Social and Emotional Competency Survey
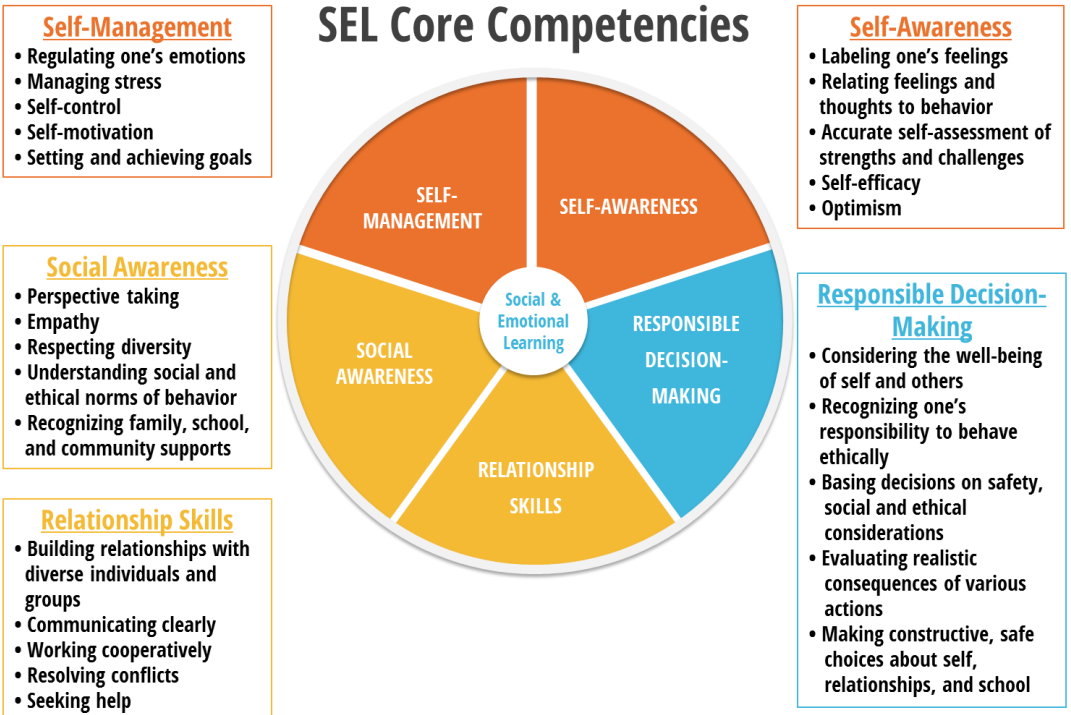## Relationships with AISD outcome measures
Research brief

Background

The [Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning](#) (CASEL)'s [Collaborating Districts Initiative](#) (CDI) evaluates the effectiveness of eight national Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs. CASEL provides ongoing support in the implementation and evaluation of SEL. Using [Second Step](#), [School-Connect](#), and [Method for Academic and Personal Success](#) (MAPS; a targeted School-Connect curriculum for 9th-grade students as they transition into high school) as curriculum to guide SEL implementation, SEL program staff in the Austin Independent School District (AISD) work with schools to integrate five core SEL competencies outlined by CASEL (i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making; Figure 1) into direct and indirect instruction.

What is the SEL competency survey?

As a participating CDI district, AISD administered surveys to assess students' level of SEL competencies in five domains (Figure 1). Students in grades 7 and 10 completed a 15-item self-assessment and teachers of 3rd-grade students provided ratings of their students' SEL skills.

Figure 1.
The five core competencies are integrated into AISD's SEL curriculum.

SEL Core Competencies

Self-Management
- Regulating one's emotions
- Managing stress
- Self-control
- Self-motivation
- Setting and achieving goals

Self-Awareness
- Labeling one's feelings
- Relating feelings and thoughts to behavior
- Accurate self-assessment of strengths and challenges
- Self-efficacy
- Optimism

Social Awareness
- Perspective taking
- Empathy
- Respecting diversity
- Understanding social and ethical norms of behavior
- Recognizing family, school, and community supports

Responsible Decision-Making
- Considering the well-being of self and others
- Recognizing one's responsibility to behave ethically
- Basing decisions on safety, social and ethical considerations
- Evaluating realistic consequences of various actions
- Making constructive, safe choices about self, relationships, and school

Relationship Skills
- Building relationships with diverse individuals and groups
- Communicating clearly
- Working cooperatively
- Resolving conflicts
- Seeking help

Source. CASEL and AISD's department of Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

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This report summarizes analyses of the construct and predictive validity of the SEL Competency Survey (see sidebar for definitions). Specifically, we analyzed relationships among SEL competency ratings and school SEL program implementation ratings, student level discipline data, attendance data, State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) performance in reading and math, student ratings of school climate, and 3rd-grade students' report card ratings of personal development skills. The accompanying technical report provides detailed results.

Who participated in the survey?

In Spring 2015, 4,873 7th- and 10th-grade students completed the SEL Competency Survey (Table 1). Nearly one quarter of the students ($n = 1,040$) took the survey online as part of AISD's annual Student Climate Survey, and 3,833 students took the survey on paper. Slightly more 7th-grade students with 3 or 4 years in SEL than 7th-grade students with 1 or 2 years in SEL participated in the survey. Conversely, slightly more 10th-grade students with 1 or 2 years in SEL than 10th-grade students with 3 or 4 years in SEL participated in the survey. Teachers of 3rd-grade students attending an SEL school were asked to provide student ratings. In total, 54 teachers provided ratings of 300 students, with each teacher rating one to six students.

Table 1.
In 2014–2015, 53% of students rated were from schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL experience, whereas 47% of students rated were from schools with 1 or 2 years of SEL experience.

	3rd			7th			10th		
	1–2 years	3–4 years	Total	1–2 years	3–4 years	Total	1–2 years	3–4 years	Total
Number of students	108	192	300	1,167	1,679	2,846	1,155	872	2,027
% of sample	36%	64%	100%	41%	59%	100%	57%	43%	100%

Source. **2014–2015 CDI SEL Competency Survey**

How did students respond?

Ratings of 3rd-grade students' SEL skills were favorable regardless of their school's longevity in SEL. At the secondary level, 10th-grade students rated several SEL competencies higher than did 7th-grade students (see technical report). With a few exceptions, secondary students' ratings for most items did not vary based on longevity in SEL.

Construct and Predictive Validity

Construct validity refers to whether or not an instrument measures what it purports to measure.

Construct validity on the **3rd grade** version of the SEL competency survey was examined by correlating teachers' ratings of their 3rd-grade students' SEL competencies with report card ratings of their personal development skills, school SEL program implementation ratings, and students' self-ratings of school climate.

Construct validity on the **7th and 10th grade** version of the SEL competency survey was examined by correlating students' self-ratings of their SEL skills with school SEL implementation ratings and students' self-ratings of school climate.

Predictive validity refers to whether or not performance on a given assessment relates to expected performance on an outcome.

Predictive validity was measured by correlating students' 2014–2015 SEL skill ratings with their 2014–2015 attendance, discipline, STAAR reading, and STAAR math data.

Although the same data were analyzed across grade levels, analyses were conducted separately by grade.

Was construct validity of the SEL Competency Survey supported?

Grade 3. Using a sample of 3rd-grade students whose teachers rated their SEL competencies and personal development skills, analyses were conducted to determine if students' scores were similar across these two measures. Not surprisingly, teachers were consistent in how they rated their students' SEL-related skills. Scores for most items were positively correlated across both measures, although some items did not overlap as much as others (Table 2, shaded in gray). Third-grade students' SEL skills were related to school-level implementation ratings of peace areas and SEL professional development/training.

Table 2.
Third-grade students' SEL competency ratings were correlated with report card ratings of their personal development skills.

Teachers' ratings of students' SEL competencies	Report card ratings of students' personal development skills									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Shows the ability to decide between right and wrong.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◗	◗	◗
Resolves disputes constructively.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◗	◗	◗
Takes responsibility for his/her own actions.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◗	◗	◗
Gets along well with adults.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◗	◗	◗
Respects other people's viewpoints.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◗	◗	◗
Follows classroom rules.	●	●	●	●	●	●	◗	◗	◗	◗
Responds appropriately to negative peer pressure.	●	●	●	◗	●	●	●	◗	◗	◗
Respects the property of others.	●	●	●	●	●	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗
Responds constructively to being corrected by teachers.	●	●	●	●	●	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗
Works well with others.	●	●	●	◗	◗	●	●	◗	◗	◗
Can control his or her behavior when angry, frustrated, disappointed, or excited.	●	●	●	◗	◗	●	●	◗	◗	◗
Expresses feelings that are appropriate to the situation.	●	●	●	◗	●	●	◗	◗	◗	◗
Joins peer group activities smoothly.	●	●	●	◗	◗	●	◗	◗	◗	◗
Accepts when things don't go his or her way.	◗	●	◗	◗	●	●	●	◗	◗	◗
Stays on task even with distractions.	●	●	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗
Understands his or her own strengths and weaknesses.	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗
Is able to explain why he or she said or did something.	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗
Is comfortable sharing feelings in a culturally appropriate way	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	●	◗	◗	◗
Responds with empathy to others who are upset.	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗
Notices and compliments others' accomplishments.	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗	◗

Source. Teachers' 2014–2015 ratings of 300 3rd students' SEL competencies and personal development skills
Note. Personal development skill report card items are as follows:
1 = follows directions in all areas
2 = makes effective decisions
3 = respects self and others
4 = interacts cooperatively with adults
5 = takes responsibility for own actions
6 = interacts cooperatively with peers
7 = manages emotions constructively
8 = sets and achieves goals
9 = responsible for schoolwork
10 = responsible for completing and returning homework

◗ significant moderate-to-strong positive correlation (r values between .40 and .60); ● significant strong positive correlation (r values between .60 and .80).

Orange shading reflects the pattern of strong relationships; gray shading reflects the pattern of moderate relationships.

Grades 7 and 10. Secondary students' ratings of their SEL competencies were generally unrelated to their school's longevity in SEL or school SEL implementation ratings, but were highly related to their ratings of student climate.

Was predictive validity of the SEL Competency Survey supported?

Predictive validity was supported at the 3rd grade level, moderately supported at the 7th grade level, and not supported at the 10th grade level (Table 3). Specifically, 3rd-grade students with high SEL competency ratings were more likely than other students to perform well on STAAR reading and math, and were somewhat less likely than other students to have disciplinary infractions. At the 7th grade level, students with favorable self-ratings of their SEL skills were slightly more likely than other students to perform well on STAAR reading and math, but no positive predictive relationships emerged at 10th grade (Table 3).

Table 3.

The SEL Competency Survey was more related to the Austin Independent School District's (AISD) Student Climate Survey than to other measures.

Teachers' ratings of their 3rd-grade students' SEL skills were strongly related to report card ratings of their SEL-related personal development skills.

Grade	Construct validity measure			Predictive validity measure			
	Personal development skills report card ratings	School SEL program implementation ratings	Student Climate Survey	STAAR reading	STAAR math	Attendance	Discipline
3rd	●	◗	◗	●	●	✖	○
7th	n/a	✖	●	○	○	✖	✖
10th	n/a	✖	●	n/a	n/a	✖	✖

Source. 2014–2015 CDI SEL Competency survey, personal development skills report card ratings, Student Climate Survey, State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) reading (raw scores), STAAR math (raw scores), attendance, discipline, and SEL school implementation ratings
Note. ○significant weak-to-moderate positive relationship; ◗significant moderate-to-strong relationship; ●significant strong positive relationship; ✖ no relationship

What conclusions can be drawn?

There was moderate support for both construct and predictive validity of the CDI SEL Competency Survey. Future analyses will replicate findings with a refined CDI SEL Competency Survey, and will explore ways to create a more parsimonious assessment of elementary students' SEL skills. Additionally, future analyses will follow students longitudinally to determine if responses to SEL competency items improve or change over time. Together, these analyses will help researchers in the field develop a more accurate assessment of students' SEL skills.