



STRENGTHENING EQUITY THROUGH SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

A Guide for Policy and Advocacy Leaders



»» EQUITY IN EDUCATION
PLAYBOOK 3 OF 5

INTRODUCTION

In every industry and business sector, securing a skilled, diverse, ready-to-work-and-lead talent pipeline is vital for short-term success and long-term sustainability. That challenge cannot be solved without transforming our education system to truly prepare all students to succeed. America Succeeds' Equity in Education platform pursues five systemic changes to ensure every student has equitable access to quality education and businesses have diverse talent and leadership pipelines for generations to come. Our work is focused on five pillars:

- Advancing equity in STEM
- Strengthening equity through social-emotional learning
- Recruiting and retaining educators of color
- Expanding equity in course access and options
- Achieving funding equity

We gathered BIPOC leaders, advocacy partners, policy experts, and businesses to develop a set of promising policies and practices emerging from across the country to improve equitable outcomes for students. Tapping into our partnership ecosystem's wide breadth of expertise allowed us to amplify leading voices in the conversation, build consensus, and identify impactful solutions to accelerate change and address these challenges.

At America Succeeds, we believe business is a powerful voice in crafting solutions that will dramatically improve the future talent pipeline. Our goal is to ensure business leaders have a seat at the table and can thoughtfully contribute to systemic change alongside other key stakeholders. There are multiple levers businesses can engage in to improve equity and this guide will focus specifically on strengthening equity through social-emotional learning.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



The Problem

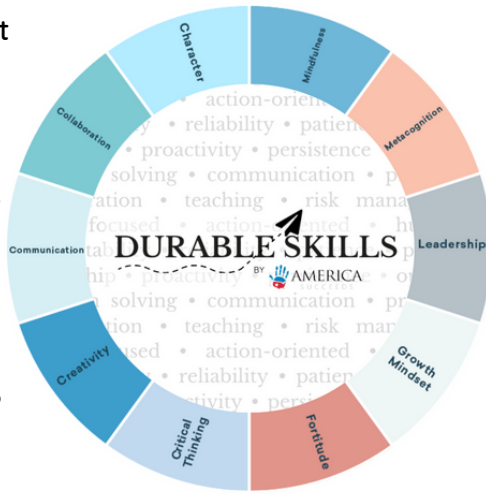
Social-emotional learning has gained increased attention over the last several years, supported by a strong research base demonstrating short- and long-term benefits for students. Studies show that SEL programs are associated with improved student behavior, improved economic mobility, and improved life outcomes. SEL is a key component of developing a strong talent pipeline as well; skills such as communicating effectively, showing empathy, being adaptable, problem-solving, and teamwork equip students for success in life and their careers.

Although all 50 states have adopted Pre-K social-emotional standards, comprehensive implementation across all grade levels is still lacking. The need for teaching SEL competencies in the classroom has only intensified as the COVID-19 pandemic brought on various levels of trauma and anxiety for many students throughout the country. Addressing students' emotional and mental needs as they have returned to the classroom has been a significant challenge that districts and states must address if students are going to progress. Luckily, many states are keyed into the fact that academic recovery is also dependent on student healing.

As states and schools begin their recovery process, implementing social-emotional learning into the curriculum will only benefit students, especially underserved students whose communities were most negatively impacted by the pandemic. States must get this right.

FACTS & FIGURES

Did you know that social-emotional learning helps students develop in-demand skills for the workforce like adaptability, reliability, empathy, self-management, problem-solving, and goal-setting?

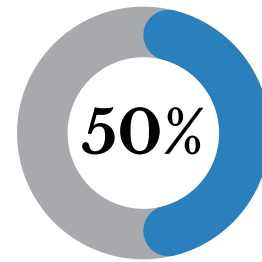


All 50 states have adopted Pre-K SEL competencies, yet less than half have developed and adopted competencies for grades K-12.

11%



SEL improves achievement scores by an average of 11 percentage points.



SPOTLIGHTS

Tulsa Public Schools: Aligning Core Values with SEL and Equity

Tulsa Public Schools has aligned its core values, commitments, and standards to align with SEL implementation and equity goals. The district has integrated school-level social and emotional learning and wellness initiatives, infused SEL into the district strategic plan, and formed innovative partnerships with leading SEL organizations. Tulsa is also strategically using its federal relief dollars to provide professional development opportunities for educators and further embed SEL into their work.

Washington Office of Public Instruction: Leading SEL Standards

The Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has made student social-emotional well-being a top priority of its reopening and planning guidelines. Equity has been central to the state's adoption of six SEL standards and 17 benchmarks. State policies clearly define SEL standards and set grade-level guidelines for districts to follow.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



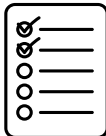
Integrate high-quality, research-based social-emotional learning practices into all aspects of teaching and learning throughout every grade level, accessible to every student.



Increase the focus through teacher preparation programs on developing teachers who have the skills needed to create culturally affirming environments, build relationships with and understand their students, and support all students' academic success.



Provide comprehensive professional development opportunities and supports for educators and school staff on culturally responsive teaching, positive classroom management, and reducing bias.



Reform school discipline policies that disproportionately affect students of color – such as 'zero tolerance' and exclusionary discipline policies – and keep them out of the classroom.



LEARN MORE

The following organizations are leading the charge on advancing social-emotional learning:



The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL):

CASEL works to make evidenced-based social-emotional learning an integral part of education from preschool through high school.



Committee for Children:

Committee for Children champions the safety and well-being of kids through social-emotional learning to fulfill their vision of safe children thriving in a just and peaceful world.



Education First:

Education First is a mission-driven strategy and policy organization dedicated to delivering experience-based solutions and results to all students – and particularly Black, indigenous, and other students living in low-income communities – so they are prepared for success in college, career, and life.

Leading research and resources on social-emotional learning:

- The largest study on the impact of social-emotional learning, **“The impact of enhancing students’ social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school based universal interventions”**
- The Collaborating States Initiative’s report, **“Preparing Youth for the Workforce of Tomorrow: Cultivating the Social and Emotional Skills Employers Demand”**
- The Education Trust’s report, **“Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Through an Equity Lens”**
- Committee for Children’s whitepaper, **“The Case for a Holistic Approach to Social-Emotional Learning”**

ABOUT US

America Succeeds is a 501(c)(3) non-profit education advocacy organization committed to improving educational opportunities, outcomes, and equity by harnessing the influence and acumen of the business community in accelerating systems change.

