs in relation to student outcomes (Greenberg et al., 2003; Marzano, 2006). As more evidence-based programs are effectively implemented and sustained, the data produced will contribute to the ongoing evaluation of SEL as an intervention and support for the healthy academic, social, and emotional development of all children. The ultimate metric of SEL as an effective curricular as well as community intervention and support will be the decrease of disproportionality by race, ethnicity, and disability (Sciuchetti, 2017).

Mental Health Implications of COVID-19 – A Public Health Pandemic

Public health emergencies can impact the health, safety, and well-being of individuals and communities, a cohesive interagency plan is necessary (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). Returning from summer break to restart the school year amid COVID-19, a global pandemic, educators and leaders had to prioritize student behavior and mental health, as these matters took precedence over other matters (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). In short, feeling connected to a school community, and having a sense of belonging within some social structure is a high priority. According to Centers for Disease Control, the COVID-19 pandemic has alarming implications for individual and collective health and emotional and social functioning." (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020, p. 510). The bottom line is due to home confinement by government order of large numbers of the population for unknown periods of time, and conflicting messages from government/public health authorities, there is already heightened

stress of individuals and communities. The medical researchers also point out that “because parents commonly underestimate their children’s distress, open discussions should be encouraged to address children’s reactions and concerns” (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020, p. 512). This key point reinforces the role that schools will play in supporting students emotionally. A comprehensive plan must be designed which includes these components in place if the current pressing concerns impacting individual and collective health are of the highest priority

Summary

As the historical analyses of contributing ideologies to social-emotional learning reveal, self-efficacy is explored as the initial internal factor contributing to academic success. This understanding of the individual’s self-concept evolves to become a form of measurable intelligence, unseen and deemed implicit, emotional intelligence then lends itself to a form of personal reflection. It is from such self-awareness that empathy can be developed and applied to the other competencies. Such a reflective process can contribute to a growth mindset and is action oriented toward goal attainment whether performance or mastery learning based.

When mastery learning is the goal over time, with an emphasis on self and social awareness, whereby individuals obtain greater understanding of their own social and emotional cognition through culturally responsive teaching and learning experiences, research evidences a resulting growth mindset that can contribute to a gain in academic achievement and a reduction in negative office data referrals. This study served as an examination of a single school district’s plan to incorporate current research emphasizing the value of SEL on student well-being as a factor in increased student performance. By analyzing student feedback on personal well-being resulting from SEL, student academic data, and the perspectives of all stakeholders, relevant comparisons were considered: 1) to evidence how the educational system design incorporates

SEL to improve academic achievement and social emotional well-being for all urban high school students; 2) specifically identify SEL experienced by marginalized students that enhanced well-being and improved achievement.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The research questions guiding this study have been formulated by current research indicating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is a necessary component to social emotional wellness and human development to support lifelong growth and learning in all other areas and is effective for all students (Durlak, 2011). SEL can be implemented as an embedded component in curriculum, a separate curriculum, as an intervention, or as an additional support. The Participant School District in which this study occurred reports various methods of providing SEL across more than fifty K-12 school sites. This study sought to provide answers to two primary research questions, with subsequent research questions designed to probe into student experiences and perceptions of SEL concepts.

The primary research question asked How does the educational system design of a district utilize (i.e., embed, measure, plan) Social Emotional Learning (i.e., self-awareness, social awareness, growth mindset, and self-efficacy) to contribute to student achievement? The secondary research question asked Does SEL impact well-being and achievement of marginalized students at the same rate as the general population of students? Subsequent probing research questions elicited data from a student self-survey to quantify student perceptions of SEL, social emotional wellness, academic achievement, and school.

Setting and Participants

This research study took place in a large, urban district in Southern California, with approximately 53,500 students. The students are predominately Hispanic (96%), and 80% of all students qualify for free and reduced-price meals, while the unduplicated pupil count of free/reduced-price meals, English learners & foster youth is 92% (“Ed Data — District Profile,” n.d.). The total number of English Language Learners make up 39% of the student population,

and the predominant home language is Spanish (California Department of Education, 2017). Other ethnicities represented are Asian (2.6%) and White (2.7%), while African American, Filipino, and the category described as two or more race each comprise less than 1% of the total school district population. Socio-economically disadvantaged student count for 2017-18 totaled 46,384, which is 87% of the population. The total number of students with disabilities in the sample district equals 12.9%. The two high schools are located within the city limits of the SSD. The specific sites were requested by the researcher, but final determination came by decision from the participant school district Office of Research and Evaluation. Quantitative data was obtained at three intervals during the 2020-21 school year from the Pulse Survey (Panorama Education, 2019), however, due to COVID-19 restrictions during the 2019 and 2020 school years, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) scores were not published. The State of California sought a waiver for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act requirements for the 2019-20 school year, and was approved by the United States Education Department (CDE Letter to ED on Statewide Assessments - Every Student Succeeds Act (CA Dept of Education), n.d.)

Sampling Procedures

The sample population for the study was a convenience sample which was selected based on access the researcher had to student data obtained with informed consent by the district through a contract with Panorama Education to survey the student population. Interviewees as administrators, fellow teachers, and community stakeholders, were selected based on interactions as fellow school district members. The participant school district is a CORE district which, according to the Policy Analysis for California Education Partnership, is designed to produce research-based feedback to improve student learning; inform policy; and provide breakthrough

solutions to inform continuous improvement (coredistricts.org, 2020). Generalizing the results of this study to student populations that do not resemble the students in this sample should be done with caution.

Ninth through twelfth-grade students were selected because they are completing A-G High school requirements, are currently participating in college preparatory curriculum, and are enrolled at the one of the two urban high schools participating in this study. Former high school students were selected based on their secondary academic experience in one of the two urban high schools participating in this study. These students were selected because of their categorical status (i.e., labeled as an English Learner or Special Education student), recent completion of school coursework, and because they have recently experienced the transition to post-secondary college or career. The goal of including former students is to include their critical perspectives, provide them the chance to take part in the collective reflection to identify what SEL experiences they recall as impactful to student achievement, and to support further development of the ability to make informed decisions about their college and career pathways.

Instrumentation and Measures

The Panorama Education Well-Being Survey (2019) was utilized for quantitative data collection and is in Appendix A. California CORE partners have forged strong evidence of correlations between the four social-emotional constructs (Meyer et al., 2018). Such recent research has provided strong evidence that data from adolescents on self-report questionnaires are valid, providing the sample is representative and certain criteria are met. Among those criteria, anonymity has been shown to make a critical contribution in securing valid responses from adolescents on self-report surveys like the Pulse Survey (Williams et al., 1979).

According to Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), threats to measuring social-emotional constructs exist due to the subjectivity of student populations responding to the survey, as well as objectivity pertaining to how the survey or scale is designed. One concern is reference bias, where students in one context may respond differently from a peer in a different context based on the peer norms of the different groups. This is an example of a subjective problem. While measurement invariance, the objective result of reference bias, can decrease the validity of a measurement scale (Gehlbach & Hough, 2018). However, Panorama Education subscribes to a pragmatic approach to designing survey scales which is supported by CORE districts and the PACE consortium. Therefore, collecting data for a specific purpose, in this case to improve outcomes of students who use them and to improve the reliability and validity of the scales by constantly evaluating all measures and tools, is the goal.

Panorama Education posits that student well-being matters in and of itself but can be used as an important predictor of varied outcomes, including educational achievement, economic prosperity, and healthy relationships. It is a commonly valued outcome but is not yet commonly measured in schools. The research team for Panorama Education refined the survey so it would capture the most accurate picture to better understand how to support students socially and emotionally. The Panorama Well-Being Survey User's Guide holds

Measuring well-being can contribute to a "whole child" approach to education, signal to students (and their families) the importance of mental health, help focus limited counseling resources on students who most need them and inform a community-wide response to the trauma of student suicide. From a student perspective, measuring wellbeing can give students an opportunity to share their inner aspirations and

struggles, and ultimately lead to interventions that improve something they value highly: their own happiness (p.2).

This statement is supported by a published document of Key Terms and References (*Panorama Student Topics*, n.d.). Those key terms and references illustrate the relationship between convergent/discriminant validity and the Pedagogical Effectiveness Scale used to identify correlations between student perception and teacher effectiveness.

Subsequent probing research questions are shown below (Table 3.1).

Table 3. 1

Fall 2020 Panorama Education Well-Being Survey Sample Questions

Subsequent research questions:

1. How often do students report feeling: happy, worried, sad, hopeful?
2. How often do students report being socially aware by finding someone to talk to when they need help?
3. How often do students report having a friend their age who helps when they need it?
4. How often do students report experiencing a problem and having lots of ways to solve it?
5. How often do students report there was at least one adult at school who really cared for them?
6. How often do students report feeling respected by teachers at school?
7. How often do students self-report getting work done right away instead of waiting until the last minute?
8. How often do students report having an adult available to help with schoolwork when learning from home?

9. How much do students report liking school?

The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that states measure at least one non-academic indicator of “school quality or student success” (e.g., student engagement, post-secondary readiness, or school climate and safety), opening up the opportunity for SEL measurement (“Let’s Not Let Perfect Be the Enemy of Good,” 2016). Similarly, under California’s Local Control Funding Formula and the supporting Local Control Accountability Plan, districts are expected to develop and report indicators representing a wide range of educational goals, including school culture and climate. As schools and districts focus on students’ SEL, and the school conditions that support it, there is growing demand for measures that track students’ progress over time.

The researcher cross-referenced student self-reported social-emotional perceptions to academic performance measurements produced triennially by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) called Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. The MAP tests are aligned to Common Core Standards. A MAP student growth summary report aggregated by school was obtained from teachmapnwea.org to provide an achievement metric. Smarter-Balanced Assessment Consortium Test results from the corresponding year were the initial academic assessment source for analysis but the test was suspended for 2019-20 schoolyear due to the anticipated abnormal effects of COVID-19 on quantitative data collection. California law, State Bill 98 (SB98), suspended the reporting of state and local indicators on the California School Dashboard.

Several methods of measuring social-emotional learning currently exist, including performance assessments, embedded tasks and competency-based portfolios, with student self-reported surveys becoming most widely used and of growing interest, as they are relatively inexpensive to collect. Although there have been reliability concerns relating to these surveys, the CORE organization outlines evidence included in the Validity and Reliability section of this report (“Measuring School Contributions to Growth in Social-Emotional Learning | Policy Analysis for California Education,” n.d.).

Validity and Reliability

The researcher determined from the Panorama Education Well-Being User’s Guide that current validity data is ongoing, but a final report will be published in 2021 with updated results further supporting convergent/discriminant validity of each scale. The Survey Checklist (Manifesto, 2018) evidencing how the survey was produced to include best practices in the science of survey design (Gelbach & Artino Jr., 2018) and was available on the Panorama Education website. The User Guide states, “After designing an initial survey, we pilot-tested it in 100 schools, collecting initial data from over 25,000 students. Using these results and feedback from our pilot partners, we refined the survey to maximize its psychometric qualities and practical utility” (Education, P. ,2021, p. 3). The Panorama Education research team posits a pragmatic approach to validity and reliability because they hold that validity is a process (Gehlbach, 2015). Specifically, this process has three phases, purposeful design of the measure (Gehlbach & Brinkworth, 2011); evaluation of the measure’s characteristics over time (Messick, 1995); and the logical arguments stemming from the evidence to support or invalidate a claim (Kane, 1992; Kane, 2006). In sum, the pragmatic approach to validity and reliability employed

by the CORE survey has established good evidence of these initial design aspects of validity by responding to four questions:

- 1) How well were the measures designed?
- 2) How well do the measures fit the context?
- 3) With what level of fidelity was the data acquired?
- 4) Is the data being used appropriately?

One critical component of the Panorama Well-being Survey is confidentiality, which is assured by survey procedures targeting anonymity. Conditions of anonymity generally refer to protocol which includes reading out loud to students' statements of confidentiality, by not allowing students to write names on surveys, not having the classroom teacher walk around classroom as students complete their surveys, turning in answer sheets and placing them in any order in large envelopes that the teacher does not access, and sealing the envelope in front of the class (Dent, 1995).

Validation studies conducted in various settings (e.g., workplace) suggest that the accuracy of self-report data varies by population surveyed (e.g., arrestees, workers, students, etc.) with criminal justice populations being least reliable (Goldstein, 2002). This is pertinent to the current study because of the longstanding belief supported by research from the 80s and 90s directly connecting cigarette and drug-use to poor self-concept, depression and subsequent correlation to higher dropout rates (Ellison, et al., 1998). Student survey results have been generally valid (Sussman, 1995). Confidential and anonymous surveys at schools have been considered more valid than telephone or personal interviews at the home when parents may be present (Turner et al., 1992). This study will be based on a confidential self-report survey conducted online by following the survey administration directions explicitly. A more careful

look at survey design shows most of what is known about best practices in designing and wording survey items comes from experiments on adults (e.g., Krosnick & Presser, 2009). Because the cognitive sophistication of elementary and secondary students will typically be lower, it is unclear how applicable these best practices are for younger respondents. Additionally, more systematic inclusion of certain steps in the survey design process such as expert reviews or cognitive pretesting could provide additional, compelling evidence for validity (Gehlbach, 2011). One relevant concern pertaining to student self-reporting is they over report or exaggerate drug use in classroom surveys. Some studies have attempted to test this hypothesis by asking about non-existent drugs and have found no evidence of overreporting (Single, 1975). O'Malley, Bachman and Johnson (1983) found that various measures of self-reported drug use among high school seniors were reliable over time. Respondents were highly consistent in their reports of drug use over the three to four-year period. Such consistency and reliability are necessary for a measure to be considered valid. In the examination of logically related drug use survey items, O'Malley and colleagues also found high degrees of consistency between the measures, suggesting that the measures were in fact getting at the same thing. In addition, students' report of drug use by unnamed friends, about whom presumably they would have less reason to provide inaccurate reports of use, was highly consistent with self-report use and trends in use.

It has been previously shown that reports of friends' use are highly related to self-use (Sussman, 1995). When compared to interviews, Mensch and Kandel (1988) and McElrath (1994) found that self-report questionnaires yielded higher reports of drug use than interviews, due in part to increased confidentiality. Taken together, these factors lend credibility to self-report measures of drug use. The extent to which this potential problem exists for a particular scale can be tested qualitatively through cognitive interviewing (Willis, 2005) or quantitatively

through measurement approaches such as those under item response theory (IRT) or structural equation modeling. The qualitative portion of this mixed-methods study will include interviews through a collective case study to cross-report self-use exaggeration. Knowledge about how evidence of validity for a particular context might transfer to a different context will presumably emerge as the researcher begins to address this question more directly.

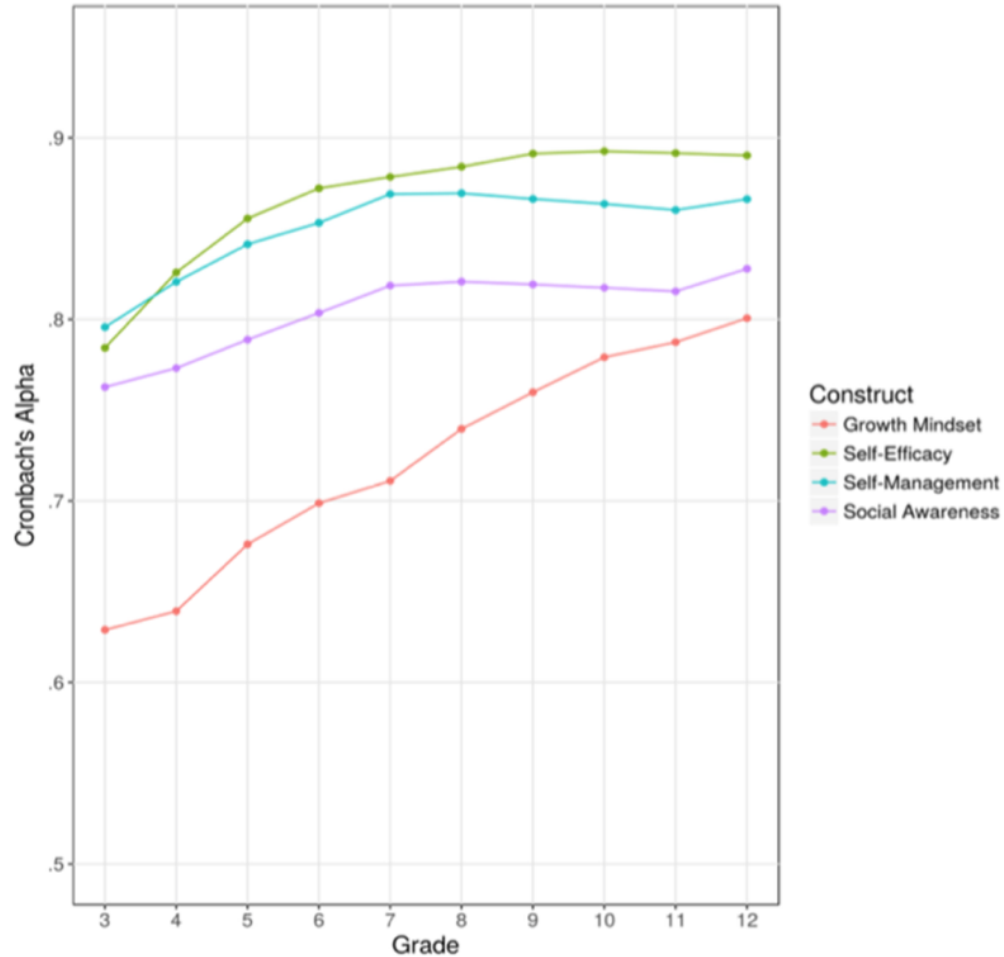
Another serious concern when students are taking surveys is the extent to which they may employ a host of different satisficing strategies (Krosnick, 1991) -ways respondents avoid putting forth effort while completing surveys. These strategies include rushing; skipping items; stopping the survey without answering all the answers; anchoring-and-adjusting, in which a respondent answers subsequent questions based on their responses to the first (Barge, 2012); straight-line responding, where students give the same answer (e.g., the second response option) for every question (Barge, 2012); and mischievous responding (Reardon et al., 2015). To the extent that respondents want to present themselves in a favorable light, social desirability bias may also cause respondents to give the answers they think would impress others rather than truthful responses. Depending on the length of the survey, fatigue could also influence data quality. The interviews will test for these variables as well. In addition, for school administrators, the fidelity of data collection is another important component of validity. The qualitative study contained open-ended questions designed for each group of participants to probe for feedback pertaining to variables.

Researchers have also found that the reliability of the scales is strong for almost all scales, although the growth mindset scale appears to be less reliable for younger students—particularly those in elementary school (Meyer et al., 2018). Figure 3.2 shows the reliability as measured by Cronbach's Alpha (a measure of how consistently students answer the items within

a construct), for each SEL construct and at each grade level. The reliability of the self-management, self-efficacy, and social awareness scales is all comfortably higher than the frequently recommended .70 level (Britto, 2003) ranging between .77 and .89, although the reliability coefficients are generally higher at higher grades. However, the reliability coefficients of the growth mindset scale, especially below Grade 7, are lower than .70, indicating that the data from these younger students contain less signal and more noise. All four growth mindset items are negatively phrased, producing speculation that the negatives in many of these items may pose cognitive challenges for these younger students (Benson, 1985; Gehlbach & Artino, 2018).

Figure 3. 1

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the SEL Constructs at Each Grade Level



Source: Meyer, Wang, & Rice (2018)

The Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) group purports validity as an ongoing process that begins with the purposeful development of a measure, entails accumulating evidence of that measure's characteristics over time, and relies upon logical arguments that draw from evidence. The CORE survey demonstrates within a construct, students answer the items consistently; Content validity - includes the right questions to measure the focal topic; Face validity - so items clearly signal the construct they are purporting to measure; Structural validity

- the items on the survey measure distinct, separate constructs. CORE's scales are analyzed and created to be congruent with the expected use(s); correlated with other related measures predictive of future outcomes. CORE's design process included research experts and practitioners (Gehlbach & Hough, 2018). The CORE's context, students participating voluntarily in surveys, provides: a variation of responses; a baseline to interpret the survey items the same across student groups; means to answer the questions similarly regardless of their school context. This is particularly important for schools and districts serving diverse student populations.

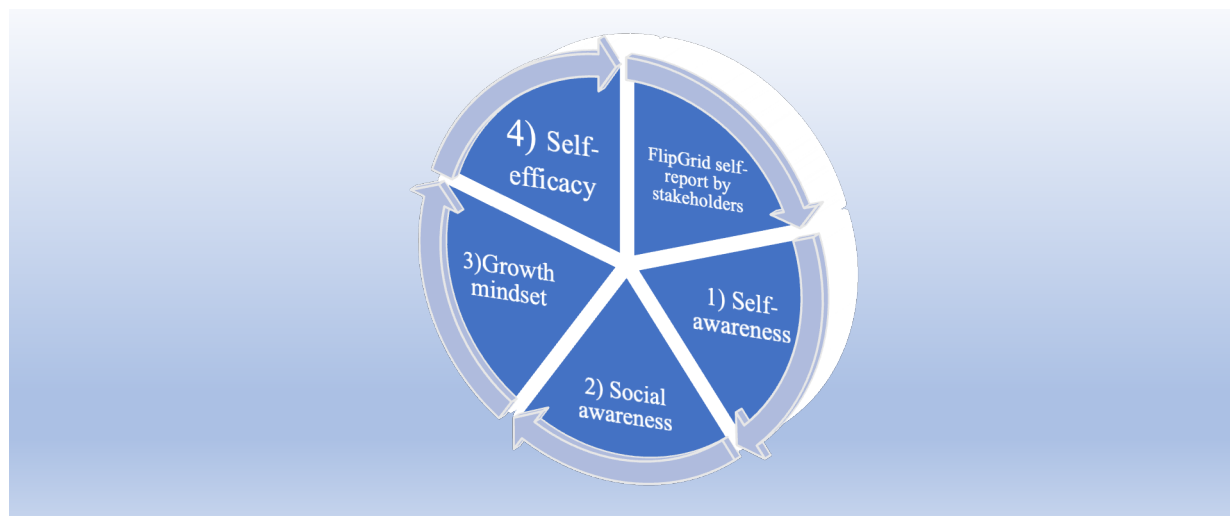
To ensure fidelity, the CORE contracted an external provider for survey administration; developing guidance around survey administration to ensure ostensibly good measures, and to avoid producing erroneous data if the survey administration is flawed. The CORE ensures Appropriate Data Use as CORE's scales are analyzed and created to be congruent with the expected use(s); correlated with other related measures; predictive of future outcomes.

Data Collection

In the same vein that the CORE survey produced four questions to reinforce the pragmatic approach, this study replicated the pragmatic approach by relating research questions to items in the Well-being Survey. This produced construct validity measuring the impact of social-emotional learning experiences on student well-being and subsequently, achievement. Data from the district administered Well-Being Survey was captured from the Rally Platform with authorization granted by the participant school district. The survey administration occurred at three intervals during the 2020-21 schoolyear, with access to results of student perceptions immediately available after the survey window closed for each administration.

Qualitative data was gathered primarily from self-report interviews with stakeholders using *Collective Case Study Interview Protocol* at the school site level. Figure 3.1 illustrates the

four-phase cycle. Given the primary research question aimed to answer how education system design utilizes SEL to contribute to achievement, the logic behind interviewing crucial stakeholders at the site level was to qualitatively examine their individual perspectives and values pertaining to emotional intelligence and social-emotional wellness proven to contribute to student achievement. The underlying assumption purported that the District intentionally adopted a strategy to measure social emotional wellness three times per year, effectively demonstrating emotional intelligence at the district level. With the district's commitment to policy analysis and ongoing procurement of data as a CORE district, this initial examination of educational system design yielded a concerted plan to systematically improve. Enacting such an improvement plan revealed emotional intelligence, beginning with the self-awareness as an institution. The next logical point of examination would lie within the site level plan to follow suit with the coherent district plan and initiative to provide SEL.

Figure 3. 2*4 Phase Self-Report Interview Cycle, CCSIP*

Source: Nixon (SEL as Equity, 2018)

Figure 3.2 diagrams the collective case study interview protocol, which was the manner of data collection used to solicit participant feedback. Given current state restrictions limiting in-person contact due to COVID-19, half of the qualitative data collected was by way of online interviews through a web-based video recording platform, FlipGrid. All participants viewed a three-minute video clip providing a baseline history of the tenets of social-emotional learning and the relationship to education, student achievement, and wellness. Then, in four separate sessions each participant responded individually and privately to one open-ended question, with up to two guiding questions per group (i.e., administrators, parents, teachers, recent graduates). Participant feedback was then manually coded, with one blind reader, to quantify and analyze data.

Figure 3. 3

Collective Case Study Interview Protocol

CCSIP Primary Research Question: *How does your school design Social Emotional Learning experiences to contribute to student achievement?*

Participants

Phase 1

How does your administration team utilize self-awareness to contribute to student achievement?

Administrator

Parent

Teacher

Graduate

Phase 2

How do you employ social awareness to contribute to student achievement?

Administrator

Parent

Teacher

Graduate

Phase 3

How do you encourage a growth mindset to contribute to student achievement?

Administrator

Parent

Teacher

Graduate

Phase 4

How do you demonstrate self-efficacy to contribute to student achievement?

Administrator

Parent

Teacher

Graduate

Source: Nixon (SEL as Equity, 2018)

Good (2003) and Blackwell et al. (2007) support timing Growth Mindset interventions to coincide with a transitional year in school when students are adjusting to new routines and expectations. The selection criteria for teachers involved those instructing eleventh-grade math students at the time of the study. Participation was voluntary, with a courtesy gift card provided as compensation upon completion. No indication of the gift card or any compensation was disclosed prior to the completion of the survey and interview process. Former students, now graduates, were selected based on their participation as a student categorically placed either as an English Language Learner or a student who qualifies for special education services, or both. The researcher wanted to learn from these students if social-emotional learning, instruction, and/or support impacted their achievement as students that influenced outcomes after graduation.

Plan for Data Analysis

Initially, coding of interview data began manually, via open coding. Themes were established relating quantitative results from the Panorama Well-being Survey data, specifically the SEL constructs self and social awareness, growth mindset, and self-efficacy. Axial coding was used to relate patterns of data to themes supporting SEL, specifically self-efficacy as a grounded theory. Multiple coding sessions conducted by the researcher occurred to mine and analyze data, yielding participant member checks to ensure reliability found in Appendix B. Although MAXQDA software has been successfully used by action researchers investigating SEL in recent qualitative studies, computerization of responses was not necessary to ensure conclusions specifically sought by this study were supported.

Ethical Issues

The researcher fully disclosed all personal connections to participants, the nature of this study, and any known biases. Consent was obtained by each adult participant in the form of signature consent. Parent permission to participate in the Panorama Well-being Student Survey was obtained by each student participant through the Pulse Well-Being opt-out consent process, which occurred prior to survey administration. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Concordia University, Irvine and the District review board. A copy of the researcher's Protecting Human Research Participants certification can be found in Appendix C.

Summary

The design of this mixed methods study was to examine how educational system design incorporates, implements, and measures SEL instruction and support to increase student achievement of all urban high school students. Specific student experiences in the form of interactions, instruction, and support perceived to be effective were explored in teacher, parent,

and student interviews. These results yielded information for educational policy makers and educators seeking evidence to design and implement systems, programs, curriculum and learning experiences to improve educational outcomes for all students using SEL as a framework for instructional design. This process of self-examination through the lens of Social-Emotional Learning can be viewed as an emotionally intelligent tool for education reform. Districts that apply this process demonstrate a commitment to renewed educational values emphasizing academic and social-emotional intelligence. Educational equity warrants collaboration. In a time of need revolving around global conservation and social justice, equity through education can unite the humans around a common cause. This comes at a time in the world when civic engagement, collective discourse, and emotional intelligence are needed to advance the causes of humanity. Now, more than ever, given the rapidly declining state of global, national, and regional values, identifying common goals and re-establishing a framework for shared human experience is instrumental to human and environmental perpetuity. This chapter gave the reader a snapshot of the participant district, the instruments used, and their validity, as well as the researcher' data collection and analyses processes.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

Data collection and analyses began with observations from quantitative results. The primary research question, “How does the educational system design of a district utilize (i.e., embed, measure, plan) Social Emotional Learning (i.e., self-awareness, social awareness, growth mindset, and self-efficacy) to contribute to student achievement?” was answered in part, as the researcher gathered evidence pertaining to the district partnership as a CORE district as well as the district partnership with a state policy conglomerate of data experts called Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). The first quantitative results evaluated came from the PACE website. PACE formed a partnership with the CORE Districts - ten large urban school districts in California seeking “Race to the Top” federal grant funding (edpolicyinca.org., 2021). The CORE districts committed to whole system reform when forming the partnership. The PACE mission holds:

Central to our vision in this area is the development of data systems that support educational improvement all levels of the system. Our research has emphasized the importance of a comprehensive, longitudinal data system that can be used to support research, accountability, and continuous improvement (*PACE - Understanding, Measuring & Improving Student Outcomes*, n.d.).

According to Fullan (2015), whole system reform occurs when evidence of partnerships and collaborative efforts to centralize data, produce transparency in the form of information sharing -by creating a web-based platform to communicate that data, and work as a conglomerate to implement systemic policy change realigned to data driven outcomes. The School District

examined for this study demonstrated best practices established by PACE and CASEL as a result of the new alliance in 2015 (*PACE - CORE-PACE Research Partnership*, n.d.).

Additionally, the District had also begun a cycle of self-evaluation and continuous improvement by conducting surveys to analyze factors impacting student achievement, namely attendance and student behavior. This district was required by state law to participate in the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), administered by West-Ed, to identify risk behaviors and resilience factors in students grades five, seven, nine, and eleven. From the results, the goal had always been to identify causes of absenteeism, poor academic engagement, and other obstacles to student achievement, and to seek solutions present in the same data. This practice goes back to the beginning of statewide testing and academic accountability; however, the participant district data became available via CHKS in 2014.

Given the District's mission to prepare all students for successful college and career prospects, serious considerations had to be made once student surveys more precisely revealed the causes of poor student outcomes. The awareness required to take action to counter such a reality would best come from within if the system had the means to assess itself and earnestly seek causes of the problems. The participant district's commitment to continuous improvement through data driven decision making spawned a more self-aware design plan. Additional quantitative data listed in Figure 4.1 below shows relatively high percentages of students responding favorably in relationship to the four SEL constructs at High School A of the District. The highest response was 71% for self- management, with 70% of students responding favorably to growth mindset, and 69% for social awareness. This is more evidence of a cohesive vision for this particular whole system design which incorporated social-emotional learning believed to contribute to student achievement.

The secondary research question aimed to discern the effects of social-emotional learning on marginalized students at two different high school sites within the School District. By evaluating data from a broad look at school factors such as attendance, statewide standardized testing, suspension rates, and college and career indicators, data revealed disparities between the students of the general population and that of students in various categorical programs. This picture produced more questions that needed to be answered. Data from the Panorama (CORE) Student Survey

Without a means for taking account of the population's needs, educationally and social-emotionally, the district was not effectively addressing their constituency as warranted by educational best practices stemming from current research at the time. By producing data points and fostering a narrative established by their community stakeholders, the participant district formed partnerships that led to statewide and then nation-wide implementation of policy change. Specifically, in 2014 in California, Education Code 52059.5 established the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). This shift in educational policy produced a new means of funding and disrupted the patterns perpetuated by educational categorization, or categorical programs – which were based on funding provisions and restrictions.

The SEL data collection period approximately coincided with the participant district's grade reporting period and the administration of the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment or Reading and Math, conducted by the Northwest Evaluation Association – a not for profit research company supportive of collaborative partnerships in education to improve student achievement. Student progress on the MAP assessments provided a gauge of student achievement compared to a Norm Grade Level Mean RIT, or Rausch UnIT, which is standardized equivalency, like the national grade level equivalency.

The researcher began the qualitative study with a Zoom presentation to potential participants. Instructions to access Flipgrid.com, the website utilized for video data collection, and dates of the study were provided, as well as an overview of SEL. In addition, completion of consent forms and confidentiality were explained, with opportunities for participants to ask questions. Informed consent forms and video consent were to be completed by all participants prior to recording interview responses. The goal to utilize Collective Case Study Protocol leveraged value from a sound qualitative method. By asking virtually the same four questions of each of the participants, the researcher was able to closely compare the responses and identify similarities and differences between the experiences of participants. When responses provided by participants in separate roles appeared to share the same language, the researcher noted enhanced value of the experiences which enhanced the recommendations presented in Chapter 5.

Quantitative Data Analysis





Based on Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients at each grade level supporting the correlation between academic test scores and social-emotional measures, the researcher employed these same four SEL constructs (growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, and social awareness) to address each of the subsequent probing research questions. Internal reliability measures of four SEL constructs by grade is high, as assessed by Cronbach's Alpha located in Figure 3.2, particularly when contrasted with standardized achievement tests which typically rely on many more items to ensure reliability. However, other kinds of reliability such as test-retest, were not fully explored. Recent work shows that SEL measures are much less correlated across grades than academic test scores, even when corrected for measurement error (West et al., 2018).

From the Secondary Student Survey created during the 2019-20 school year and administered by Panorama Education in the Spring of 2020, 70% of student participants enrolled

at High School A reported employing a growth mindset, while 71% of students responded favorably that they employ self-management, and 69% favorably indicated practicing social awareness, with 47% favorably reporting self-efficacy (See Figure 3.2).

Figure 4. 1

High School A Panorama - CORE Student Survey Summary, Spring 2020

Topic Description	Results	Comparison
<p>Growth Mindset</p> <p>The belief that you can grow your talents with effort. Students with a growth mindset see effort as necessary for success, embrace challenges, learn from criticism, and persist in the face of setbacks. NOTE: The questions for this topic area were updated in 2018, so no change over time data will appear between Spring 2018 and Spring 2019.</p>	<p>70%</p> <p>▼2 since last survey</p>	<p>60% Educational Options</p> <p>66% High</p> <p>64% </p>
<p>Self-Efficacy</p> <p>The belief that you can succeed in achieving an outcome or reaching a goal. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in your own ability to control or manage your motivation, behavior, and environment.</p>	<p>47%</p> <p>▼1 since last survey</p>	<p>37% Educational Options</p> <p>43% High</p> <p>44% </p>
<p>Self-Management</p> <p>The ability to effectively manage your emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations. This includes managing stress, delaying gratification, motivating yourself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals.</p>	<p>71%</p> <p>▼1 since last survey</p>	<p>60% Educational Options</p> <p>67% High</p> <p>65% </p>
<p>Social Awareness</p> <p>The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.</p>	<p>69%</p> <p>▼1 since last survey</p>	<p>51% Educational Options</p> <p>64% High</p> <p>62% </p>

2,269 responses

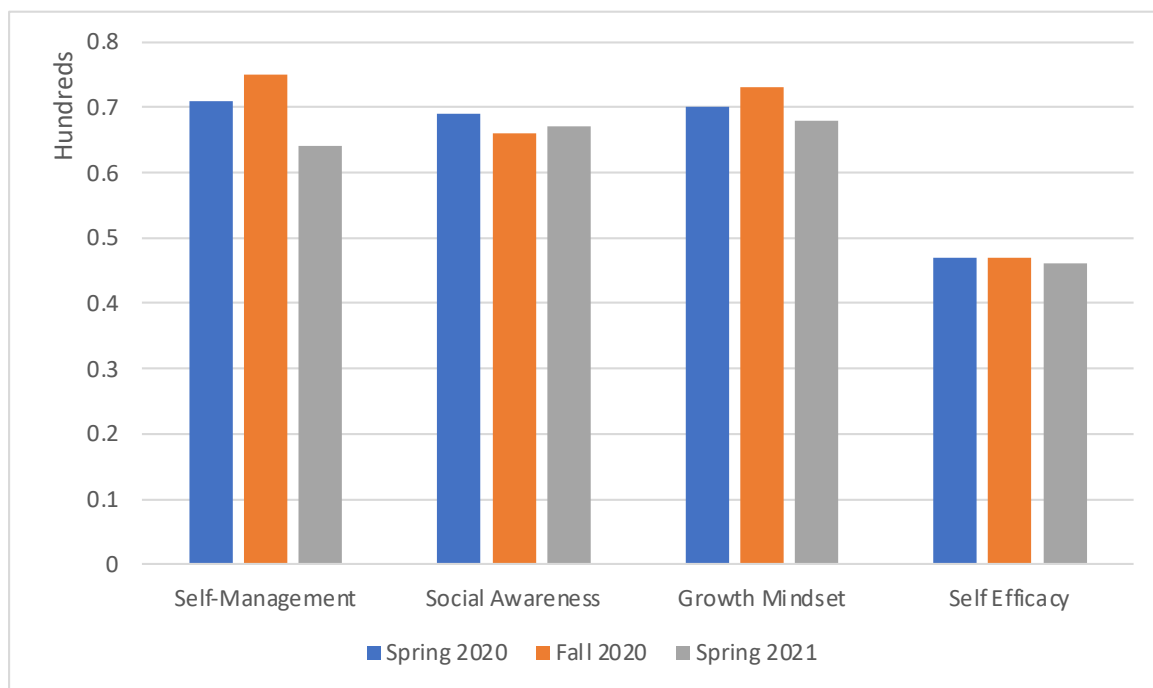
Source: Panorama Education (2021)

One notable data point for each SEL construct pertaining to High School A is each category score is at least three percentage points higher than the school district average and, at a minimum, ten points greater than the scores provided by Educational Options (alternative

programs) available in the district. High School B was selected because it is considered an Educational Options program. The researcher worked part-time at High School B, providing case-management support and services for students enrolled in the educational options program with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Another notable fact is that all scores reported decreased by at least one point since the last administration of the survey, during Spring 2019. The table below illustrates SEL factors in comparison at High School A between Panorama CORE Student Survey, Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. Of the four factors in comparison, self-efficacy is both the lowest factor and the one demonstrating the least amount of change over the course of Spring 2020 to Spring 2021.

Figure 4.2a 1

High School A SEL Factors Comparison Over Time, Panorama CORE Student Survey Results



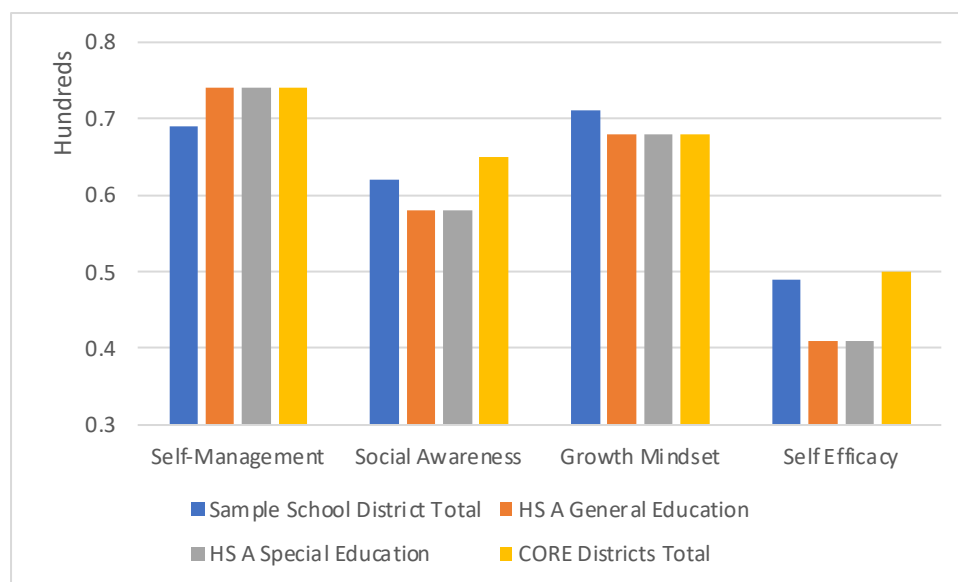
Source: Nixon (SEL as Equity, 2021)

Results from the Panorama Wellbeing Survey prompts measuring strengths of SEL constructs were categorized by school and grade, with disaggregated data distinguishing students identified as English Learners and those receiving special education services. Of the students attending High School A, with a total population of 2381 during the 2020-21 school year, 73% self-reported favorably regarding a growth-mindset. This is two points higher than the district average, and five points greater than the average reported by CORE districts. Students categorically identified as special education favorably self-reported growth mindset as a strength at a rate of 68%, which is equal to the CORE district average, given over 27,000 students. The total population of students at High School A identified as receiving special education services is 310, totaling 13% of the student population. To adequately address the secondary research question, the following table illustrates this comparison of SEL factors by population.

Figure 4.3 1

Comparison of SEL Factors by Population, Fall 2020 Panorama Well-Being

Survey Results



Source: Nixon (SEL as Equity, 2021)

Regarding self-efficacy, 47% of students overall at High School A reported favorably about their own self-efficacy compared to 49% at the participant district, and 50% of students throughout CORE districts. Special education students at the High School A reported strength in self-efficacy at a rate of 41%. For strength in self-management, 75% of students overall self-reported favorably, which was six points higher than the participant district (69%), but only 1 point higher than CORE districts (74%) and the special education population (74%). Finally, in reference to social awareness, the fourth SEL construct supported by Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of SEL, 58% of students identified as special education reported social awareness as a strength, while 66% of the overall population of students reported social awareness to be a strength. Across the participant district, 62% of students reported social awareness as a strength, compared to 65% of students attending CORE districts, as illustrated in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4. 2

High School A Fall 2020 Panorama Check-in SEL Survey Demographics in Comparison (%)

Special education status	Enrollment	Strength in Growth Mindset	Strength in Self-Efficacy	Strength in Self-Management	Strength in Social Awareness
Fundamental High School A	2381	73	47	75	66
Sample School District (Compare)	44492	71	49	69	62
CORE Districts (Compare)	278091	68	50	74	65
Yes	310	68	41	74	58

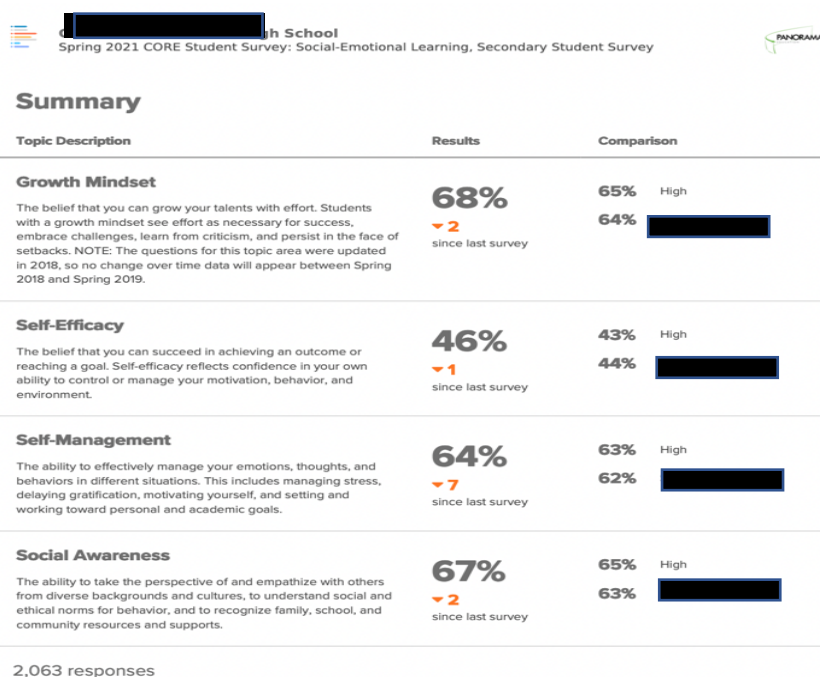
Source: Panorama Education (2021)

When compared to the general education population of students at High School A, those qualifying to receive special education services favorably self-reported at a lesser percentage for all factors. Finally, when analyzing student results from the Spring 2021 CORE Student Survey of High School A, the number of students reported favorably for a growth mindset decreased to 68%. This was still higher than the district comparison at 64%, and the average of other high schools at 65% reporting favorably. Self-efficacy decreased by one point from the previous survey to 46%, yet the scores from High School A were again higher than district and other high

schools. Self-management results showed a decrease by seven total points to 64% responding favorably, and social awareness dropped two total points to 67% of students responding favorably. For both self-management and social awareness, High School A reported slightly higher rates than other high school averages as well as the entire district average.

Figure 4. 3

High School A Panorama CORE Secondary Student Survey Summary, Spring 2021



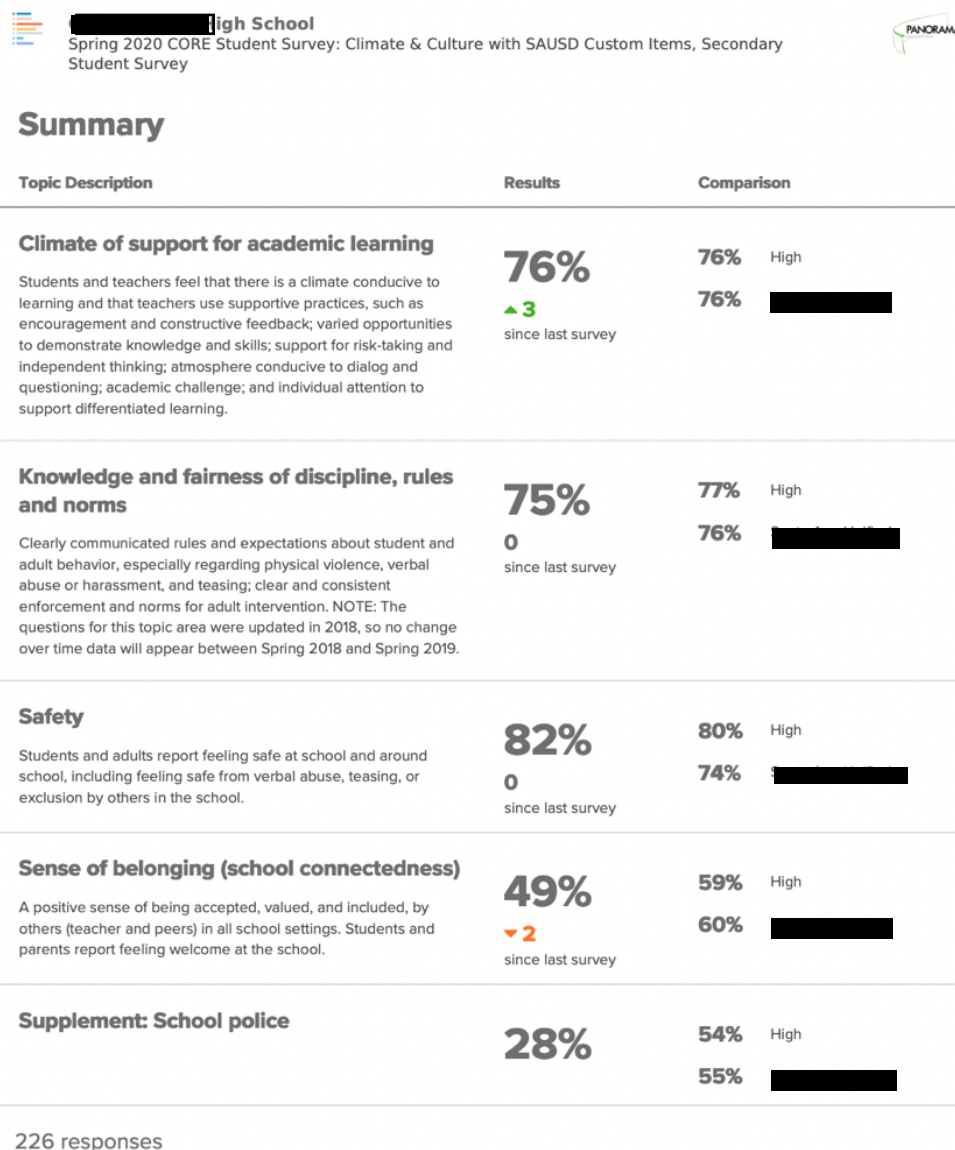
Source: Panorama Education (2021)

Analyzing results from Panorama's surveys employed at High School B during the Spring of 2020 revealed a conundrum for the comparison of data. Given the uniqueness of schools considered to be educational options programs, the surveys administered were also unique to each of the school sites due to the variations in each school program, purpose, culture,

and population. For example, the Spring 2020 survey targeted Climate and Culture rather than Personal or Interpersonal Wellbeing. The prompts/questions were different when comparing High School A to High School B. The researcher concluded that with the individual circumstances of the student population varying, the needs being quantified also varied and must be collected differently. The range of information being collected related to the topics: Climate and Support for Academic Learning; Knowledge and Fairness of Discipline, Rules, and Norms; Safety; Sense of Belonging (School Connectedness); and Supplement-School Police. Considering the factors referred to in Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of SEL, the surveyed topics Climate and Support for Academic Learning along with Sense of Belonging are most closely related as shown in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4. 4

High School B Panorama CORE Secondary Student Survey Summary, Spring 2020



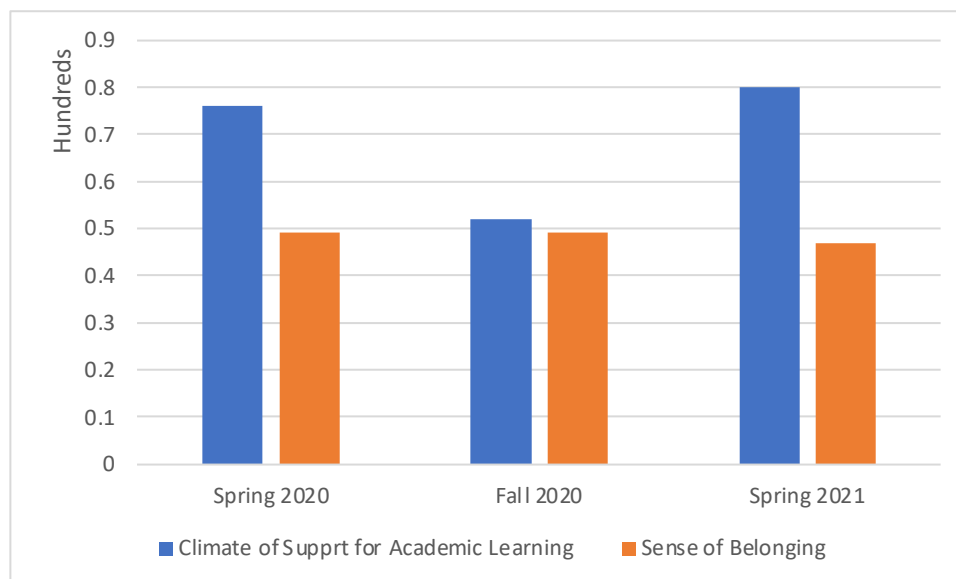
Source: Panorama Education (2021)

For the topic of Climate of Support for Academic Learning, 73% of students at High School B responded favorably. This topic is closely related to social awareness as well as a growth mindset. Although these questions vary compared to the questions/prompts asked of students from High School A, the results effectively provide a metric to evaluate two SEL factors believed to contribute to student wellbeing and achievement. One of the four prompts averaged to provide the former percentage listed above holds, “Adults at this school encourage me to work hard so I can be successful in college or at the job I choose.” The student responses indicate 77% of students responded favorably. The other prompt from this topic relating to social awareness and a growth mindset asks students to respond to whether their teachers work hard to help them with schoolwork when needed, which 76% of students responded favorably.

Pertaining to the topic area ‘Sense of Belonging’ are self-awareness and self-efficacy. As previously stated, although there is not a direct correlation between the questions/prompts being administered, the results can be grouped within comparable outcomes, namely the four social-emotional constructs listed in Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficients for SEL. Forty-nine percent of student participants from High School B responded favorably to four prompts inquiring about student perceptions of self-awareness and self-efficacy.

Figure 4. 5

High School B Panorama CORE Student Survey, SEL Factors Comparison Over Time



Source: Nixon (SEL as Equity, 2021)

Looking directly at each prompt, 36% of students responded favorably to “I feel close to people at this school,” while 42% of students reported favorably that “I feel like I am a part of this school.” Fifty-two percent of students indicated they are happy to be at this school, and 66% of students report that the teachers at this school treat students fairly. These data points will only be directly compared to subsequent results reported from the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 intervals at High School B.

Student achievement results from the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments during the 2020-21 school year were summarized and illustrated in Figure 4.7 for High School A. Students from High School A in both ninth and tenth grade showed no observed growth from Fall 2020 to Spring 2021 in Language Arts: Reading. However, in Math: Math K-12, students in grades nine and ten showed at least three points of observed growth, based on Mean Rausch Unit (RIT) Score. For ninth graders, with a four-point gain during the period,

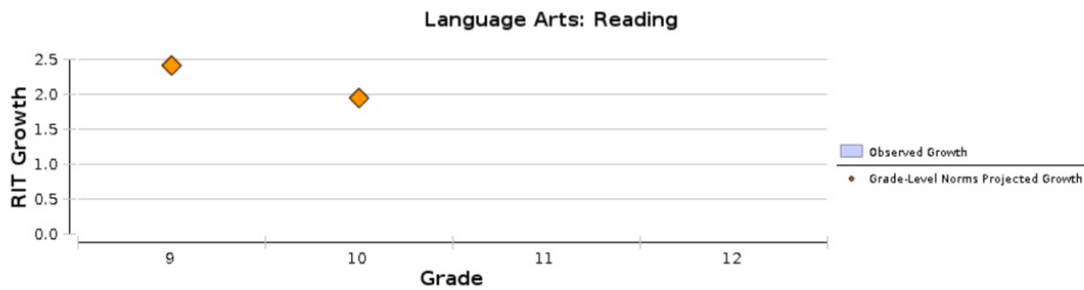
observed growth exceeded expectations, but for tenth graders a three-point gain fell short of the goal by 22%, based on the School Conditional Growth Index. Analysis of patterns are presented in the Chapter 5 discussion along with recommendations for further research.

Figure 4. 6

Measures of Academic Progress- Language Arts, Reading High School A Fall 2020 to Spring 2021

Language Arts:
Reading

Grade (Spring 2021)	Total Number of Growth Events	Comparison Periods						Growth		Growth Evaluated Against							
		Fall 2020			Spring 2021			Observed Growth	Observed Growth SE	Grade-Level Norms			Student Norms				
		Mean RIT Score	Standard Deviation	Achievement Percentile	Mean RIT Score	Standard Deviation	Achievement Percentile			Projected School Growth	School Conditional Growth Index	School Conditional Growth Percentile	Number of Students With Growth Projections	Number of Students Who Met Their Growth Projection	Percentage of Students Who Met Growth Projection	Student Median Conditional Growth Percentile	
9	399	219.8	15.0	54	220.1	16.1	45	0	0.5	2.4	-1.10	14	399	175	44	43	
10	466	223.0	15.3	57	222.7	15.8	46	0	0.4	1.9	-1.41	8	466	195	42	42	
11	0	**			**			**					**				
12	0	**			**			**					**				

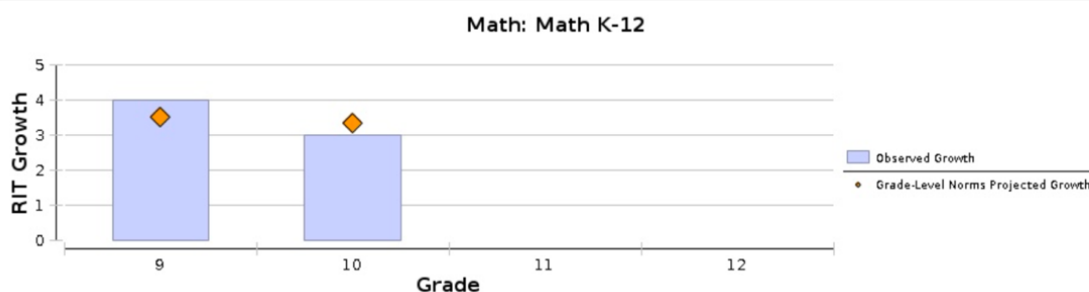


Source: TeachMap, NWEA (2021)

Figure 4. 7

Measures of Academic Progress- Math K12 High School A Fall 2020 to Spring 2021

Math: Math K-12		Comparison Periods						Growth Evaluated Against								
Grade (Spring 2021)	Total Number of Growth Events†	Fall 2020			Spring 2021			Growth		Grade-Level Norms			Student Norms			
		Mean RIT Score	Standard Deviation	Achievement Percentile	Mean RIT Score	Standard Deviation	Achievement Percentile	Observed Growth	Observed Growth SE	Projected School Growth	School Conditional Growth Index	School Conditional Growth Percentile	Number of Students With Growth Projections	Number of Students Who Met Their Growth Projection	Percentage of Students Who Met Growth Projection	Student Median Conditional Growth Percentile
9	351	231.1	18.4	68	234.6	19.8	68	4	0.5	3.5	0.00	50	351	193	55	53
10	434	236.2	18.4	76	239.1	21.1	74	3	0.4	3.3	-0.22	41	434	231	53	52
11	0	**			**			**					**			
12	0	**			**			**					**			



Source: TeachMap, NWEA (2021)

Findings of Qualitative Research

Collective Case Study Interview Protocol was employed to standardize the interview experience, produce greater reliability, and to provide a formal procedure for other practitioners to employ should this SEL as Equity study be replicated to improve the emotional intelligence of a school district-site-community. Asking the same questions of all participants, then requiring they reflect and report on their experiences with, or as, site level administrators produced a subjective outcome pertaining to an objective position or role. The causes or influences of site-level administrative policies and practices were able to be explored through the SEL constructs established by social-emotional learning and self-efficacy frameworks: self-awareness, social awareness, growth mindset, and self-efficacy. This provided personal and informal analysis of the administrative team's self and social awareness at each site. Connecting a site's policies and practices to valid data produced support for how the district plan was being executed at the site

level. The consenting member participants who completed the four-stage interview cycle were a site principal, one assistant principal, and two site level teachers as illustrated in Figure 4.7. One assistant principal who provided consent to participate completed one round of the interview process but did not complete each of the four cycles and was not included in the open coding process. Observations from that live interview are summarized in Chapter 5. Additional feedback from two parent/guardians and two students was also obtained, however consent was not completed. A summary and commentary are found in chapter five pertaining to these four subjects and their individual contributions to this study.

Figure 4.7

Member Participant Site Level Roles

Participant Number	Role with the District	Gender	Years in Education
#1	Education Specialist Mod/Sev Disabilities	M	15+
#2	Assistant Principal	F	15+
#3	Principal	M	20+
#4	High School Math	F	15+

Source: Nixon (SEL as Equity, 2021)

From there, participants further explored and experienced intersectionality while positioning themselves to understand the reasoning for site-level system design, policy, and practice. Given a site level administrator is deemed the head of instruction, academically and social-emotionally, their participation in this practice is essential to understanding how they perceive their role as being carried out. Additionally, the impact of administrator's roles as explained by other stakeholders in the community are seen as key indicators of an effective head of academics and social-emotional instruction. Being able to present the concepts of the framework while providing a platform to receive immediate feedback from participants proved effective, as indicated by the participants themselves on several occasions.

Analysis of qualitative research was conducted weekly. Social-Emotional Learning as Equity – A Community Action Project, began with the topic of self-awareness (deemed synonymous to self-management) during week one. Participants were provided an overview of SEL which identified the five tenets as made popular by CASEL. The intent of maintaining self-awareness as a tenet for this study, despite Cronbach’s Alpha SEL constructs not incorporating it, is because there is an emphasis within Cronbach’s Alpha SEL constructs on self-management and self-efficacy that could be merged into one construct, self-awareness. Additionally, growth mindset is not a part of CASEL’s five core competencies, but relationship skills and responsible decision-making could also be merged into one construct, growth mindset.

SEL as Equity – CCSIP, Week 1

How does your administration team utilize self-awareness to contribute to student achievement?

Participant #1

Participant #1, a special educator and case manager, provided in-depth details about an administrator utilizing self-awareness to promote student achievement. Beginning with a description of how his current principal spearheads a gift program annually at Christmas for student gifts with donations from teachers, participant #1 acknowledged the incredible support demonstrated by the faculty and the appreciation of and by families. “My principal displays compassion on a regular basis, for example when our AP passed away over a holiday break, the principal made a formal announcement upon returning to school and provided means for students to seek counseling as needed, and that is was okay to publicly grieve.”

The opportunity to model compassion and empathy was also on display throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine. The first example was when a staff member was infected by Coronavirus and passed away after a brief illness the principal responded to the emotional

well-being of the community by making resources available to families, staff, and students. The situation was personal, the community responded personally. “It is great to be able to have administrators lead with compassion, believe in the capacity of working adults and staff.” The second example of the principal showing self-awareness was when the administration team produced realistic expectations for distance learning. Being mindful of the duties and expectations of teachers teaching from home without professional development to standardize the process was challenging, but the principal took the approach that all staff can constructively contribute to the cause (at home instruction).

As for self-awareness (as a teacher) that contributes to student achievement, participant #1 self-reported being the cool teacher to be able to extend himself to the general education population to enable peers on campus to access students assigned to rosters and “be a bridge to help them assimilate.” Participant #1 sees all staff on site as contributing to the cause of student academic and social-emotional learning, believing also that social awareness is modeled across the board on campus by caring adults.

Participant #2

Participant # 2, an assistant principal at a participating site, reported that a great example of self-awareness came from a former principal who believed in distributed leadership and built a distributed leadership approach based on strengths and weaknesses. “Being a self-aware leader is about recognizing your strengths and weaknesses, and who you can lean on...to improve student achievement.” Being self-aware as an administrator means providing others with the opportunity to become leaders through a distribution of power and responsibility. It means being self-aware by not expecting things to be certain way without creating opportunities. A responsive rather than reactive leader in situations to meet the needs and expectations of the circumstance

epitomizes self-awareness. That self-aware leader also listens and provides time to process information and ideas. An example of this is when people intentionally connect, like a teacher relating to their students on purpose. “Effective teachers integrate social emotional learning at all times because they have to, out of mindfulness for students.” This sense of self-awareness leads to an understanding within a social setting with and for others.

In order to effectively access the whole learner and connect them to the lesson, it is important to remember that every student walking into their space has a different perspective and that is okay. It is the administrator’s responsibility to somehow create an environment that embraces everyone where they are and allows them to feel safe. Creating that kind of environment as educators in classes or on campuses by implementing self-awareness is crucial for manifesting greater social awareness and developing strong relationships with students, staff, and the community.

Participant #3

Participant #3, a principal at a participating site, clearly articulated the vision established for the work currently being administered in the form of social-emotional learning. Their experience has led them to use their platform as an educator and an administrator to spotlight the student growth and achievement of students traditionally underrepresented in education, like students from racial minorities, impoverished socio-economic settings, and students with disabilities, as well as English learners. Having first-hand experiences as a learner with socio-economic needs allows the use of alternative indicators to establish and identify who benefits from various kinds of help and how to offer/provide that help in such a way that maximizes student achievement. Also, communicating awareness of their needs to students in need is less challenging when the help is guided by empathy and grounded in a systemic approach that

considers the position of the student/family and works to support a positive self-concept rather than a shameful or shunned sense of responsibility.

Participant #4

Participant #4 is a math teacher at a participating site and stated, “In many staff meetings, our principal uses his own personal experiences about his childhood to help encourage teachers to be sympathetic to students. He also likes to highlight his success by crediting his teachers, this helps to further motivate teachers to support all students.” Additionally, “although our school has high academic expectations of all students as a fundamental school, our principal makes it well known that their emotional well-being is a priority. Simply put, if a student is struggling emotionally, their mind will be unable to focus inside the classroom. As such, there are several opportunities around campus where students can learn in a flexible learning environment, such as the Flex Lab, Library, or Grizzly Lounge.” Producing environments that provide alternatives to traditional classrooms that maintain rows of desks and chairs can be a welcome change for students employing new technologies and research-based best practices for collaboration and productivity. Receiving support from an administrator who reflects on their own experiences in school is indicative of self-awareness.

SEL as Equity – CCSIP, Week 1 Synopsis and Correlation to Self-Efficacy Theory

The interview question asked during the first week of the study provided insight to how participants perceived their principal/administrative team’s utilization of self-awareness to contribute to student achievement. The purpose of looking into the principal’s demonstrated use of SEL is because the role as principal warrants them as the head of instruction (Fullan, 2010). Being an effective role model of SEL as the principal means having the capacity to see yourself as an example of what you expect to see in others. According to the participant responses,

teaching and leading by demonstrating what it means to be a sensitive, compassionate leader is what a self-aware leader embodies. They said about self-awareness: “to support a positive self-concept over a negative one” (Participant #3, Week 1, 2021); (my principal) “displays compassion,” and “(our) admin team leads with compassion (Participant #1, Week 1, 2021); “recognizes your own strengths and weaknesses” (Participant #2, Week 1, 2021); “principal uses own personal experiences...to help encourage teachers to support all students” (Participant #4, Week 1, 2021).

Through open to axial coding the researcher identified and related themes between the four major SEL factors (self-awareness, social awareness, growth mindset, self-efficacy) and the four keys of self-efficacy theory (master experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, physiological feedback). Recognizing the correlation is critical to further research and implications of practice. Week one responses yielded common language pertaining to emotion of the person in the role as principal such as compassion, empathy, sympathetic, cool, and grounded. Bandura (1977) holds that emotional/physical/physiological state influences how a person feels about their abilities. It is sufficient to say that a self-aware principal with the goal of preparing students for 21st century college and careers strives to have a positive influence on others they encounter. Bandura also posited vicarious experiences are essential to develop self-efficacy. He stated, “Seeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities to succeed” (1994, p.71). The conduit catalyzing self-awareness toward social awareness, and eventually to self-efficacy, mimics the connection between an emotional state, and vicarious experiences. So, when a student perceives that their interest is being sought, and a constructive connection is thriving between them and those they encounter in academic settings, it is then that

positive perception yields a greater performance outcome, which lauds verbal persuasion. This cycle becomes the aim of a productive learner familiar with the sense of intrinsic value when they experience achievement. The way relationships are influenced by positive social interactions between a principal and their staff, students, and the community is a major component of development for student self-efficacy and thereby student achievement both during school and after graduation.

SEL as Equity – CCSIP, Week 2

How do you employ social awareness to contribute to student well-being and achievement?

Participant #1

The special education teacher acknowledged demonstrating advocacy for students assigned to their caseload and to all students around campus. “We create a safe space for all. My school site is a good environment for all students. I help with decision-making by modeling the appropriate behavior, talking to other students to prevent mocking/bullying and just by listening. Teachers exemplify people-first language to ensure civility and so we don’t give the disability more credence and power over a child that promotes a stigma. Many students want to be heard, in the same way adults do, and both must find a way to promote social awareness.”

The parents of students in this teacher’s class appreciate the social lessons and awareness others show for their children. It shows the importance of being unique and accepted, where the families feel good that their students are in the hands of caring professionals, it contributes to the sense of being safe at school. Having ways to tune-in, breathe, and relax is also important, so teaching by example to practice self-control is an expectation of the caring professionals. “This is a huge part of success and student achievement for all.”

Participant #2

Demonstrating social awareness all the time, for example, by not judging students based on perception and being aware of explicit and implicit biases is critical for success in educational settings. When parents enter the office or classroom, to assume that they have the same social awareness as an educator does, or that they don't have social awareness at all, is a mistake and an example of not being mindful or dutiful as the educational leader tasked with the role of providing the structure and lessons necessary for scholarly productivity. Being open minded and accepting is critical to job performance, and the success of an administrator's role.

Providing encouragement for the well-being of community members is exemplified when administrators, staff, and community members develop real and caring relationships that matter. Being intentional to provide the time and space for these kinds of conversations must be embedded into planning with the purpose of intentionally connecting to be well as a community. You cannot separate the child from the learning. All their fears and filters must be minimized inside the classroom environment so that kids can learn and make connections to their world. "We learn best when we are loved and safe. We learn best when there is an emotional connection between the people we speak to. It is a way of thinking, being. It is a way you are mindful of students without judgement or prejudice."

Social awareness is not static, so the context of the situation bears a significant value on that social awareness. Embracing all types of people as well as exhibiting care openly and unconditionally are goals to strive for to make others feel comfortable and accepted. That care demonstrated can support the relationship and the lesson when there is difficulty with social awareness.

Participant #3

Self-segregation is natural, and not a problem so long as a system does not prevent you from integrating. In high school, cliques form around interests. Therefore, basketball players tending to congregate on the left side, for example, and football players grouping on the right side is a common observation, as long as no one ends up being alone. Being anchored is being connected to people who have things in common. Giving students something to engage in teaches unity and community. They respond by participating. “[At our site, the program designed to focus on students pursuing scholarly aspirations] is an example of an organization of like-minded students and community members working to achieve academic excellence. Our outstanding scholars, as an example, demonstrate social responsibility, collaboration, and empathy at a high level. We invest in all members, so they feel a part of the community. We allow them to know it is okay to be different and be unified around a common cause.” There is no shame, rather extensive positive social support for the students seeking scholarly excellence, in the same way that the school culture supports its sports teams such as football, volleyball, and soccer.

“Being intentional contributes to the community thriving, regardless of the differences.” The social awareness that stigmatizes students for being from low-income communities is neutralized as the aim is to provide valuable/meaningful activities that yield opportunities for connecting and supporting student achievement.

Participant #4

“As a product of the school district I teach in, I highlight my own experiences to my students. At the beginning of each school year, I include a slide where I introduce myself to students and share where I went to school. Growing up, most of my teachers were of a different

race or different sex, and I didn't identify with them. By sharing my background with my students, I'd like to think that I'm making a positive impact in their lives and that they can see me as a role model, someone who has been in their shoes, been through similar experiences and struggles, and still managed to get an education and have a successful career.”

Being relatable to students and contributing to the teacher-student relationship more personally before providing content lessons fosters social awareness and broader connections to potential student outcomes, namely a growth mindset and self-efficacy.

The second interview question focused on the participant's experiences implementing social awareness and student achievement. By first considering the level of self-awareness of their respective principals, and then having to shift to analyze their own social awareness, the researcher witnessed each of the participants experiencing an acute sense of both thinking and feeling. While reflecting on how they previously experienced their principal's implementation of self-awareness, the participants had to also consider how that self-awareness affected them, which is a conduit to social awareness. Once more, Bandura's self-efficacy theory is revealed when the perception of the emotional state, likely enhanced by the vicarious experience, contributes to the performance outcome. This supports triangulation between thinking, feeling, and self-efficacy, the initial framework presented by the researcher as an updated foundational approach for designing educational frameworks, policies, and implementation plans in chapter one.

SEL as Equity – CCSIP Week 2 Synopsis and Correlation to Self-Efficacy Theory

The recurring theme of positive vicarious experiences leading to enhanced outcomes relates to being intentional about teaching social awareness, whether through modeling it as a teacher and community member, promoting social awareness lessons, or using personal

experiences “to build real relationships with students and families that yield opportunities for student achievement” (Participant #3, Week 2, 2021). Succinctly stated, “planning the time to have the conversations to be well as a community” (Participant #2, Week 2, 2021).

SEL as Equity – CCSIP, Week 3

How do you encourage or demonstrate a growth mindset to contribute to student achievement?

Participant #1

“You want to let kids know that, yes, their brains are always growing. Research shows that a growth mindset is brain-based and backed by evidence that the brain’s neuroplasticity allows for change. Making mistakes is more than okay. It is how we make progress over time. All of my students feel supported and that contributes to small gains.”

The goal as a teacher is to encourage and support student minds to keep striving. As educators, we must make safe spaces for them to develop at their own pace. Students need and want to feel supported when being challenging academically. That must be reinforced or students will shut down due to the difficulty of repetition without progress. Providing opportunities for students to rethink their own ideas, simply by rearranging the words used to ask them questions can help to encourage them to try a task a different way.

It is nice to have a growth mindset, as students and as teachers. Having a fixed mindset will impact how a teacher instructs students. There are teachers who do not believe in a growth mindset for all students, so the research must be explained and provided for them to re-evaluate their own fixed mindset. The school and district have a professional learning community that encourages all staff to pursue lifelong learning opportunities.

Participant #2

Utilizing the Universal Design for Learning framework can really help to push the growth mindset philosophy. Multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression are required for all learners to be successful. Implementing the UDL framework to provide access points with accommodations is an excellent instructional practice that teaches students not to give up on that process or skip over something that they don't understand, but to take a different approach to learning that content.

Applying a growth mindset also means striving to make less of a learning gap by being willing to reteach and apply different strategies in order to get students to the point of academic achievement. One specific example was when working with students who were orally inclined but struggled with writing skills. By redesigning the lessons to incorporate dialogue that strength of expression was improved to support their own writing skills. Learning in different ways is something we should inform students about and use to encourage them to improve all academic skills.

"I believed in a growth mindset all my life, before I knew there was a term for it." It was also developed in formal education. The idea of the growth mindset presented formally during educational professional development came from John Hattie, who developed the idea that there is no limit to learning. How wise a person is, the words they use, and the way they think are always changing, growing and developing.

Participant # 3

According to this site principal, you have nothing to lose when it comes to education. Growth mindset equals no one wanting to not do well. So, if everyone wants to succeed, we must figure out a way for everyone to get a little success. Success is addicting. However, people don't

always know what a growth mindset entails. You do not always have to learn from a mistake, but if you happen to make one, then there is something to learn. Keeping the flexibility of mind to know you are always growing is the growth mindset.

Given that a growth mindset is theoretical, the problem with it as professional development is that we are unable to accurately measure it. Once programs are designed and implemented, there are limited means to review the results. The cycle of inquiry warrants reflecting on the results, however that does not happen with consistency before the next implementation of a new program. A proven team focal point must always function based on clearly, discernible, identifiable outcomes with benchmarks in place. These performance-based evaluations can be designed with the end in mind. So, by backwards planning, as a rule of thumb, beginning at the goal, theoretically, and moving backwards to carefully identify the path and steps needed to ensure success of that result ensures not just a growth mindset, but also measurable growth.

Participant #4

“Being a math teacher, I know that most of my students will have a negative perception of math or of their own abilities to learn math. In fact, most adults that I encounter tell me they were bad at math when they find out I’m a math teacher. As such, I keep a recurring theme in my classroom centered around the growth mindset where I constantly remind students that (making) mistakes are ok, that mistakes help us learn, and that what is not ok is to give up. To help me reinforce this, I have a bulletin board in the back of my classroom that I reference regularly titled ‘Change your words, change your mindset.’ The bulletin board offers students alternate ways of thinking, for example instead of saying “I don't understand” a student can say “What am I missing?” Providing access to new pathways of thinking and feeling related to previous math

experiences and the potential for new outcomes is necessary for success. Being able to support students discovering their math fluency and improve not just their grades but also their overall comprehension of information makes students more aware of what growth mindset is and the fact that they can improve in any cognitive tasks. Grades usually reflect the positive change, and the teacher stated how often that once math grades improve, performance scores in other classes follow. The math teacher believes in the use of technology in math classes and incorporates projects to challenge critical thinking skills through a math lens.

In terms of recent professional development, the teacher indicates certainly having participated, but did not recall specific dates. One reference to a recent training for math specific curriculum was discussed. The district adopted math curriculum requires a minimum of four in-depth training modules be completed prior to implementation of instruction. The curriculum incorporates four team roles that are assigned to each team of four students. Inherent in each team's roles are duties required to fulfill daily learning objectives, demonstrate proficiency on learning assessments as individuals and teams, and improve math conjecture. In this way, the curriculum encourages peer support, seeks to build self and social awareness, and thereby promotes academic rigor and SEL. With such built-in social skills expectations come teachable moments addressing well-being and achievement, as well as team productivity and socialization.

SEL as Equity– CCSIP Week 3 Synopsis and Correlation to Self-Efficacy Theory

Asking study participants how they use a growth mindset to contribute to student achievement produced additional evidence of the relationship between verbal persuasion, vicarious experience, and performance experience. All participants referred to the value of communicating to students the importance of making mistakes and not giving up, and one went on to say it is okay if you are unable to learn from each mistake. The researcher immediately

thought of “practicing forgiveness,” an empathy yielding technique that couples thinking and feeling, with an allowance for a new opportunity to grow from the last mistake, even if it is merely by eliminating a negative reaction to the performance outcome just experienced.

Other participant statements evidencing a growth mindset correlating to verbal persuasion were: “providing opportunities for students to rethink their own ideas, simply by rearranging the words used to ask them questions can really help to encourage them to try a task a different way” (Participant #1, Week 3, 2021); “Learning in different ways is something we should inform students about and encourage them to improve all academic skills” (Participant #2, Week 3, 2021); and finally, “I have a bulletin board in the back of my classroom that I reference regularly titled ‘Change your words, change your mindset.’ The bulletin board offers students alternate ways of thinking, for example instead of saying ‘I don't understand,’ a student can say ‘What am I missing?’

SEL as Equity – CCSIP, Week 4

From your perspective, how does your school site promote self-efficacy as SEL that contributes to student achievement?

Participant #1

“I like to think as teachers, professionals, and admin we got in this line of work to promote and to help guide and nurture students.” We are going to walk them along, see them through to achieve their goals. We strive for that teachable moment, to provide more than facts but support for their overall development. Our site culture promotes college as an attainable pathway, and our students know that they will be held responsible for their own behavior, choices, and actions. We promote Santa Ana College as a viable option, with two years of free tuition. At the end of their four years (of high school), students participate in Senior Interviews

where they discuss portfolio entries displaying their four years of favorite assignments and accolades. This provides a great opportunity for them to own their choices and take responsibility for their growth over the last four years.

By emphasizing the value of their plans, hopes, and dreams of college and career success since middle school the system has given students access to their belief in their own ability. After teaching them for four years during high school to put forth the effort to grow, develop, and pursue their talents and learning capacity, students show their self-efficacy and belief in their own abilities by persevering to achieve their aspirations after completion of high school. Students are taught that they must have the grades to participate in extracurricular sports, and performance endeavors (band, cheer, etc.). Once they meet teacher expectations, they form their own standards for growth and development, which then occurs after preparation for their various fields of endeavor. Watching students execute an effective golf swing, for example, makes the pursuit worthwhile during school. Then, once students go on to college, they excel in their studies and after that their career pursuits, which produce greater outcomes for the rest of society.

“Even considering how I became a teacher, I experienced other teachers nurturing my talent and allowing me to pick their brains, but ultimately expecting me to grow to respond to the challenges of teaching by taking charge of a class. Eventually earning a credential and becoming a teacher is the example of my own self-efficacy, built on the support I received from master teachers guiding me through effective practices.

Participant #2

Through conversations with staff, one common attribute aligned to self-efficacy on site is high expectations for all students. As a school site, it is apparent everyone believes all students

can achieve their best potential. Teachers planning and collaborating effectively with administrators to provide intervention services and access to best practices for specialized populations is one way the site promotes self-efficacy contributing to student achievement. Also ensuring access to rigorous AP courses, dual enrollment at community college, and numerous extra-curricular opportunities bolsters self-determination and student achievement.

Participant #3

“I think it is very simple, we make it very comfortable to ask for help. There is no shame if you don’t know something, and if there is shame, it will be in not asking or getting the information you need.” Not only does the site have a supportive system in place, but all staff also make sure kids are aware of that system and they feel comfortable embracing the system. People have these programs, but what good is ‘checking in-checking out’, to say ‘I am here’? Checking on the child by asking how they are doing, what they need, or if everything is good seems more effective. Making them feel comfortable if they don’t have the materials to be successful and teaching them to have the confidence to ask for that help is how self-efficacy is attained.

ASB affiliated clubs account for more than 20 activities and resources on campus, which does not even include athletics, drama, and band. Our high school site has the resources and human capital to produce an environment that encourages the individual to be a part of something greater than themselves to grow and achieve.

Participant #4

Having a Higher Education Center like the one at our site shows how valuable mentoring and the planning process is for students to have access to, especially during junior and senior year of high school. The fact that students actively participate in college orientations, post-secondary recruiter seminars, and sign up to hear guest speakers evidences the school’s

commitment illustrating college and career options for students. Being taught to visualize future outcomes requires mentoring, practice, and prominent models to emulate.

“I think our school has done an incredible job at creating a community where students feel valued and supported. There are several events that students can participate in to help them grow such as college nights, college visits to our campus, school-wide read author invites, and other events by the higher education center and our community liaison. Additionally, after every announcement on the intercom the principal ends with “...remember students, if you need help, please ask.”

SEL as Equity– CCSIP Week 4 Synopsis and Correlation to Self-Efficacy Theory

The four tenets of self-efficacy theory are not sequentially arranged. They are, however, deeply interconnected, often impacting each other without clear indicators of how or why. The growth mindset, as an SEL factor, merges with the other SEL factors to solidify as self-efficacy when students are able to hone personal abilities through positive vicarious and performance experiences, while also utilizing constructive verbal persuasion to improve their results. Bandura stated, “Self-beliefs of efficacy play a key role in the self-regulation of motivation. Most human motivation is cognitively generated...They form beliefs about what they can do. ... They set goals for themselves, and plan courses of action designed to realize valued futures” (Bandura, 1994, p. 72)

“Our site culture promotes college as an attainable pathway, and our students know that they will be held responsible for their own behavior, choices, and actions...we’ve given them (access to) their belief in their own ability since middle school. After teaching them for four years to put forth the effort to grow, develop, and pursue their talents and learning capacity, students show their self-efficacy and belief in their own abilities. Even considering how I

became a teacher, with other teachers nurturing my talent and allowing me to pick their brains, but ultimately expecting me to grow to respond to the challenges of teaching by taking charge of a class. Eventually earning a credential and becoming a teacher is the example of my own self-efficacy, built on the support I received from master teachers” (Participant #1, Week 4, 2021).

“Through conversations with staff, one common attribute aligned to self-efficacy is high expectations for all students. As a school site it is apparent everyone believes all students can achieve their best potential. Teachers planning and collaborating effectively with administrators to provide intervention services and access to best practices for specialized populations is one way our site promotes self-efficacy contributing to student achievement. Also ensuring access to rigorous AP courses, dual enrollment at community college, and numerous extra-curricular opportunities bolsters self-determination and student achievement” (Participant #2, Week 4, 2021).

“Not only do we have a supportive system in place we make sure kids are aware of that system and they feel comfortable embracing the system. Making them feel comfortable if they don’t have the materials to be successful and teaching them to have the confidence. We...have the resources and (we) work to produce an environment that encourages the individual to be a part of something greater than themselves to grow and achieve” (Participant #3, Week 4, 2021).

“I think our school has done an incredible job at creating a community where students feel valued and supported...there are several events that students can participate in to help them grow such as college nights, college visits to our campus, school-wide read author invites, and other events by the higher education center and our community liaison. Additionally, after every announcement on the intercom the principal ends with “remember students, if you need help, just ask” (Participant # 4, Week 4, 2021).

Summary of Findings

Quantitative data collected by the researcher served as initial evidence supporting the participant district's commitment to a continuous cycle of improvement that included academic and social emotional learning factors. The educational system design of the participant district led the way in California toward a partnership which changed categorical funding. This was supportive of the participant district's effective system design centered around SEL contributing to student achievement. This undergirds the primary research question of this study. The participant district committed to assess its population, carefully analyze data from the California Healthy Kids Survey, California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) - Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, then reflect on policy, funding, and real student outcomes. Operating on a continuous cycle of improvement means constant change, which can be difficult, uncomfortable, and expensive. This is in complete alignment with the PACE mission. The researcher posits that the SEL framework can and has been organizationally implemented, though it has been called other things like emotional intelligence or growth mindset, it's tenets are overlapping and synonymous as demonstrated through published articles by White-Smith, Boaler, Goleman, and Dweck. The participant district's investment in effective educational system design led to measuring factors of SEL that have been proven to contribute to student achievement. In this case, quantitative analyses of Panorama CORE Student Survey results for two sites, a traditional high school and an educational options site, both indicated student responses that measured average or higher than average in comparison to other CORE districts for at least one of four SEL constructs. This is how a continuous cycle of improvement manifests when self-awareness is employed.

The secondary research question, to determine whether SEL impacts the marginalized population at the same rate as the general population, produced findings showing a concise disparity. Further analysis of disaggregated quantitative data, taken primarily from High School A, revealed that the marginalized group of students receiving special education services experienced lower levels of favorably self-reporting in all categories of SEL when compared to their peers at their school site. However, that same group scored the same for growth mindset and self-management when compared to students in the other CORE districts. Additionally, students receiving special education services responded favorably and higher in comparison to their own school district in the area of self-management. The area of self-efficacy yielded the lowest percentages of students responding favorably overall compared to other areas for both general and marginalized populations. This data could provide insight for the site level decisions an administration team makes to design, carefully plan, and implement activities to improve self-efficacy and social awareness, which have already been proven to contribute to student achievement (Durlak, 2011). It should provide a general direction for the district to consider moving toward. Additional discussion is presented in “Implications of Practice.”

The researcher considered the population of students in attendance at High School B, an educational options program, and the documented challenges of all students enrolled and determined the academic data from quantitative results would not be reliable or necessary to draw a conclusion to the secondary research question. Social-emotional factors measured in the Panorama Wellbeing survey were included for transparency. The status of the researcher at the time of the study as a part-time service provider proved valuable for this study. From one assigned student, qualitative information was obtained that will be presented at length in chapter

five to support implications of practice, if this study were replicated, or if a district design plan required qualitative input to support successful implementation.

Regarding qualitative findings, the researcher discerned clear responses from participants that aligned with tenets of self-efficacy theory. These correlations provide a stronger basis for standardizing SEL curriculum across grade levels. According to self-efficacy theory the four keys are mastery and vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional/physiological feedback. Student responses to the series of Panorama surveys all self-reported least favorably in the area of self-efficacy. Considering Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of SEL factors by grade, self-efficacy is the last of the four factors to emerge, typically after 8th grade. Self-efficacy has been linked to resilience to adversity and stress, as well as higher work performance and educational achievement.

The argument for implementing a standardized approach to teaching social-emotional lessons, given a fluctuating high school graduation rate amongst other serious indicators of systemic plague like suspension rates, absenteeism, and low grades, is sound. With imminent threats to youth development looming, state educational agencies could implement recommendations for teaching self-efficacy theory directly to preteens, specifically students receiving special education services in grades six through twelve. Policy recommendations should also aim to produce further research, at a minimum, designed to improve preservice programs and professional development of teachers in the area of self-efficacy.

Currently, public efforts to roll out programs are funded privately. The political landscape does not bear any support currently, with much greater issues from civil unrest to economic insolvency pending. One possibility, given the educational funding formula in California, could be a privately funded endeavor with a commitment to form a partnership to research, produce,

and publish a series of digital lessons, ultimately forming a digital archive of exemplary educational materials and made accessible via an online platform. A consortium could then fund the maintenance and improvement of that platform. A district such as the participant district could effectively design and implement an elementary and secondary program beginning with a pilot program across grade levels based on data obtained from the Panorama Survey.

The focal point while additional research on students is being conducted should be current educators. With a mental health crisis bearing down because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the onus must be on public health and government officials to enact additional legislation to counterbalance the negative effects of this current situation. Educators are a front line of protection for students and their community. However, educators must have systematic supports in place and easy access to resources. With that comes the even greater impending teacher shortage crisis that must also be addressed through legislation in order to attract talent and build up human resource that lacks in the field of education.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The following discussion is an attempt to frame the context of this mixed methods study as a recycled byproduct of self-efficacy theory, social-emotional learning, and emotional intelligence. This new framework is being posited by the researcher to merge thinking and feeling in universal design as a measure of Social Emotional Awareness (SEA) for the betterment of people. It is, in essence, the rebirth of “The Golden Rule,” whereas one must take into full consideration the results of their own individual and collective actions. Human choices and decisions impact everything within a localized and, eventually, a globalized environment. This is what humanity is currently experiencing and learning through the exploited power of social and mass media, once the messages are too powerful to be regulated.

Self-awareness to social awareness, in the context of what is best for the local environment – physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially, can lend itself to a community sense of growth mindset which can forge self-efficacy of a collective. Human and ecological survival depends on a conscious revolution, one that could benefit from both intuitive thinking and collective feeling to develop points of connection, collaboration, and community. The need for individuals to develop singular Social Emotional Awareness and plural Social Emotional Awareness is obvious, given the rate of escalating conflicts between civilians living in a free society, purporting to have values and comprehensive moral fabric.

In the 21st century, humanity has a built-in opponent, time, as current thinking and philosophical ideologies morph due to demand, need, and desperation. In physics the term entropy relates to thermodynamics which has been attributed to Clausius (1882), a German mathematician and physicist, but was first introduced by Carnot (1830). The premise, applied to

various scientific and engineering fields, depicting the process of things becoming more chaotic over time. In fact, Stephen Hawking was quoted in *A Brief History of Time (1988)* as stating, “The increase of disorder or entropy is what distinguishes the past from the future, giving a direction to time.”

The human system is being bred, enhanced by its own technologies, to speed up the pace of production and consumption to meet such supply and demand and effectively attempt to win against time. Corporate interests, spawned by the desire to grow and turn profit, outpace the capacity of the Earth and its inhabitants to produce and meet the “needs” of a burgeoning society. The result of growth, a once desired outcome, creates another byproduct, only this one is not intentional and typically leaves one of the participants, or stakeholders, stuck with the excess waste from the process.

Students growing, developing, and maturing at varying rates experience this pressure to conform to a standard, an ideal, beginning in a school system built around normed timelines that are not appropriate for all students’ ability levels. By not considering variations in human capacity, moving abruptly to build a system to meet limited outcomes for some and not all students, the educational system is doomed to experience this entropy at a greater rate. When people recognize the result of their actions in hindsight, living less in a linear manner and more in a cyclical one, their actions and intentions have the potential to align and produce less heat and waste due to the intentionality and conscious awareness inherent in the process prior to the result. Bandura coined mastery experiences as a part of the four keys to self-efficacy.

To show mastery of educational system design that utilizes SEL to contribute to student achievement means to see the result, specifically academic and social-emotional growth of all students as student achievement. Educational system design focused on student outcomes for 21st

century college and career achievement must aim to enhance the thinking and feeling of all stakeholders by intentionally and strategically planning Social-Emotional Learning experiences grounded in Self-Efficacy Theory. Teaching all learners to develop Social Emotional Awareness by seeking new learning experiences to master, while seeking to teach a mastered skill to someone is a way to demonstrate a Mastery Learning Cycle (MLC). This process provokes sensory experiences that allow a learner to remain supple within a learning process.

The researcher found a large misconception or void inherent in current research pertaining to systems thinking and mindfulness, which is that adults are deemed adequately self-aware. However, living in a world seemingly built on visible evidence, technology, and deductive processes exclusively is eroding humanity and contributing to the social and environmental entropy the world is undergoing right now. Evidence of the short-sighted consciousness that all people are subject to experience right now has become daily news during the COVID-19 era. World-wide toilet paper shortages and other supply chain problems demonstrate the physical bottleneck produced by fear of inadequacy, while various stances on vaccinations prevent people from choosing to take the vaccine, even while poor mortality rates plague the world.

One missing element in legislation, policy, and system design is the accounting for human responses to change. By better preparing people as adolescents to believe in the potential of their own unseen ability, and directly connecting them to a process that continually orients them toward enduring and overcoming negative outcomes which self-efficacy was proven to do, the educational system can restore positive expectations and produce lifelong learners who have the capacity to delve below the surface and relate to one another to survive. Exploring the unseen, with intent to manifest and harness the power of human capability is at the core of

education. If the rush to produce, with intent only to consume, causes humanity to falter it will be due to a lack of awareness. If self-efficacy theory were taught directly, rather than academic and social experiences intended to produce adversity and build resilience in youth, then this strategic educational experience could operate like an intervention for students who have not had a common rite of passage. This would produce a standardization of social-emotional learning experiences as culture. (Bandura, 2002).

Producing a self-efficacy scale appropriate by age/grade level to drive the social-emotional development of students, considered to be a Social Emotional Awareness Scale could be normed according to Cronbach's Alpha recommendations. Additional research providing insight how to tailor lessons and target student needs based on the results of SEL surveys like the Panorama Education surveys could vastly improve the field of SEL, educational system design, and other systems angling to capitalize on productive human outcomes.

Educational system design that employs SEL is ultimately fulfilling self-efficacy theory as a collective entity when the cycle of improvement yields a greater outcome for all stakeholders. From the qualitative research conducted, ongoing themes of emotion, empathy, and positive feelings prevailed related to SEL and mindfulness in education. However, when humanity fails to plan for the unseen, catastrophic results occur, and given our current access to technology, are being exponentially explored and experienced.

From educational to corporate systems, the relationship between self and social awareness, a growth mindset, and self-efficacy is tantamount to the sustainability of the individual, the collective, and the natural environment in which everything operates interconnectedly. Analytic intelligence, or deductive reasoning, as demonstrated by the scientific method and all legal processes in modern international society requires forging tangible results to

evidence proof. However, when dealing with emotion, an intangible object, processes fall short of being able to produce sustainable methods of measuring and analyzing how intangible factors influence tangible outcomes. The time is now to further develop methods of measuring intangible factors that influence tangible outcomes, specifically as they relate to educational system design. Considering educational grading systems as an example, a passing score is deemed greater than 60% in most districts in the United States. If that same scale were used to grade the job of the participant district based on the self-efficacy construct from the Panorama Student Survey from any of the years data as obtained, their feedback would have yielded a grade of 'F'. In plain terms, education is failing to produce hope for its client base.

Educational System Utilization of Social Emotional Learning

The primary research question for this study was: How does educational system design utilize Social Emotional Learning (i.e., instruction and support to include self-awareness, social awareness, growth mindset, and self-efficacy) to improve social emotional wellness and thereby contribute to student achievement. The variables, concepts, constructs and sources listed in Table 5.1. have been evaluated by this mixed methods study to adequately answer the question.

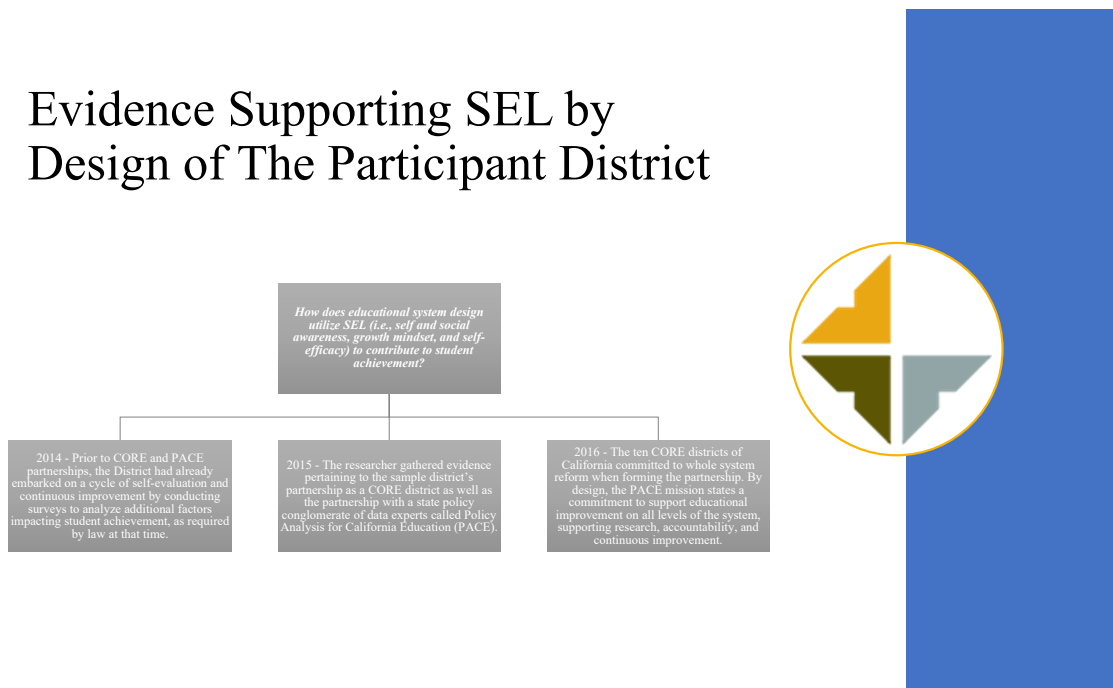
Table 5. 1*SEL Present in Educational System Design*

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Social Emotional Learning (i.e., self-awareness, social awareness, growth mindset, and self-efficacy) by design at school	Interview	Collective Case Study Interview Protocol (CCSIP) – FlipGrid Video Questions for Administrators (1 Principal and 1 Assistant Principals/Site) Parents (2/Site), Teachers (2/Site), Former Students (1/Site)
		Research	Worldwide Cat
Dependent	Student Self Report on Social Emotional Well-Being	Survey	Panorama Education Fall Check-in (Well-being Survey) 2020 Items 1-6; 10-12;15;21
	Former Students/Graduates Self Report on Social Emotional Well-Being And Personal Achievement	Interview	Open-ended Questions
Demographics	Racial/Ethnic Diversity Socio-economic status Language Background	School Site Data	California Dashboard (CDE)
Confounding variables	Teacher and administrator implementation of practices Variations in SEL approaches Targeted PD Facilitating SEL Emotional Intelligence	Interview	CCSIP; FlipGrid; Open-Ended Question

A quantitative analysis showed the educational system design of the participant district produced a plan to collect and analyze relevant SEL and academic achievement data. By following the continuous cycle of improvement and implementing current educational research and best practices, the participant district has effectively produced a system design formula in policy and practice which includes evaluating academic and social-emotional factors for student achievement. Academic testing has proven to be valuable for accountability, and now measurement of SEL provides a broader picture of student inputs and outcomes, which are being driven by an overall district theme of college and career readiness.

Figure 5. 1

Evidence Supporting SEL by Design of the Participant District



Source: Nixon, 2021

Specific details regarding how the district, site, and community accomplish effective educational system design inclusive of SEL that contributes to achievement vary greatly at this juncture. The researcher sought patterns within the educational system studied, from the district level to the community, that could explain or provide insight to variations. However, without a policy, standard, or mandate warranting SEL instruction the district is focused primarily on the measurement of SEL at this time. Policy has only gone so far as to elicit quantifiable means for identifying the presence of SEL in students. Currently in the United States, there are primarily only recommendations for how to teach students social-emotional skills. There is no universal agreement of when or by whom these skills should be taught, or even common agreement that they should be taught in public schools. Current school of thought has relied on the nuclear family unit to provide social-emotional learning.

Since this appears to be the early stages of SEL policy development and implementation, research and practice are also in a design phase. In depth analysis of qualitative data gathered from site-level stakeholders further informed the answer to the primary research question and provided valuable implications for practice for the participant district, and other urban districts facing similar challenges. Considering on a national level, law and policy implementation have stalled, it is in the best interest of the participant district, and any solvent district, to develop its own means for determining how to proceed to maximize the emotional intelligence of its members in order to accomplish the mission of the educational system.

Current unprecedented global concerns, political unrest, and climate change have all been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The drastic effects of this world catastrophe will continue to shape educational design, as it is shaping political landscapes and the financial world, all of which drive law and policy. There is sufficient evidence of a need for greater social-

emotional learning for all global citizens at this present time. The means to produce this new framework are emerging from current overlapping ideologies supporting the interconnectedness of all humans through a global commitment to paternity, environmental conservation, and reversing the effects of global warming spawned by human industrial development, none of which exclude emotional intelligence.

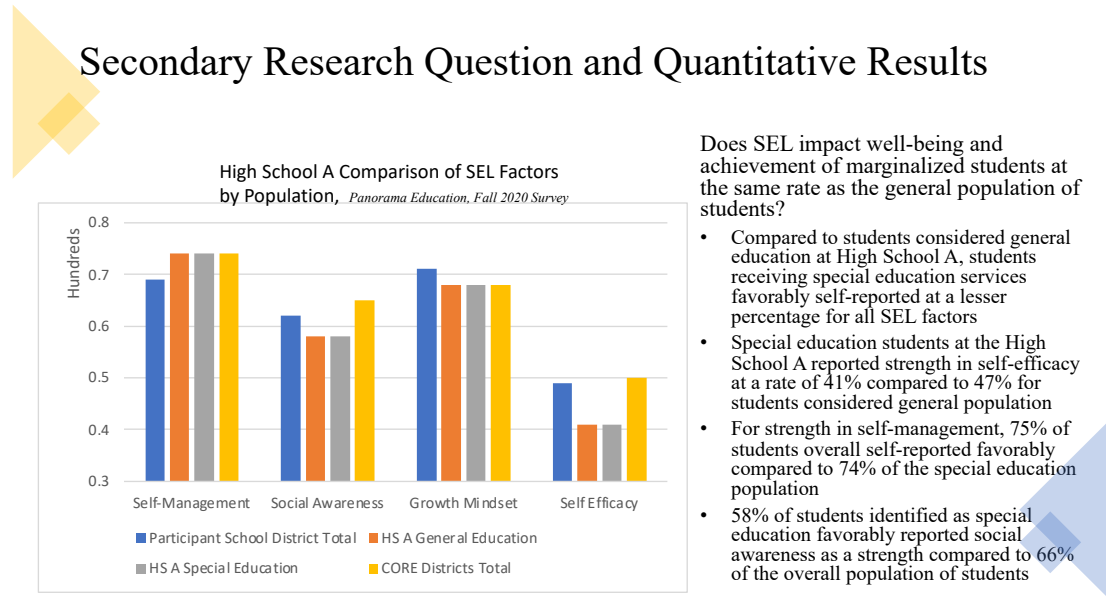
SEL and Wellbeing of the Marginalized Student Population

The secondary research question was: Does SEL impact well-being and achievement of marginalized students at the same rate as the general population of students? According to the Fall Check-in Survey 2020 administered throughout SSD, pertaining to Interpersonal Well-being, 61% of general education students responded favorably compared to 46% of students receiving special education services. That is a significant difference of -15%. In relationship to Personal Wellbeing, 51% of the general population responded favorably, while 48% of the special education population responded favorably, a 3% decrease between the groups.

In reference to the categorization of students labeled as English Learners (ELs), specifically Limited English Proficient (LEP), the difference between general education students was also substantial at -10%, so 51% of LEP students responded favorably to the interpersonal wellbeing survey questions. For personal wellbeing, the difference between the general and LEP population responding favorably was 3%. 48% of LEP students responded favorably compared to 51% of the general population of students.

Figure 5. 2

Secondary Research Question and Quantitative Results



Source: Nixon (SEL as Equity, 2021)

Student Responses to Subsequent Research Questions

A closer look at disaggregated data from the participant district sanctioned Panorama Wellness Survey questions (See Appendix A) administered during the Fall 2020 check-in identified twelve probing questions construed to identify correlations between tenets of SEL proven to contribute to student achievement. The first subsequent research question relates to the first four survey items. Responses for the SEL tenets self-awareness and self-efficacy are addressed in survey questions one through four.

Table 5. 2*Subsequent Research Question #1*

a) What is the percentage of students who report being self-aware by knowing how they have felt during the past week?

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Self-Efficacy	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Items 1-4
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Items 1-4
Demographics	Family Composition	Interview	Open-Ended Question
	Categorical Program Designation	Interview	
Confounding variables	Accessibility Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Survey items presented in questions one through four indicated 59% of students reported feeling happy, 32% reported feeling worried, while 61% reported feeling sad, and 45% reported being hopeful.

Table 5.3*Subsequent Research Question 2*

b) What is the percentage of students reporting to be socially aware by finding someone at school to talk to when they need help?

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Growth mindset Self-efficacy	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 5
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 5
Confounding variables	Student perception of help Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Forty-six percent of students reported being socially aware by finding someone to talk to when they need help.

Table 5. 4*Subsequent Research Question #3*

c) What is the percentage of students who report having a friend at school their age who helps when they need it?

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Growth mindset Self-efficacy	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 8
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 8
Confounding variables	Awareness Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Seventy-five percent of students reported having a friend at school their age who helps when they need it.

Table 5. 5*Subsequent Research Question #4*

d) What is the percentage of students to report experiencing a problem and having lots of ways to solve it?

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Growth mindset Self-efficacy	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 6
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 6
Confounding variables	Student perception of a problem and/or solution Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Fifty percent of students self-reported experiencing a problem and having lots of ways to solve it.

Table 5. 6*Subsequent Research Question #5*

e) What is the percentage of students self-reporting there was at least one adult at school who really cared for them?

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Self-efficacy (of adults at school)	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 10
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 10
Confounding variables	Awareness Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Seventy-two percent of students reported having at least one adult at school who really cared for them.

Table 5. 7*Subsequent Research Question #6*

f) What is the percentage of students self-reporting teachers treating them with respect?

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Self-efficacy (of students and adults at school)	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 11
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 11
Confounding variables	Awareness	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Eighty-seven percent of students reported feeling respected by teachers at school.

Table 5. 8*Subsequent Research Question #7*

g) How often do students report getting schoolwork done right away instead of waiting until the last minute?

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Self-efficacy	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 15
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 15
Confounding variables	Awareness Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Forty-four percent of students self-reported getting schoolwork done right away instead of waiting until the last minute.

Table 5. 9*Subsequent Research Question #8*

h) How often do students report having an adult available to help with schoolwork when learning from home?

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Social awareness Self-efficacy Emotional Intelligence (of adults at home)	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 19
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 19
Confounding variables	Awareness Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Forty-seven percent of students surveyed reported having an adult available to help with schoolwork when learning from home.

Table 5. 10*Subsequent Research Question #9*

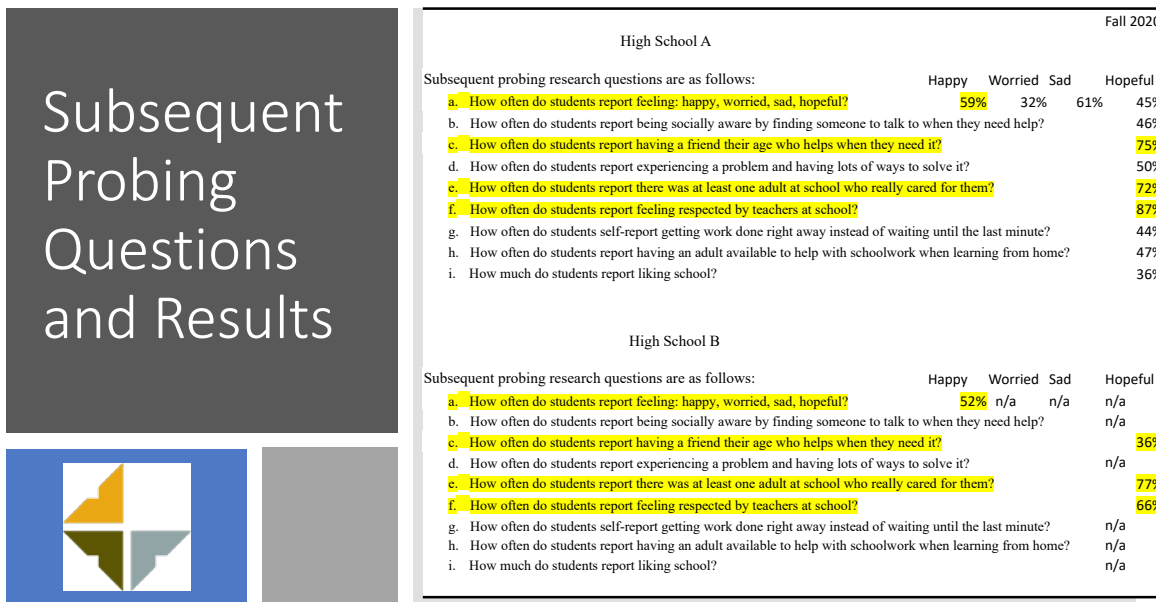
i) How much do students report liking school?

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Self-efficacy Growth mindset	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 21
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 21
Confounding variables	Past school experiences Emotional Intelligence (of self, peers at school, and adults at school and home)	Survey	Open-Ended Question

Thirty six percent of students reported liking school.

Figure 5.3

Results of Subsequent Research Questions



Source: Nixon, 2021

One notable point pertaining to the Panorama Education relationship with the participant district is the availability of data, findings, and ongoing research to support practitioners and all educators responding to the needs, academically and social-emotionally of students. This relationship is further discussed in “Implications for Practice.”

Summary of the Study

As school systems nationwide shift from the age of educational accountability and testing toward post-secondary outcomes for all community members, teaching critical thinking is instrumental to success. By prioritizing both academic and social-emotional learning, an educational system produces a dual focus on tangible and intangible outcomes that contribute to the growth and development of academic or cognitive intelligence as well as emotional

intelligence. In plain terms accounting for intangible factors impacting the essential purpose of a system, measuring the results of those factors, and then reflecting on adjustments to meet the current needs of the population served contributed to the greatest outcomes for the population.

The Wellbeing survey was developed by the participant district in partnership with Panorama Education as a customized means to account for the intangible factors perceived to be impacting student achievement. The goal was to follow the template used by the CORE Student Survey from prior years but improve on the quality of the data obtained by adding evidence-based prompts that were germane to their community and this current time. The Well-being Survey was administered in the Fall of 2020. The CORE Student Survey: Social Emotional Learning, Secondary Student Survey, was issued in the Spring of 2020 and the Spring of 2021 at two participating high schools in Orange County, California. The Well-being survey was tailored to gather information pertaining to student well-being as it related to the unique challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent quarantine that required a distance/remote learning plan. The Well-being survey targeted four areas: Distance Learning Environment, In-Person Learning Environment (prior to quarantine), Inter-personal well-being, and Personal well-being. For the purpose of this study the subsequent probing questions were derived exclusively from the Inter-personal and Personal Well-being portions of the Fall Check-in Survey.

Implications for Practice

Operating on a continuous cycle of improvement means constant change, which can be difficult, uncomfortable, and expensive. However, this is in complete alignment with the PACE mission. Since the participant district demonstrated a quantitative investment to their educational system design by seeking to measure factors of SEL that have been proven to contribute to student achievement, they are already implementing best practices and are on the cutting edge of

current educational research. The researcher posits that since the SEL framework can and has been organizationally implemented by customizing and providing the Panorama surveys to gather crucial information on academic and social-emotional indicators for success, the district should now move to establish a means to build self-efficacy in its stakeholders based on the results of the data for the past five years. Various stakeholders, from students to their families and site leaders to their staffs could access valuable data to discuss and analyze results to build collective focus and accurately identify community learning needs. Having access to pertinent data and functioning like a community to mine the information and formulate plans for prosperity advances the conversation of collective self-efficacy.

Figure 5. 4

Implications for Practice

The infographic features a blue and green background on the left with the Concordia University Irvine logo. The main title 'Implications for Practice' is centered at the top. Below the title are three circular icons: a stack of books, a person with a lightbulb, and a person at a whiteboard. Each icon is followed by a column of text.

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY IRVINE

Implications for Practice

- THE WAY WRIGHT PRODUCED ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PLANS SHOULD BE THE WAY EDUCATORS IMPLEMENT SEL IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS DESIGN, LESSONS, AND COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES YIELDING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE. "TO SERVE ITS PARTICULAR PURPOSE-A THINKING AS WELL AS FEELING PROCESS" (FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, N.D., P.1).
- THIS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE, DEEMED A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY, WAS DESIGNED AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION AIMED TO STRENGTHEN THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF ALL PARTICIPANTS. THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE SHOULD BE REPLICATED BY SMALL COHORTS AIMING TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY SELF-EFFICACY.
- EVIDENCE OF THE DISTRICT'S COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT WAS REALIZED THROUGH RESEARCH, AS WELL AS QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE FINDINGS. COMMITTING TO A SUSTAINABLE PROCESS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SHOULD BE NOTED AS THE MOST ESSENTIAL STRATEGY FOR REFORM AND IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES.

Source: Nixon (SEL as Equity, 2021)

There are various scales and sub-scales relating to self-efficacy to consider incentivizing current administrators, teachers, students, and community members to participate by taking periodically and then discussing the results in focus groups. This step in the process will serve to support a positive vicarious experience, one of the key factors of self-efficacy theory. With the results of the scales being strategically communicated, the step in the process becomes like the verbal persuasion and emotional feedback to spawn the utilization of the next key factor in self-efficacy theory, performance mastery.

The secondary research question, to determine whether SEL impacts the marginalized population at the same rate as the general population, produced findings showing a concise disparity between populations. Further analysis of disaggregated quantitative data, taken primarily from High School A, revealed that the marginalized group of students receiving special education services experienced lower levels of favorably self-reporting in all categories of SEL when compared to their peers at their school site. Specialized populations such as students receiving special education services and those classified as English Learners must be considered first when collecting data, distributing resources, and conducting research pertaining to student achievement because it is already known that their experience is uniquely different from the general population and data is already available to support their success, but more in-depth research is needed.

Recommendations for Further Research

The availability of alternative educational options is advantageous to an educational system because of the type of programs made available to students experiencing unique circumstances that would make a traditional educational setting or program less accessible. However, caution must be taken when systemically producing programs to ensure categorization

is not harmful to the population. The participant district has developed three alternative educational options programs that are proving to serve students effectively despite the circumstances they face, which then provides opportunities to graduate and move toward college and career success. The program in reference is High School B from this study.

The status of the researcher at the time of the study as a part-time service provider at an educational options program proved valuable for this study. The initial plan was to research two main high schools within the same district to compare the effectiveness of each site's SEL focus. However, once evidence of the district's educational design plan proved to be well engineered, the logical step was to investigate how effectively the system served all of its students across a continuum, and whether SEL could effectively be measured to improve student achievement in the district right now.

From one student enrolled at High School B assigned to the researcher's caseload to support, a qualitative experience occurred that proved to be instrumental in shedding light on the value of mentoring as a thinking and feeling process that builds self-efficacy, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the student pursuing a high school diploma and the researcher completing this dissertation benefitted from the regimented schedule of weeknight Zoom sessions to complete online coursework and earn a high school diploma. The high school student was in pursuit of eight classes to begin the 2020-21 schoolyear, which operates on a quarter system. The researcher was pressed to complete the SEL as Equity study and then finish composing the dissertation to fulfill educational doctoral requirements.

Sharing personal experiences to build a working relationship via the internet was challenging for all parties, which included the student's guardian at the time. Establishing norms for communicating in a one-to-one virtual setting meant being self-aware, trusting, and flexible

for both the student and the teacher. For up to two hours on some days, lessons were completed in the evenings, which meant the student had afternoon classes while the researcher had daytime job and family duties to complete. The relationship was strained on some days, but the level of personal interaction required patience. These meetings, often three times a week, began in the November of 2020 and went through May of 2021. Self-efficacy theory was being employed in real time by the researcher, the student, and the legal guardian who became involved to provide a home environment for a non-biological foster child.

Acting as an example, the researcher modeled self-awareness, social awareness, a growth mindset, and ultimately self-efficacy by sharing stories of the experience pursuing a doctoral degree and the process up to that point, working with three children while surviving daily through the pandemic. Sharing on a personal level provided a point of access that the student had not experienced with a teacher before this experience. The student's candid nature meant exchanging observations of this nature regularly, including being grateful for the relationship while balancing the anxiety of having to trust someone after experiencing such trauma, but needing that person to make progress on daily learning objectives.

The student's legal guardian at the time often remarked about the value of working with adults so closely in safe spaces and how that one-to-one access was the primary reason the student was willing to participate, contribute so much, and thrive academically as well as socially-emotionally. Conversations ensued between the researcher, the student, and the legal guardian when there were challenges impeding the planned meeting schedule. The student managed to get a job at a coffee shop and was now having to balance short- and long-term goals. The situation provided healthy means to forge ahead and tackle social (awareness) matters that arose, as well as fixed mindset issues and overall performance/mastery.

Taking the time to talk out issues that arose relating to the difficulty of the endeavor, the academic tasks, and the life circumstance at the time proved to be necessary to maintain the working relationship. Since there was no additional value of interacting, other than to support the academic and social-emotional growth, the student and researcher developed a productive routine, with norms the student abided by consistently. This mentoring routine worked well since academic work was assigned by a separate teacher and completed by the student with the researcher as a tutor. However, the storming phase did prove challenging for the student and her household. Given the amount of trauma the student faced prior to attending the educational options program, the negative emotional feedback experienced had to be addressed collectively.

From February to mid-April the student regressed to missing appointments and being dishonest about the reason for missing. Classes were being missed and the credits were not being earned at the rate planned to finish credit recovery in time for graduation. The student had a reckoning experience when work hours were truncated dramatically. From that point the message was reiterated that there was still time to finish, but that it would be difficult and very strenuous as a workload. The student did not relent from that point, having gotten a third chance to complete outstanding assignments for make-up work, as well as tests. There was a weekend when a Zoom meeting had to take place to meet a deadline for a language, and the student met the expectation. By the deadline to complete coursework, the student managed to submit nearly all assigned work and pass the language course with just enough points to graduate. The student proved to the researcher, and legal guardian that the commitment, effort, and efficacy were all within reach with an adequate belief system. Both thinking that the effort and motivation was enough and believing that there was ample ability to meet the expectations qualitatively proved self-efficacy theory for that specific case. Mentoring is instrumental to develop Social Emotional

Awareness (SEA) in all humans. There is always more to learn, and the “how” is as important as the “what.”

Conclusions

The researcher discerned clear responses from Community of Practice study participants that aligned with tenets of self-efficacy theory. These correlations provided a stronger basis for standardizing SEL curriculum across grade levels. According to self-efficacy theory, the four keys are mastery and vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional/physiological feedback. Student responses to the series of Panorama surveys all self-reported least favorably in the area of self-efficacy. Considering Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient of SEL factors by grade, self-efficacy is the last of the four factors to emerge, typically after 8th grade. Self-efficacy has been linked to resilience to adversity and stress, as well as higher work performance and educational achievement.

The argument for implementing a standardized approach to teaching social-emotional lessons, given a fluctuating high school graduation rate amongst other serious indicators of systemic plague like suspension rates, absenteeism, and low grades, is sound. With imminent threats to youth development looming, state educational agencies could implement recommendations for teaching self-efficacy theory directly to preteens, specifically students receiving special education services in grades six through twelve.

Policy recommendations should also aim to produce further research, at a minimum, designed to improve preservice programs and professional development of teachers in the area of self-efficacy. In addition to initiating teacher education programs pertaining to self-efficacy theory, the conscious, self-aware school district should continue to identify the clients it serves and build the community sense of self-efficacy.

Figure 5. 5*Qualitative Findings of SEL as Equity Community of Practice*

Source: Nixon (SEL as Equity, 2021)

Investing in the value systems of a community will require taking inventory of belief systems and identifying common goals that support those beliefs. Learning to value both seen outcomes, like academic achievements, and unseen growth, like discovering the empathy and compassion to yield to the needs of a larger collective are vital to slow social entropy which is most evident in all human systems at this time.

Currently, public efforts to roll out self-awareness, SEL, and mindfulness programs are funded through various means including both private and public funds. The political landscape does not bear enough support currently to forge common or neutral grounds, with much greater issues from civil unrest to economic insolvency pending. One possibility, given the educational funding formula in California, could be a privately funded endeavor with a commitment to form a partnership to research, produce, and publish a series of digital lessons, ultimately forming a

digital archive of exemplary educational materials and made accessible via an online platform. A consortium could then fund the maintenance and improvement of that platform. A district such as the participant district could effectively design and implement an elementary and a secondary program beginning with a pilot program across grade levels based on data obtained from the Panorama Survey.

Summary

Quantitative data collected by the researcher served as initial evidence supporting the participant district's commitment to a continuous cycle of improvement that included academic and social emotional learning factors. The educational system design of the participant district led the way in California toward a partnership which changed categorical funding. This was supportive of the participant district's effective system design centered around SEL contributing to student achievement. This undergirds the primary research question of this study.

The secondary research question, to determine whether SEL impacts the marginalized population at the same rate as the general population, produced findings showing a concise disparity. Further analysis of disaggregated quantitative data, taken primarily from High School A, revealed that the marginalized group of students receiving special education services experienced lower levels of favorably self-reporting in all categories of SEL when compared to their peers at their school site. However, that same group scored the same for growth mindset and self-management when compared to students in the other CORE districts. Additionally, students receiving special education services responded favorably and higher in comparison to their own school district in the area of self-management. The area of self-efficacy yielded the lowest percentages of students responding favorably overall compared to other areas for both general and marginalized populations.

The researcher considered the population of students in attendance at High School B, an educational options program, and the documented challenges of all students enrolled and determined the academic data from quantitative results would not be reliable or necessary to draw a conclusion to the secondary research question. Social-emotional factors measured in the Panorama Wellbeing survey were included for transparency. The status of the researcher at the time of the study as a part-time service provider at the educational options school site proved valuable for this study. From one assigned student, due to the uniqueness of the COVID-19 distance learning models, the qualitative experience provided an opportunity to implement mentoring techniques that proved to be of high value in supporting the student's completion of graduation requirements. Both the student and legal guardian reflected positively about the experience and informed the researcher that high school graduation would not have happened without the one-to-one help and guidance. If this study were replicated, small communities of practice could work to identify students, teachers, parents, and staff members, who could benefit from each other's strengths and weaknesses, given they were grouped based on that SEL data.

Regarding qualitative findings, the researcher discerned clear responses from participants that aligned with tenets of self-efficacy theory. These correlations provide a stronger basis for standardizing SEL curriculum across grade levels. Self-efficacy has been linked to resilience to adversity and stress, as well as higher work performance and educational achievement. The argument for implementing a standardized approach to teaching social-emotional lessons, given a fluctuating high school graduation rate amongst other serious indicators of systemic plague like suspension rates, absenteeism, and low grades, is sound.

A district such as the participant district could effectively design and implement an elementary and secondary program beginning with a self-efficacy pilot program across grade

levels based on data obtained from the Panorama Survey. Although the focal point while additional research on students is being conducted should be current educators. With a mental health crisis bearing down because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the onus must be on public health and government officials to enact additional legislation to counterbalance the negative effects of this current situation. Educators are a front line of protection for students and their community. However, educators must have systematic supports in place and easy access to resources. With that comes the even greater impending teacher shortage crisis that must also be addressed through legislation in order to attract talent and build up human resource that lacks in the field of education.

Self-awareness to social awareness, in the context of what is best for the local environment – physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially, can lend itself to a community sense of growth mindset which can forge self-efficacy of a collective. Human and ecological survival depends on a conscious revolution, one that could benefit from both intuitive thinking and collective feeling to develop points of connection, collaboration, and community. The need for individuals to develop singular Social Emotional Awareness and plural Social Emotional Awareness is obvious, given the rate of escalating conflicts between civilians living in a free society, purporting to have values and comprehensive moral fabric.

To show mastery of educational system design that utilizes SEL to contribute to student achievement means to see the result, specifically academic and social-emotional growth of all students as student achievement. Educational system design focused on student outcomes for 21st century college and career achievement must aim to enhance the thinking and feeling of all stakeholders by intentionally and strategically planning Social-Emotional Learning experiences grounded in Self-Efficacy Theory. Teaching all learners to develop Social Emotional Awareness

by seeking new learning experiences to master, while seeking to teach a mastered skill to someone is a way to demonstrate a Mastery Learning Cycle (MLC). This process provokes sensory experiences that allow a learner to remain supple within a learning process.

By better preparing people as adolescents to believe in the potential of their own unseen ability, and directly connecting them to a process that continually orients them toward enduring and overcoming negative outcomes which self-efficacy was proven to do, the educational system can restore positive expectations and produce lifelong learners who have the capacity to delve below the surface and relate to one another to survive. Exploring the unseen, with intent to manifest and harness the power of human capability is at the core of education. If the rush to produce, with intent only to consume, causes humanity to falter it will be due to a lack of awareness. If self-efficacy theory were taught directly, rather than academic and social experiences intended to produce adversity and build resilience in youth, then this strategic educational experience could operate like an intervention for students who have not had a common rite of passage. This would produce a standardization of social-emotional learning experiences as culture. (Bandura, 2002)

Mentoring is instrumental to develop Social Emotional Awareness (SEA) in all humans. There is always more to learn, and the “how” is as important as the “what.” This is complementary of the notion expressed earlier, “things seen derive from those things that are unseen.” One additional, relevant expression is, “the end does not justify the means.” Finally, Rene’ Descartes posited, “I think therefore I am,” which is a powerfully deductive statement, that in my best opinion is fully realized when paired with this, “There can be no transforming of darkness into light and of apathy into movement without emotion” (Jung, 1948).

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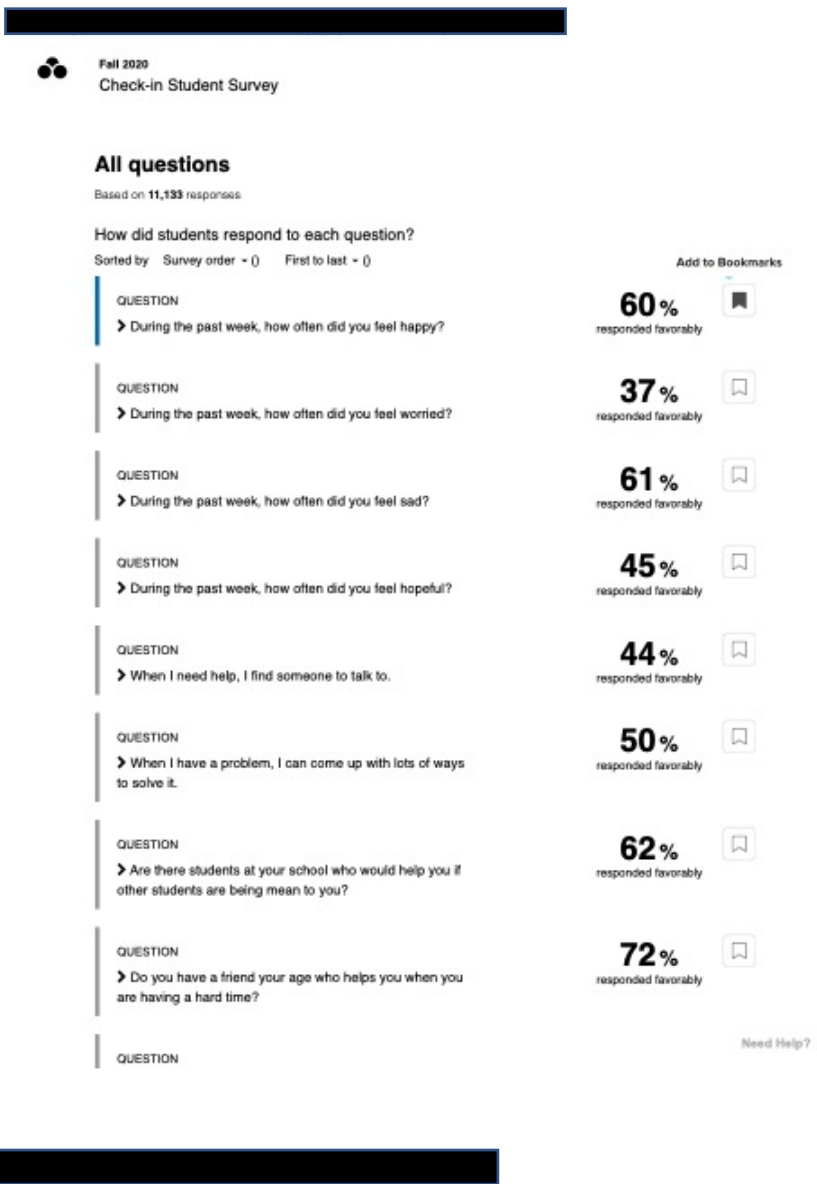
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Fall 2020 Panorama CORE Check-in Student Survey

9/20/21, 5:30 PM

Panorama Education



< Summary/Report/Student/497363?summary-period-id=19166&role=student
Fall 2020

Check-in Student Survey

All questions

Based on 23,120 responses

How did students respond to each question?

Sorted by Survey order - 0 First to last - 0

QUESTION	Percentage	Label
During the past week, how often did you feel happy?	60%	responded favorably
During the past week, how often did you feel worried?	45%	responded favorably
During the past week, how often did you feel sad?	63%	responded favorably
During the past week, how often did you feel hopeful?	47%	responded favorably
When I need help, I find someone to talk to.	42%	responded favorably
When I have a problem, I can come up with lots of ways to solve it.	46%	responded favorably
Are there students at your school who would help you if other students are being mean to you?	55%	responded favorably
Do you have a friend your age who helps you when you are having a hard time?	66%	responded favorably
QUESTION		

Need Help?



Appendix B: Participant Member Checks

Note: Participant member signatures were obtained digitally to ensure confidentiality of participant members.

SEL as Equity - Collective Case Study Interview Protocol

Participant Member #1

Interview Date: 05/14/2021-06/04/2021

Week 1 - Self Awareness

Question 1

How do your administrators utilize self-awareness to contribute to student achievement?

“I have been fortunate to have an administrator (my principal) leading by example with self awareness...every year at Christmas when putting together incentives for students.”

Principal spearheads a gift program annually at Christmas where teachers and staff donate for student gifts (ear-pods, giftcards, art supplies). We have a principal who displays compassion as evidenced by the response to another administrator passing away, with an announcement and heartfelt responses from members banding together within the community. In addition, throughout COVID, with the passing of yet another long-time staff member and a collective response including counseling and public grieving. The clear message is that help is available, and the admin generally cares for the emotional well-being of all, and provides reassurances.

Question 2

Can you think of specific examples where administrators intentionally encourage, offer and/or provide emotional well-being?

“(Our principal) met with us and assured us that at any point if you need to leave your classroom please call and I or another admin will cover your class.”

It is great to be able to have admin lead with compassion and believe in the capacity of working adult staff. The lead by example framework was in effect when admin provided SEL via self awareness, producing realistic expectations for distance learning. Families and students can also rely on the school for SEL and community involvement. Taking those needs into account and providing points of access for resources for families during the pandemic has been reassuring for all. Expecting teachers to have presentable platforms (Google Meet, Canvas) to teach and connect with students during this time of turmoil was reasonable. The principal leads by example, once again, when interacting with teachers by respecting our time and being straightforward about matters.

“I think teachers like to offer it (SEL and self awareness) at school as well. Again, I like to offer it to my students and be one of the cool teachers on campus.”

To extend myself to the general ed population to have/enable peers on campus to access my student population (students with autism) and be a bridge to help them assimilate. Extending myself to families and working in the community to make things better is why I teach. Many of the teachers on site share in that passion for contributing to the cause. Social awareness is modeled across the board.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Week 2 - Social Awareness

Question 1

How do you employ social awareness to contribute to student wellbeing and achievement?

“Social awareness starts with me as a teacher of all students, teachers, and admin.

I demonstrate advocacy for my students around campus. We create a safe space for all. My school site is a really good environment for all students. I help with decision-making by modeling the appropriate behavior, talking to other students to prevent mocking/bullying and just by listening.

Question 2

Would you say the people that you encounter (staff and students) and the community members demonstrate social awareness?

“It is a student with a disability, not the kid with autism.”

Teachers exemplify people-first language to ensure civility and so we don't give the disability more credence and power over a child that promotes a stigma. Many students want to be heard, in the same way adults do, and both must find a way to promote social awareness.

The parents of my students appreciate the social lessons and awareness others show for their children. It shows the importance of being unique and accepted, where the families feel good that their students are in my hands and safe at school. Having ways to tune-in, breathe, and relax is important. This is a huge part of success and student achievement for all.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Week 3 Growth Mindset

Question 1

How do you encourage or demonstrate a growth mindset to contribute to student achievement?

“You want to let kids know that, yes, their brains are always growing.”

Research shows that a growth mindset is brain-based and backed by evidence that the brain’s neuroplasticity allows for change. Making mistakes is more than okay. It is how we make progress over time.

“All of my students feel supported and that contributes to small gains.”

My goal as a teacher is to encourage and support their mindsets to keep striving. As educators, we have to make safe spaces for them to develop at their own pace. With my students I want them to feel supported when I am challenging them academically. That has to be reinforced or my students will shut down due to the difficulty of repetition without progress. Providing opportunities for students to rethink their own ideas, simply by rearranging the words used to ask them questions can really help to encourage them to try a task a different way.

Question 2

Have you participated in (district) professional development or other training on growth mindset?

“I am sure I have (participated in PD for growth mindset), with back to school preparation each year.”

It is nice to have a growth mindset, as students and certainly as teachers. Having a fixed mindset will impact how a teacher instructs students. I know there are teachers who do not believe in a growth mindset for all students, so the research has to be explained and provided for them to re-evaluate their own fixed mindset. Our school and district have a professional learning community that encourages all staff to pursue lifelong learning opportunities.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Week 4 Self Efficacy

Question 1

From your perspective, how does your school site promote self-efficacy as SEL that contributes to student achievement?

“I like to think as teachers, professionals, and admin we got in this line of work to promote and to help guide and nurture students”

We are going to walk them along, see them through to achieve their goals. We strive for that teachable moment, so as to provide more than facts but support for their overall development. Our site culture promotes college as an attainable pathway, and our students know that they will be held responsible for their own behavior, choices, and actions. We promote Santa Ana College as a viable option, with two years of free tuition. At the end of their four years (of high school), students participate in Senior Interviews where they discuss portfolio entries displaying their four years of favorite assignments and accolades. This provides a great opportunity for them to own their choices and take responsibility for their growth over the last four years.

“We’ve given them (access to) their belief in their own ability since middle school.”

After teaching them for four years to put forth the effort to grow, develop, and pursue their talents and learning capacity, students show their self efficacy and belief in their own abilities. Students are taught that they have to have the grades to participate in extracurricular sports, and performance endeavors (band, cheer, etc.). Once they meet these standards the growth and development occurs within these various fields of endeavor. Watching students execute an effective golf swing, for example, makes the pursuit worthwhile.

Even considering how I became a teacher, with other teachers nurturing my talent and allowing me to pick their brains, but ultimately expecting me to grow to respond to the challenges of teaching by taking charge of a class. Eventually earning a credential and becoming a teacher is

the example of my own self-efficacy, built on the support I received from master teachers guiding me through effective practices.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Member Signature: _____ Date _____

SEL as Equity - Collective Case Study Interview Protocol

Participant Member # 2

Interview Dates: 05/25/2021-06/14/2021

Week 1 - Self Awareness

Question 1

How do you experience administrators utilizing self-awareness to contribute to student achievement?

“A former principal of mine was a very self aware person, and he recognized both his strengths and weaknesses, he really believed in distributed leadership.”

Being a self-aware leader is about recognizing your strengths and weaknesses, knowing you can rely on your team, and who you can lean on and how to employ their strengths to improve student achievement. Additionally, giving others opportunities to become leaders and develop new skills through responsibilities while promoting goals and initiatives of the school. Sharing the role of leader means allowing others to participate and shine in their strong areas. Building a team's capacity occurs when the leader trusts in their team. Being self-aware means one does not expect things to be a certain way without creating opportunities. It is also about managing your responses. Being responsive rather than reactive in situations to meet the needs and expectations of the circumstances epitomizes self-awareness. A good leader listens and provides time to process, without judgement and not necessarily with a solution readily in hand. One of the best ways at a school site to strengthen your weaknesses is to build a team around you to address matters collaboratively.

Question 2

Can you think of specific examples where administrators intentionally encourage, offer and/or provide emotional well-being?

"When people ask me about my passions, about my family...people intentionally connecting with me makes me feel well, emotionally."

Administrators, staff, and community members developing real and caring relationships matter. Providing the time and space for these kinds of conversations must be embedded and intentional.

“Effective teachers who teach well and have kids learning every single day integrate social-emotional learning into lessons all the time.”

You cannot separate the child from the learning. All of their fears and filters have to be minimized inside the classroom environment so that kids can learn and make the connections. We learn best when we are loved and safe. We learn best when there is an emotional connection between the people we speak to. It is a way of thinking, being. It is a way you are mindful of students without judgement or prejudice.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Week 2 - Social Awareness

Question 1

How do you employ social awareness to contribute to student wellbeing and achievement?

“Everybody has a different degree of being aware of the social environment.”

It is really important to remember that every student who walks into my office has a different perspective and that is okay. It is my responsibility to somehow create an environment that embraces everyone where they are and allows them to feel safe. Creating that kind of environment as an educator is crucial to developing strong relationships with students, and with staff as well as the community. Demonstrating

social awareness all the time, for example by not judging students based on perception. Being aware of explicit and implicit biases. Also, when parents enter the office to assume that they have the same social awareness as I do, or that they don't have it at all. Being open minded and accepting is critical to my job and the success of my job.

Question 2

Would you say the people that you encounter (staff and students) and the community members demonstrate social awareness?

"It is hard for me to say that I can judge whether or not others in my direct community are socially aware or not."

In the context of the situation, a person may act awkward, but in another environment be able to shine. Social awareness is not static, so the context of the situation bears a significant value on that social awareness. Embracing all types of people, exhibiting care openly and unconditionally are goals to strive for to make others feel comfortable and accepted. That care demonstrated can support the relationship and the lesson when there is difficulty with social awareness.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Week 3 Growth Mindset

Question 1

How do you encourage or demonstrate a growth mindset to contribute to student achievement?

“When I was in the classroom, using the idea of UDL really helped to push the growth mindset philosophy.”

Multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression are required for all learners to be successful. So, utilizing a framework like UDL to provide access points with accommodations so that I don't give up on that process or skip over something that they don't understand. Applying a growth mindset means striving to make less of a learning gap by being willing to reteach and apply different strategies in order to get students to the point of academic achievement. One example was when working with students who were orally inclined but struggled with writing skills. By redesigning the lessons to incorporate dialogue, that strength of expression was improved to support their own writing skills. Learning in different ways is something we should inform students about and encourage them to improve all academic skills.

Question 2

Have you participated in (district) professional development or other training on growth mindset?

“I believed in a growth mindset all my life, before I knew there was a term for it.”

As a teacher, instructional coach, and admin, I studied John Hattie, who developed the idea that there is no limit to learning. My personal faith, ever since I was young I learned

that how wise you are, the words you use and the way you think are always changing, growing and developing.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Week 4 Self Efficacy

Question 1

From your perspective, how does your school site promote self-efficacy as SEL that contributes to student achievement?

“I began here as an AP during the pandemic in the 2020-21 school year and there has been distance learning since that time so I have not been able to observe personally in the classroom.”

Through conversations with staff, one common attribute aligned to self-efficacy is high expectations for all students. As a school site it is apparent everyone believes all students can achieve their best potential.

Teachers planning and collaborating effectively with administrators to provide intervention services and access to best practices for specialized populations is one way our site promotes self efficacy contributing to student achievement. Also ensuring

access to rigorous AP courses, dual enrollment at community college, and numerous extra-curricular opportunities bolsters self-determination and student achievement.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Member Signature: _____ Date _____

SEL as Equity - Collective Case Study Interview Protocol

Participant #3

Interview Date: 07/23/2021

Week 1 - Self Awareness

Question 1

How do you and other administrators (on your admin team) utilize self-awareness to contribute to student achievement?

“I meet people where they are and provide a pathway for them to advance.”

To me, self awareness means using my/your voice as a platform to spotlight and support student growth and achievement. Levels of self awareness through experience teach social norms and behaviors, where some people have and use more than others.

“I use indicators others may not to determine what is going on. If I see their shoes have holes in them...or when girls start wearing excessive makeup, that is maybe masking a problem. For me I wanted to mask my poverty, I did not want you to know I was poor. I went to LA High School... and got shamed for getting in the ‘county lunch line’.” (This refers to those receiving Free and Reduced Lunch, and how they were assigned to report for lunch daily.)

Such a lack of control contributed to me seeking to be in charge of people’s perception of me - controlling my story became my self awareness.

Question 2

Can you think of specific examples where administrators intentionally encourage, offer and/or provide emotional well-being?

“Our strategic system connects people and resources, but we communicate extremely well, and listen to each other carefully.”

When a teacher, counselor, or other staff need support the admin team provides well-being to teachers, counselors, FACE liaisons, and students...it is what we do.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Week 2 - Social Awareness

Question 1

How do you employ social awareness to contribute to student wellbeing and achievement?

“I guess we have to operationally define social-awareness, like it occurs as cliques form naturally within groups of people who share the same physical qualities.”

Self segregation is natural, and not a problem so long as a system does not prevent you from integrating. In high school, cliques form around interests. Therefore, basketball players on the left side and football players on the right side are common. Even kids who are loners are okay, but no one wants to be alone. Being anchored is being connected to people who have things in common. Giving students something to engage in teaches unity and community. They respond by participating.

Question 2

Would you say the people that you encounter (staff and students) and the community members demonstrate social awareness?

“We are not better, we are just fortunate.”

The Distinguished Grizzly Academy (DGA) is an example of an organization of like minded students and community members working to achieve academic excellence. Our DGAs, as an example, demonstrate social responsibility, collaboration, and empathy at a high level.

We invest in all members so they feel a part of the community. We allow them to know it is okay to be different, and be unified around a common cause.

“I did not uplift myself, I grew from the ground.”

Being intentional contributes to the community thriving, regardless of the differences. Fully aware of stigmas low-income communities face, we aim to provide valuable/meaningful activities that yield opportunities for connecting and supporting student achievement.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Week 3 Growth Mindset

Question 1

How do you encourage or demonstrate a growth mindset to contribute to student achievement?

“I really believe failure is not an option and there is no penalty for learning a little bit more.”

You have nothing to lose when it comes to education. Growth mindset equals no one wanting to not do well. So, if everyone wants to succeed, we have to figure out a way for everyone to get a little success. Success is addicting. However, people don't always know what a growth mindset entails. You do not always have to learn from a mistake, but if you happen to make one, then there is something to learn. Keeping the flexibility of mind to know you are always growing is the growth mindset.

Question 2

Have you participated in (district) professional development or other training on growth mindset?

“Oh yes, all the time...it is all theoretical.”

The problem with PD is that we have them but do not get to review results from the programs, curriculum, and strategies implemented. The cycle of inquiry warrants reflecting on the results, however that does not happen with consistency before the next implementation of a new program. My team focus is always on clearly, discernible, identifiable outcomes with benchmarks in place. We backwards plan as a rule of thumb. I implement backwards planning in my personal life to begin at the goal, theoretically, and move backwards to carefully identify the path and steps needed to ensure success of that final result.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Week 4 Self Efficacy

Question 1

From your perspective, how does your school site promote self-efficacy as SEL that contributes to student achievement?

“I think it is very simple, we make it very comfortable to ask for help. There is no shame if you don’t know something, and if there is shame, it will be in not asking or getting the information you need.”

Not only do we have a supportive system in place we make sure kids are aware of that system and they feel comfortable embracing the system. People have these programs, but what good is ‘checking in-checking out’, to say ‘I am here’? Checking on the child by asking how they are doing, what they need, or if everything is good seems more effective. Making them feel comfortable if they don’t have the materials to be successful, and teaching them to have the confidence to ask for that help.

ASB affiliated clubs account for more than 20 activities and resources on campus, which does not even include athletics, drama, and band. We (at Godinez) have the resources and work to produce an environment that encourages the individual to be a part of something greater than themselves to grow and achieve.

Member Feedback: _____

Member Approval: (Initial Here) _____

Member Signature: _____ Date _____

Participant Member #4

Interview Dates: 08/21/2021-09/28/2021

Week 1 - Self Awareness

Question 1

How do you experience administrators utilizing self-awareness to contribute to student achievement?

In many staff meetings, our principal uses his own personal experiences about his childhood to help encourage teachers to be sympathetic to students. He also likes to highlight his success by crediting his teachers, this helps to further motivate teachers to support all students.

Question 2

Can you think of specific examples where administrators intentionally encourage, offer and/or provide emotional well-being?

Although our school has high academic expectations of all students as a fundamental school, our principal makes it well known that their emotional well-being is a priority. Simply put, if a student is struggling emotionally, their mind will be unable to focus in the classroom. As such there are several opportunities around campus where students can

learn in a flexible learning environment, such as the Flex Lab, Library, or Grizzly Lounge.

Week 2 - Social Awareness

Question 1

How do you employ social awareness to contribute to student wellbeing and achievement?

As a product of the district I teach in, I highlight my own experiences to my students. At the beginning of each school year include a slide where I introduce myself to students and share where I went to school. Growing up, most of my teachers were of a different race or different sex, and I didn't identify with them. By sharing my background with my students, I'd like to think that I'm making a positive impact in their lives and that they can see me as a role model, someone who has been in their shoes, been through similar experiences and struggles, and still managed to get an education and have a successful career.

Question 2

Would you say the people that you encounter (staff and students) and the community members demonstrate social awareness?

Week 3 Growth Mindset

Question 1

How do you encourage or demonstrate a growth mindset to contribute to student achievement?

Being a math teacher I know that most of my students will have a negative perception of math or of their own abilities to learn math. In fact, most adults that I encounter tell me they were bad at math when they find out I'm a math teacher. As such, I keep a recurring theme in my classroom centered around the growth mindset where I constantly remind students that mistakes are ok, that mistakes help us learn, and that what is not ok is to give up. To help me reinforce this, I have a bulletin board in the back of my classroom that I reference regularly titled "Change your words, change your mindset." The bulletin board offers students alternate ways of thinking, for example instead of saying "I don't understand" I student can say "What am I missing?"

Question 2

Have you participated in (district) professional development or other training on growth mindset?

I'm sure I have, but I don't recall specific dates.

Week 4 Self Efficacy

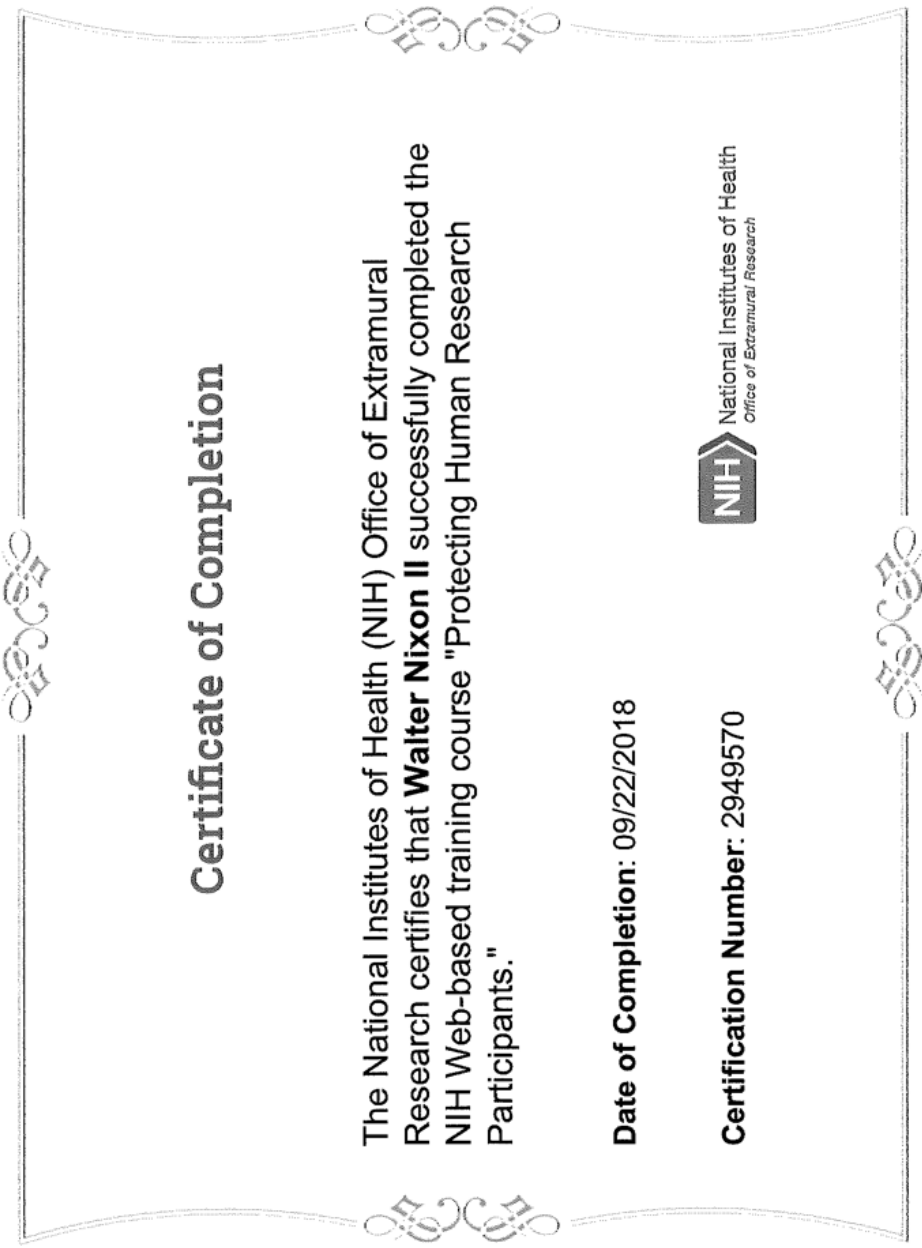
Question 1

From your perspective, how does your school site promote self-efficacy as SEL that contributes to student achievement?

I think our school has done an incredible job at creating a community where students feel valued and supported. There are several events that students can participate in to help them grow such as college nights, college visits to our campus, school-wide read

author invites, and other events by the higher education center and also our community liaison. Additionally, after every announcement on the intercom the principal ends with “remember students, if you need help, just ask.”

Appendix C: National Institute of Health, "Protecting Human Research Participants" Certificate

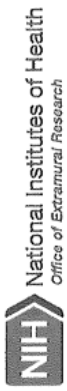


Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Walter Nixon II** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants."

Date of Completion: 09/22/2018

Certification Number: 2949570



Appendix D: Research Questions Matrix

Primary Research Question: How does educational system design utilize Social Emotional Learning (i.e., instruction and support to include self-awareness, social awareness, growth mindset, and self-efficacy) to improve social emotional wellness and thereby contribute to student achievement.

Table 1: Variables - Concepts – Constructs - Sources

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Social Emotional Learning (i.e., self-awareness, social awareness, growth mindset, and self-efficacy) by design at school	Interview	Collective Case Study Interview Protocol (CCSIP) – FlipGrid Video Questions for Administrators (1 Principal and 1 Assistant Principals/Site) Parents (2/Site), Teachers (2/Site), Former Students (1/Site)
		Research	Worldwide Cat
Dependent	Student Self Report on Social Emotional Well-Being	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Items 1-6; 10-12;15;21
	Former Students/Graduates Self Report on Social Emotional Well-Being And Personal Achievement	Interview	Open-ended Questions
Demographics	Racial/Ethnic Diversity Socio-economic status Language Background	School Site Data	California Dashboard (CDE)

Confounding variables	Teacher and administrator implementation of practices Variations in SEL approaches Targeted PD Facilitating SEL Emotional Intelligence	Interview	CCSIP; FlipGrid; Open-Ended Question
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Subsequent Research Question: a) How often do students report being self-aware by knowing how they have felt during the past week?

Table 2: Variables - Concepts – Constructs – Sources

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Self-Efficacy	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Items 1-4
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Items 1-4
Demographics	Family Composition Categorical Program Designation	Interview Interview	Open-Ended Question
Confounding variables	Accessibility Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Subsequent Research Question: b) How often do students report being socially aware by finding someone at school to talk to when they need help?

Table 3: Variables - Concepts – Constructs - Sources

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Growth mindset Self-efficacy	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 5
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 5
Confounding variables	Student perception of help Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Subsequent Research Question: c) How often do students report having a friend at school their age who helps when they need it?

Table 4: Variables - Concepts – Constructs - Sources

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Growth mindset Self-efficacy	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 8
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 8
Confounding variables	Awareness Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Subsequent Research Question: d) How often do students report experiencing a problem and having lots of ways to solve it?

Table 5: Variables, Concepts & Constructs

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social-awareness Growth mindset Self-efficacy	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 6
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 6
Confounding variables	Student perception of a problem and/or solution Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Subsequent Research Question: e) How often do students report there was at least one adult at school who really cared for them?

Table 6: Variables - Concepts – Constructs - Sources

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Self-efficacy (of adults at school)	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 10
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 10

Confounding variables	Awareness Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question
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Subsequent Research Question: f) How often do students report teachers treating them with respect?

Table 7: Variables - Concepts – Constructs - Sources

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Self-efficacy (of students and adults at school)	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 11
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 11
Confounding variables	Awareness	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Subsequent Research Question: g) How often do students report getting schoolwork done right away instead of waiting until the last minute?

Table 8: Variables - Concepts – Constructs - Sources

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Self-efficacy	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 15
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 15

Confounding variables	Awareness Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question
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Subsequent Research Question: h) How often do students report having an adult available to help with schoolwork when learning from home?

Table 9: Variables - Concepts – Constructs - Sources

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Social awareness Self-efficacy Emotional Intelligence (of adults at home)	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 19
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 19
Confounding variables	Awareness Emotional Intelligence	Interview	Open-Ended Question

Subsequent Research Question: i) How much do students report liking school?

Table 10: Variables - Concepts – Constructs - Sources

Variable	Concept	Construct	Source
Independent	Self-awareness Social awareness Self-efficacy Growth mindset	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 21
Dependent	Student Self Report	Survey	Panorama Education Pulse Survey 2020-21 Item 21

Confounding variables	Past school experiences Emotional Intelligence (of self, peers at school, and adults at school and home)	Survey	Open-Ended Question
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