June 9, 2008

To: Basic Education Finance Task Force
Fr: Sheryl L. Harmer, Ed.D.

Re: Support for Social and Emotional Learning as Part of a Basic Education in
        Washington State.
        Proposal from Representative Mary Lou Dickerson.

First, I would like to thank Representative Dickerson for the opportunity to join her today and
offer my perspective and support for this important proposal. Thank you, also, to the members of
the Basic Education Finance Task Force for your time this afternoon.

As a former teacher and teacher of teachers, school administrator, and community advocate for
balance in public education for nearly forty years I firmly believe there is no more important
work that we must undertake at this time for the well-being and success of the children in our
state.

While today I am offering my own perspective in support of this proposal, I would like to
acknowledge the numerous efforts and individuals within this audience and within our state who
have been committed, as I have, to this work for many years. I know I speak for others when I say
that we believe the timing is right and the opportunity is here to bring those efforts together under
this significant proposal in collaborative and aligned action across sectors.

What is Social and Emotional Learning?
Social and emotional learning (SEL) is generally defined as addressing five core groups of
competencies:

- Self-awareness—identifying and understanding one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths
- Self-management—regulating emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere;
  setting and monitoring progress toward goals; expressing emotions appropriately
- Social awareness—being able to take the perspective of and empathize with others; to
  recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences
- Relationship skills—establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships;
  resisting inappropriate social pressure; preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal
  conflict; seeking help when needed
- Responsible decision-making—making and applying decisions based on ethical standards,
  safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and consideration of likely
  consequences; contributing to the well-being of one's school and community

Why is it is important to integrate Social and Emotional Learning into the basic education framework?
Public school educators – teachers, principals, superintendents, support staff – deserve policies ·
that reflect thoughtful integration with existing programs, appropriate funding, access to effective
materials, and on-going professional training. They also deserve public support and public
understanding of the challenges of dealing with change while continuing to respond to current
demands and the daily needs of children, families, and colleagues. Those conditions are
assumptions underlying my support of this proposal.

I support this proposal because I share the deep belief – with earnest and effective educators
across all grade levels – that without balanced learning environments where students feel safe,
and supported, and seen; without equal accountability for the creation of caring, connected, and

collegial schools that we presently give for academic performance, we are failing our children and we will fail our purpose for schools. We must find a way to support the _essential_ work within the framework of a basic education and bring thoughtful balance to the rest.

Ultimately, learning requires taking risks – and taking risks requires a confidence that comes from an understanding of self and a trust of others, the ability to problem-solve and work in relationship, and an appreciation for diversity of thought, perspective and style. Good teachers and administrators have always known that the minds of children thrive when their hearts are full. Social and emotional learning isn't just about making school a good place for a child to spend a significant part of his / her life – although one shouldn't have to defend such a purpose in and of itself – it is, ultimately, about feeding human skill development in the same measure as academic skill development so that learning can thrive, that children can reach their full potential, and that our communities and culture can reflect a shared optimism born of collective strengths. It's about taking a prevention approach to the well-being of our world – beginning with our greatest hope – our children.

Rather than diverting schools from their primary academic mission, improving the social and emotional competence of students and the climate of schools advances it. The science is clear: Social and emotional learning fortifies students with the basic skills they need to be successful in school and more importantly in life. A growing body of research by neuroscientists, psychologists, child development specialists, and educators is telling us about the positive outcomes related to SEL programming in schools: Some of the proven results include:

- **SEL decreases behaviors that interfere with learning**

SEL programs can decrease high-risk behaviors (such as student violence and bullying, behavioral problems, unsafe sexual activity, drug and alcohol use) that interfere with learning. SEL helps establish learning environments where students are emotionally and physically safe.

- **SEL increases student engagement in school and helps students learn well with others**

Student perceptions of teachers' support and caring as well as positive peer connections are predictors of student's academic motivation, engagement, and performance. Learning is enhanced through social processes. Unless students have good social and emotional skills, the academic benefits of group learning can be minimized or negated.

- **Most significantly, SEL programming directly improves measurable academic performance and long-term educational outcomes**

Results from a recently completed meta-analysis of more than 700 positive youth development, SEL, character education, and prevention interventions show the dramatic impact that social and emotional programs can have in three major areas: feelings and attitudes, indicators of behavioral adjustment, and school achievement.

Youth show improvement in social and emotional skills, school bonding, prosocial norms, self-perceptions, positive social behaviors, and academic achievement and significant reductions in such areas as conduct problems and substance use. The gains include:

- 23% improvement in social and emotional skills
- 9% improvement in attitudes about self, others, and school
- 9% improvement in school and classroom behavior

- 9% decrease in conduct problems such as classroom misbehavior and aggression
- 10% decrease in emotional distress such as anxiety and depression
- 11 percentile point gain in achievement test scores

In another study, SEL programs significantly decreased the number of suspensions and expulsions while improving school attendance, students' attitudes towards school, students' grades, and performance on achievement tests – with scores increasing by the equivalent of 14 **percentile points.**

What's already happening in our state and in other states?
We know that there are numerous schools staffed by caring teachers, enlightened building and district administrators, dedicated school health care providers, counselors, psychologists, and support staff that promote social and emotional learning for students through formal and informal programs. The challenges those schools face are inconsistencies in external expectations, limited resources to address the complexity of children's needs, and the pressure to narrow the classroom curriculum to a singular focus in an attempt to meet accountability benchmarks.

The good news is that this proposal already has a foundation of efforts within our state as well as across the nation to build upon. Examples of that foundational work include:

The Washington State Department of Early Learning – paving the way by setting standards for early childhood professionals and caregivers that provide a focus on the needs of the whole child.

The Council for Children and Families – working from a Protective Factor Framework for strengthening Families through Early Care and Education that includes Social and Emotional Competence as one critical protective factor.

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction – moving toward a trauma-informed services model for schools. The summer OSPI summit – Compassionate Schools: Moving from Trauma to Resilience – will provide opportunities for school/community teams to develop plans to support K–12 students who are impacted by social/emotional barriers to learning.

Readiness to Learn – focusing on the removal of non-academic barriers to ensure that all children are able to <u>attend</u> school prepared to learn. Social and emotional learning programs can ensure that children <u>leave</u> school prepared for life.

There are also many organizations within our state that are leading the field through research and the development of evidence-based social-emotional learning programs such as the internationally acclaimed **Committee for Children** and the esteemed **Social Development Research Group** at the University of Washington.

Additionally, the citizens of our state have expressed their support for the advancement of social and emotional development in schools.

The recent **Seeds of Compassion** event in April – that brought together over 140,000 participants – provided the following recommendation from a cross-sector forum as the top-ranked priority for building compassion in early learning and education:
"Increase funding and establish strong public policies that support social and emotional learning for children and youth"

And, on May 13th, at the **Prevention Advisory Group Summit** – that was convened to inform the **Mental Health Transformation Project** in Washington State – the school-age group selected social and emotional learning as one of the top three priorities for action.

Nationally, Washington State has the opportunity to both learn from the actions of others as well as provide leadership for new models strengthened by collaborative efforts across sectors. Through the guidance and support from the **Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)** two states, Illinois and New York, have passed legislation requiring schools to address social and emotional learning through the adoption of Social and Emotional Learning Standards.

Illinois:
In 2003, passage of the Children's Mental Health Act required The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to develop and implement a plan to incorporate social and emotional learning standards as part of the Illinois learning standards. The standards were accepted in December 2004 and are currently guiding coordinated efforts throughout the state.

New York:
In 2006, New York State passed legislation to create a comprehensive, coordinated approach to children's mental health services that incorporates social and emotional development into state educational standards. In 2007, New York also introduced a law requiring the completion of a curriculum in the social and emotional development and learning of children as a condition for teacher certification.

CASEL stands ready to lend their learning and leadership to similar efforts in Washington State.

The Funding challenge:
In closing, while resource allocation and "affordability" is a challenge that must be addressed given the financial realities of our current economy, many believe that what we cannot afford is to miss the call for action that is right before us. There are enthusiastic educators, researchers, and concerned citizens waiting to support and advance this work. I urge your careful consideration and ultimate support for this historic proposal.

Thank you for the work you are doing for the children and educators of our state.

SHERYL L. HARMER, ED.D.
BIO SKETCH

Sheryl L. Harmer, Ed.D. has dedicated her career to the development of effective schools educational support systems, and organizations. Dr. Harmer is currently the Principal Partner of SLPH & Associates, a consulting firm specializing in social-emotional skill building, strategic planning, systems change management, organization development, and leadership coaching. She holds a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and school superintendent certification from the University of Washington. In her work, she collaborates with leaders in public and private schools; community and state organizations – including colleagues at the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) – to advance social and emotional learning strategies through evidence-based programming.

Dr. Harmer was formerly the Director of Program Development at Committee for Children – a not-for-profit organization based in Seattle, Washington with programs in over 25,000 schools and 21 countries. Through her role at Committee for Children, Harmer directed the process of translating prevention research into internationally acclaimed and scientifically proven classroom and school-wide programs.

Harmer began her career in 1970 as a Washington State reading specialist. She later served as a teacher in special education and regular classes at all levels, high school program administrator, principal of three elementary schools, instructor in junior college and university teacher preparation programs, and on a wide range of state and local professional advisory councils. Dr. Harmer's leadership work in public education has been recognized through numerous awards at the national and state levels including a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 1992, a case study site for Harvard University Project SUMIT (Schools Using Multiple Intelligence Theory) in 1996, and her selection as the 1998 NAESP National Distinguished Principal of the Year for Washington State.

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U.S. Public High Schools Losing 6,829 Students Per Day

Nearly 1.23 million members of the public high school class of 2008 will fail to graduate with a diploma. That amounts to a loss of 6,829 students from the U.S. graduation pipeline per day. With 900 students falling through the high school pipeline daily, California—the country's most populous state and the largest source of leakage from the graduation pipeline—accounts for one out of every eight nongraduates in the nation.

Class of 2008: 1.23 Million Students Will Fail to Graduate

Diplomas Count uses the Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI) method to measure high school graduation rates as the percent of 9th graders who will earn a diploma four years later. The center can project the expected numbers of graduates and nongraduates for the class of 2008 by multiplying the CPI value for 2004-05 by the number of 9th grade students enrolled that year.

4.18 Million
9th Graders in 2004-05
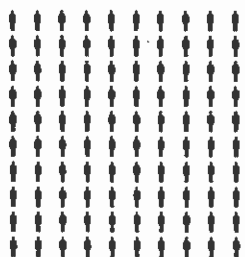
2.95 Million
Graduates in 2008

† = Approximately 42,000 students
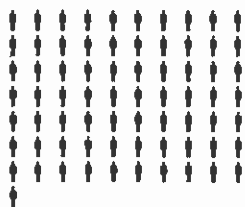
1.23 Million
Nongraduates in 2008

	Projection of Graduates and Nongraduates		
	9th graders (2004-2005)	Projected outcomes 2007-08		Total students lost each school day
Alabama	64,505	39,520	24,985	139
Alaska	11,934	8,069	3,865	21
Arizona	74,445	54,593	19,852	110
Arkansas	38,225	27,965	10,260	57
California	540,669	378,751	161,918	900
Colorado	64,383	47,743	16,640	92
Connecticut	44,634	34,870	9,764	54
Delaware	10,706	6,435	4,271	24
District of Columbia	4,570	2,633	1,937	11
Florida	248,943	151,444	97,499	542
Georgia	141,984	82,474	59,510	331
Hawaii	16,971	11,435	5,536	31
Idaho	21,217	16,263	4,954	28
Illinois	176,606	135,538	41,068	228
Indiana	86,901	63,981	22,920	127
Iowa	40,876	33,843	7,033	39
Kansas	39,054	29,011	10,043	56
Kentucky	56,661	40,501	16,160	90
Louisiana	58,589	32,069	26,520	147
Maine	16,759	12,945	3,814	21
Maryland	81,270	59,780	21,490	119
Massachusetts	64,321	48,023	16,298	91
Michigan	153,729	108,424	45,305	252
Minnesota	68,889	53,784	15,105	84
Mississippi	40,118	24,796	15,322	85
Missouri	78,089	59,752	18,337	102
Montana	13,147	9,956	3,191	18
Nebraska	25,129	19,998	5,131	29
Nevada	36,056	16,369	19,687	109
New Hampshire	18,564	14,320	4,244	24
New Jersey	110,862	92,388	18,474	103
New Mexico	30,134	16,297	13,837	77
New York	261,936	178,031	83,905	466
North Carolina	125,375	84,013	41,362	230
North Dakota	8,524	6,753	1,771	10
Ohio	157,212	119,355	37,857	210
Oklahoma	49,977	35,366	14,611	81
Oregon	45,612	32,126	13,486	75
Pennsylvania	156,169	125,591	30,578	170
Rhode Island	12,722	9,047	3,675	20
South Carolina	64,175	35,697	28,478	158
South Dakota	10,311	7,800	2,511	14
Tennessee	80,890	52,908	27,982	155
Texas	374,403	256,312	118,091	656
Utah	37,352	29,367	7,985	44
Vermont	8,528	6,839	1,689	9
Virginia	107,753	78,558	29,195	162
Washington	89,781	61,780	28,001	156
West Virginia	24,033	17,503	6,530	36
Wisconsin	76,042	61,178	14,864	83
Wyoming	7,219	5,358	1,861	10
U.S.	4,176,954	2,947,677	1,229,277	6,829

Eye on Research

Social-Skills Programs Found to Yield Gains in Academic Subjects

By Debra Viadero

New York

A forthcoming research review offers some counterintuitive advice for educators: Take time out of the curriculum to teach students to manage their emotions and to practice empathy, caring, and cooperation—and their academic achievement could improve in the bargain.

The new findings, discussed last week at a national forum here on social and emotional learning, are based on a not-yet-published analysis of 207 studies of school-based programs designed to foster children's social and emotional skills.

"In the past, when people would say, 'You're taking away from academic time for these programs,' we would say, 'Well, it's not going to hurt learning,' " said Roger P. Weissberg, the president of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, or CASEL, the Chicago-based group that sponsored the four-year study. "What we find now is that when you have these programs, academics improve."

The results come at what some see as a critical juncture in the movement to promote social and emotional learning. Research findings in education and other fields, such as brain science, seem to be converging on the benefits of such instruction, and programs based on the concept have a small but growing presence in schools.

One state, Illinois, has set down standards for teaching the subject. Another, New York, is developing voluntary guidelines for teaching students social and emotional skills. Lessons in social and emotional learning are also taught in some districts, from New Haven, Conn., to Anchorage, Alaska.

Some advocates of social and emotional learning contend that one roadblock to more widespread implementation of their programs is the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which has put new pressure on schools to raise test scores in core subjects and narrowed the curricular focus in some schools.

But the nearly 6-year-old law also calls on educators to employ "scientifically based" educational practices, and leaders of the movement for social and emotional learning hope the new findings will give their programs a more solid footing in schools nationwide.

"This research confirms what a lot of us have been saying for years," said Dr. James P. Comer, the Yale University psychologist best known for developing the Comer School Development Project, a model for improving the social, emotional, and academic outcomes of urban schoolchildren. "It's almost counterintuitive for some people to believe that it's about how you treat kids."

207 Studies Analyzed

For their analysis, the CASEL researchers sifted through 700 studies on a broad range of school-based programs aimed at honing students' social and emotional skills. Such programs might include, for instance, character education lessons, anti-bullying efforts, drug-abuse-prevention programs, or conflict-resolution training.

Out of that hodgepodge, the researchers culled 207 studies that met their criteria for inclusion in the analysis. The studies had to involve typical students ages 5 to 18, and use a control group of students, so that any gains could be compared against those that students might be expected to make under normal circumstances.

Just under half the studies also went a step further and randomly assigned students to either the experimental or the comparison group.

Strong Effects Found

Across the board, the researchers found, the programs did what they were supposed to do: After the lessons, the students in the experimental groups were better behaved, more positive, and less anxious than their control-group peers. The program students had also, apparently, gotten smarter, as measured by their grades and test scores.

As a group, those students scored 11 percentile points higher than the comparison-group students on a measure known as an "improvement index." The term, borrowed from federal education researchers, refers to the difference between the mean percentile rank for the intervention group and that of the control group.

"The impact here is almost twice that of studies on class-size improvements," said Mr. Weissberg, who is also a professor of psychology and education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He was a co-author of the report with Joseph A. Durlak, a Loyola University of Chicago psychologist, and other researchers.

CASEL is scheduled to publish the report in early 2008. Mr. Weissberg shared the findings at the Dec. 10 meeting in New York, which was aimed at charting a future course for the 13-year-old organization and the movement it helps promote.

"When kids are disaffected or they're not motivated and engaged, improving academic test scores is a real challenge," Mr. Weissberg added, "and that can't be done unless you address students' social, emotional, and cognitive needs."

Some Skeptical

The analysis also showed that the good effects persisted six months or more after students took part in the programs, although to a lesser degree. And the lessons were even more effective when they were provided by teachers, rather than the program developers or researchers, Mr. Weissberg said.

Some experts, however, continue to caution that such findings should be viewed with a dose of skepticism since they have yet to be published in a peer-reviewed academic journal.

"I have always been a bit skeptical of in-house studies, because it's often the case that the people who do the evaluations have a stake in the outcome turning out a certain way," said Kevin R. Murphy, a professor of psychology, information sciences, and technology at Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pa.

A critic of the theory of "emotional intelligence," Mr. Murphy was not part of the CASEL meeting. "That's not to say these programs can't work," he added. "But this is an area where the claims often run ahead of the evidence."

But Richard J. Davidson, a professor of psychology and psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, noted that the findings dovetail with his own work on emotion and the brain's structure and function. While studies have long shown that negative emotions, such as anxiety and fear, can interfere with learning, Mr. Davidson, who was named one of the world's most influential people by Time magazine in 2006, has documented that in people who undergo regular training in meditation or other practices akin to social and emotional learning, the brain circuitry actually changes.

"Social and emotional learning likely produces beneficial changes in the brain," Mr. Davidson told conference-goers here.

Though research is needed to better document the mechanics of such transformations, he said, "qualities such as patience, calmness, cooperation, and kindness should really now best be regarded as skills that can be trained."

"Not an Easy Sell"

Policymakers and educators at the K-12 level, though, can be reluctant to incorporate such teachings into the curriculum, said Carol S. Comeau, the superintendent of schools in Anchorage. Lessons in social and emotional learning have been part of the regular instructional program across that 48,500-student district since 2004.

"It was not an easy sell," Ms. Comeau said. "Some members of our school board thought it was really about self-esteem and helping kids feel good about themselves."

Test scores have risen districtwide since the changes have been incorporated. And now an ongoing study by the Washington-based American Institutes for Research suggests that some of that improvement could be due to the lessons.

Since 2005, David Osher, the lead researcher on the AIR study, has surveyed staff members and students across the district in grades 5-12 on measures of school climate—factors, in other words, such as the extent to which students feel safe and cared for in schools, whether parents are involved in schools, and the pervasiveness of student drug and alcohol use.

"When the school climate and school connections measures go up," Mr. Osher said, he has found that "students' performance on statewide tests in reading, mathematics, and writing also goes up."

Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards

The state has adopted standards for the social and emotional skills that K-12 students should be taught.

GOAL 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.

A. Identify and manage one's emotions and behavior
B. Recognize personal qualities and external supports
C. Demonstrate skills related to achieving personal and academic goals

GOAL 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.

A. Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others
B. Recognize individual and group similarities and differences
C. Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others
D. Demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways

GOAL 3: Demonstrate decision making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

A. Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions
B. Apply decision making skills to deal with academic and social situations
C. Contribute to the well-being of one's school and community

SOURCE:
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

The Collborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

www.CASEL.org

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Developed by
**The Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership
School Policies and Standards Committee
with technical support from the Collaborative for Academic, Social
and Emotional Learning (CASEL)**

What is social and emotional learning (SEL)?

SEL is the process through which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to recognize and manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations constructively. Although SEL is not a program, many available programs provide instruction in and opportunities to practice, apply, and be recognized for using SEL skills. Competence in the use of SEL skills is promoted in the context of safe and supportive school, family, and community learning environments in which children feel valued and respected and connected to and engaged in learning. SEL is fundamental not only to children's social and emotional development but to their health, ethical development, citizenship, motivation to achieve, and academic learning as well. (Elias et al., 1997— www.casel.org/projects_products/pastprojects.php, and CASEL, *Safe and Sound,* 2005—http://www.casel.org/projects_products/safeandsound.php)

Why is SEL needed?

There are a great deal of data indicating that large numbers of children are contending with significant social, emotional, and mental health barriers to their success in school and life. In addition, many children engage in challenging behaviors that educators must address to provide high quality instruction. Data from the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/SS/SS5504.pdf) indicate that:
- 6.0% of U.S. youth 14-17 years old did not go to school on one or more of the previous 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.
- 7.9% of these youth reported having been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during this same period.
- 28.5% of these youth reported having felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row during the previous 12 months that they stopped doing some usual activities.
- 13% reported actually having made a plan to attempt suicide during this period.

Data on developmental assets considered important to children's mental health and social/emotional development are also cause for concern. A 2003 Search Institute survey of 202 U.S. communities (www.search-institute.org/research/assets/assetfreqs.html) found that:

- Only 29% of students in 6th through 12th grade thought their school provided them with a caring, encouraging environment.
- The same percentage reported that that people who know them well would say they know how to plan ahead and make choices.

Data reported by the Illinois Children's Mental Health Task Force in its 2003 Final Report (www.ivpa.org/childrensmhtf/pdf/ICMHTF_FinalReport2003_1.pdf) state that:

- At least 1 child in 10 suffers from a mental illness that severely disrupts daily functioning tat home, in school, or in the community.
- 70-80% of children in need don't receive appropriate mental health services.
- 25-30% of American children experience school adjustment problems.
- 32% of children (including toddlers) at 10 Chicago childcare centers are deemed to have behavioral problems.
- 14% of students 12-18 years of age report having been bullied at school in the six months prior to being interviewed.

Providing children with comprehensive social and emotional learning (SEL) programs characterized by safe, caring, and well-managed learning environments and instruction in social and emotional skills addresses many of these learning barriers through enhancing school attachment, reducing risky behaviors and promoting positive development, and thereby positively influencing academic achievement.

Why is SEL essential to the school and life success of all children and youth?

Our emotions and relationships affect how and what we learn and how we use what we learn in work, family, and community contexts. Emotions can enable us to generate an active interest in learning and sustain our engagement in it, but unmanaged stress and poor regulation of impulses can interfere with attention and memory and contribute to behaviors disruptive to learning. Moreover, learning is an intrinsically social and interactive process: it takes place with the support of one's family in collaboration with one's teachers and in the company of one's peers. Hence, the abilities to recognize and manage emotions and establish and maintain positive relationships impact both preparation for learning and the ability to benefit from learning opportunities. Because safe, nurturing, well-managed learning environments are critical to the mastery of SEL skills, they too are essential to children's school and life success. SEL skills and the supportive learning environments in which they are taught contribute to the resiliency of all children—those without identified risks and those at-risk for or already exhibiting emotional or behavioral problems and in need of additional supports.

What skills do socially and emotionally competent children and youth have?

According to research, socially and emotionally competent children and youth are skilled in five core areas:

(a) They are **self-aware.** They are able to recognize their emotions, describe their interests and values, and accurately assess their strengths. They have a well-grounded sense of self-confidence and hope for the future.
(b) They are able to **manage their emotions and behavior.** They are able to manage stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles. They can set and monitor progress toward the achievement of personal and academic goals and express their emotions appropriately in a wide range of situations.
(c) They are **socially aware.** They are able to take the perspective of and empathize with others and recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences. They are able to seek out and appropriately use family, school, and community resources in age-appropriate ways.
(d) They have good **relationship skills.** They can establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation. They resist inappropriate social pressure; constructively prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflict; and seek and provide help when needed.
(e) They demonstrate **responsible decision making** at school, at home, and in the community. In making decisions, they consider ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, respect for others, and the likely consequences of various courses of action. They apply these decision-making skills in academic and social situations and are motivated to contribute to the well-being of their schools and communities (CASEL, *Safe and Sound*, 2005—http://www.casel.org/projects_products/safeandsound.php).

How is SEL related to other youth development and prevention initiatives?

SEL addresses the social and emotional variables that place youth at risk for school failure (e.g., lack of attachment to a significant adult, inability to regulate emotions) or promote school success (e.g., ability to empathize with and work with others, effective conflict resolution skills). In addressing these variables SEL provides educators with a common language and framework to organize their activities, thus overcoming fragmentation, minimizing competition for resources, and undermining program effectiveness. Many examples illustrate this link between SEL and other youth development and prevention initiatives. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is being used by many Illinois schools as the common basis for their discipline system, and educators are exploring how it relates to the universal programming being implemented to address the SEL standards. Another example is character education, for which SEL can provide an essential skill foundation for achieving positive outcomes such as responsible and respectful behavior. Similarly, service-learning opportunities provide ideal situations for applying SEL skills, while these skills also enhance the quality of service-learning experiences. In health education and promotion classes, SEL skills provide a coordinating framework for addressing the risk and protective factors shared by many health conditions. (CASEL, *Safe and Sound*, 2005— http://www.casel.org/projects_products/safeandsound.php).

Finally, coordinating classroom-based SEL instruction with services provided by student support staff can be especially effective in promoting the school success of children who have social, emotional, and mental health problems that interfere with learning.

What are the components of effective school-wide SEL programming?

Effective SEL programming includes
- Instruction in and opportunities to practice and apply an integrated set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills
- Learning environments characterized by trust and respectful relationships
- Implementation that is coordinated and reinforces classroom, school-wide, out-of-school, and at-home learning activities
- Systematic and sequential programming from preschool through high school
- Developmentally and culturally appropriate behavioral supports
- On-going monitoring and evaluation of implementation for continuous improvement

Effective SEL programming provides students with opportunities to contribute to their communities, families with opportunities to enhance their children's social and emotional development, school personnel (administrators, teachers, student support services, and support staff) with ongoing professional development, and community groups that affect the lives of children and youth (e.g., after-school and before-school programs, juvenile justice, mental health and health care providers groups) with opportunities to partner with schools (Elias et al.,1997— www.casel.org/projects_products/pastprojects.php and CASEL, *Safe and Sound*, 2005— http://www.casel.org/projects_products/safeandsound.php).

What empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of SEL programming?

Several hundred studies conducted using experimental designs with control groups have documented the positive effects of SEL programming on children of diverse backgrounds from pre-school through high school in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Some of the best reviews of this body of research have been done by Greenberg, et al., 2003— www.casel.org/downloads/AmericanPsychologist2003.pdf and Zins, et al., 2004— www.casel.org/downloads/T3053c01.pdf). Currently, Joe Durlak of Loyola University (Chicago) and Roger Weissberg of the University of Illinois at Chicago (www.casel.org/downloads/apa08.05.ppt) are completing a research synthesis of 300 studies of such programs. The research clearly demonstrates that SEL programming significantly improves children's academic performance on standardized tests. Moreover, compared to control groups, children who have participated in SEL programs have significantly better school attendance records, less disruptive classroom behavior, like school more, and perform better in school. The research also indicates that children who have participated in SEL programs are less likely than children in control groups to be suspended or otherwise disciplined. These outcomes have been achieved through SEL's impact on important mental health variables that improve children's social relationships, increase their attachment to school and motivation to learn, and reduce anti-social, violent, and drug-using behaviors. The research also indicates that SEL programs with the best outcomes are multi-year in duration, use interactive rather than purely knowledge-based instructional methods, and are integrated into the life of the school rather than being implemented as marginal add-ons. CASEL, *Safe and Sound*, — http://www.casel.org/projects_products/safeandsound.php).

What is the Illinois Children's Mental Health Act of 2003?

The Illinois Children's Mental Health Act of 2003 (P.A. 93-9485), based on recommendations from the April 2003 Report of the Illinois Children's Mental Health Task Force (*Children's Mental Health: An Urgent Priority for Illinois*), creates the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership (ICMHP), which among other areas was charged with developing and implementing a Children's Mental Health Plan for submission to the Governor. The Plan includes both short- and long-term recommendations to provide comprehensive, coordinated mental health prevention, early intervention, and treatment services for Illinois children from birth through age 18 (www.ivpa.org/childrensmhtf/pdf/ICMHTF_FinalReport2003_1.pdf).

What responsibilities do Illinois schools and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) have under the Illinois Children's Mental Health Act (ICMHA)?

Under the ICMHA, every school district in the State must adopt and submit to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) a "policy for incorporating social and emotional development into [its] educational program." Such policies must (a) address teaching social and emotional skills and assessing children's progress in acquiring these skills and (b) include protocols for responding to children with social, emotional, or mental health problems. All 879 Illinois school districts have already submitted such policies to ISBE (model policies at http://spr14.isbespr1.isbe.net:8765/query.html?col=isbe&qt=Children%27s+Mental+Health+Act&c harset=iso-8859-1&pw=80%25). The ICMHA also requires the ISBE must develop and incorporate into the Illinois Learning Standards social and emotional development standards to strengthen school-based practices to "enhance and measure children's school readiness and academic success." As are standards in other learning areas, the SEL standards should be age appropriate and assure that students' skill level increases as they grow older. ISBE is also responsible for developing an implementation plan for the SEL standards. SEL standards have been adopted by the ISBE, and professional development for educators—a key provision in its implementation plan--is being developed.

According to the SEL goals and standards, what must Illinois students know and be able to do by the time they graduate from high school?

There are 10 SEL standards specifying what students must know and be able to do by the time they graduate from high school. These standards support 3 broad learning goals as follows:

Goal 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success. Skills supporting this goal specify identifying and managing one's emotions and behavior, recognizing personal qualities and external supports, and demonstrating skills related to achieving personal and academic goals.

Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships. Skills supporting this goal include recognizing the feelings and perspectives of others; recognizing individual and group similarities and differences; using communication and social skills to interact effectively with others; and demonstrating an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.

Goal 3: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts. Skills supporting this goal include considering ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions; applying decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations; and contributing to the well-being of one's school and community ((http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm).

Based on the SEL standards, what are some examples of skills that children and youth are expected to have at various developmental levels?

With regard to *self-awareness*, children in the elementary grades should be able to recognize and accurately label simple emotions. In middle school, students should be able to analyze factors that trigger their stress reactions. Students in high school are expected to analyze how various expressions of emotion affect other people.

With regard to *self-management*, elementary school children are expected to describe the steps of setting and working toward goals. In middle school they should be able to set and make a plan to achieve a short-term personal or academic goal. High school students should be able to identify strategies to make use of available school and community resources and overcome obstacles in achieving a longer-term goal.

In the area of *social awareness*, elementary school students should be able to identify verbal, physical, and situational cues indicating how others feel. Those in middle school should be able to predict others' feelings and perspectives in various situations. High school students should be able to evaluate their ability to empathize with others.

In the area of *relationship skills*, elementary school students should have developed an ability to describe approaches to making and keeping friends. Middle school students are expected to demonstrate cooperation and teamwork to promote group goals. In high school students are expected to evaluate uses of communication skills with peers, teachers, and family members.

Finally, with regard to *responsible decision making*, elementary school students should be able to identify a range of decisions they make at school. Middle-school students should be able to evaluate strategies for resisting peer pressure to engage in unsafe or unethical activities. High-school students should be able to analyze how their current decision making affects their college and career prospects (http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm).

What instructional methods are commonly used in SEL?

Effective instructional methods for teaching SEL skills are active, participatory and engaging. Here are a few examples:

- Young children can to be taught through modeling and coaching to recognize how they feel or how someone else might be feeling.

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- Prompting the use of a conflict-resolution skill and using dialoguing to guide students through the steps can be an effective approach to helping them apply a skill in a new situation.
- In class meetings students can practice group decision making and setting classroom rules.
- Students can learn cooperation and teamwork through participation in team sports and games.
- Students deepen their understanding of a current or historical event by applying to it a set of questions based on a problem-solving model.
- Cross-age mentoring, in which a younger student is paired with an older one, can be effective in building self-confidence, a sense of belonging, and enhancing academic skills.
- Having one member of a pair describe a situation to his partner and having the partner repeat what he or she heard is an effective tool in teaching reflective listening.

What are some specific examples of learning outcomes directed toward meeting the new SEL standards?

In addition to goals, standards, and benchmarks, the ISBE website includes performance descriptors for each standard at each of 10 grade levels with over 600 descriptors in all. These descriptors provide educators with examples of very specific learning outcomes that teachers can use in developing lessons aligned with specific standards at specific grade levels. Examples of descriptors that support each of the standards can be found at http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/descriptors.htm.

What are the key steps in implementing school-wide SEL?

Implementing school-wide SEL involves 10 key steps that take school teams from planning to implementation. These steps are summarized in CASEL's *Sustainable Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Implementation Guide and Toolkit* at http://www.casel.org/about_casel/toolkit2.php. The 10 implementation steps are:
- Principal commits to school-wide SEL
- Engage stakeholders and form steering committee
- Develop and articulate shared vision
- Conduct needs and resources assessment
- Develop action plan
- Select evidence-based program
- Conduct initial staff development
- Launch SEL instruction in classrooms
- Expand instruction and integrate SEL school-wide
- (10Continue cycle of implementing and improving

How should the effectiveness of SEL programming be evaluated?

To determine effectiveness, educators must keep two considerations in mind: (1) Getting positive program outcomes depends upon high-quality implementation; (2) Measuring program impacts on school climate and student behavior and academic performance are key indicators of its

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effectiveness. One tool for monitoring SEL implementation is CASEL's Practice Rubric for School-wide Implementation, which is listed in the resources below. The Rubric helps school districts look at what implementation supports they currently have in place and helps them identify next steps they might take to further their implementation. Other evaluation tools can be found on CASEL's website (http://www.casel.org/sel_resources/assessment2.php) and in *Sustainable Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Implementation Guide and Toolkit* at http://www.casel.org/about_casel/toolkit2.php.

What steps is ISBE taking to support implementation of the SEL standards?

All Illinois school districts have established policies for incorporating social and emotional development into their educational programs. ISBE is taking steps to help Illinois schools build upon, strengthen, and systematize practices that they may already have in place that promote their students' social and emotional development. Establishing the SEL learning standards provides an important foundation to guide and support Illinois educators as they enhance the social, emotional, and academic growth of all students. Five core activities have been highlighted in ISBE's plan to support implementation of the SEL standards: (1) ISBE is taking supplemental steps to establish informative, practical SEL standards, including posting a list of SEL readings and resources on its website and establishing classroom-based assessments aligned with the standards to help educators determine students' progress in meeting the standards; (2) raising educator and public awareness about the SEL standards; (3) working with the Regional Offices of Education to design educator professional development modules to support SEL implementation; (4) promoting high-quality school and district implementation and sustainability; and (5) conducting ongoing evaluations of progress in implementing the SEL standards and offering recommendations to support continuous improvement of this initiative.

Why is it important to use an evaluated, evidence-based SEL curriculum?

Many available SEL programs have core elements based on an underlying theory of how desired student changes are achieved. Such core elements closely align these programs with the Illinois SEL standards and are essential to their demonstrated effectiveness. Schools interested in implementing an SEL program are urged to start by familiarizing themselves with a few such programs, as reviewed in CASEL's *Safe and Sound*, 2005—
http://www.casel.org/projects_products/safeandsound.php). This will give them a better understanding of how these programs work and enable them to adapt such a program to meet the needs of their students and get buy-in from their teachers without compromising the integrity of its core elements. Educators who pick and choose activities and strategies from one or more programs run the risk of missing some of these core elements and as a result not achieving the desired results with their students. Such an approach also may contribute to further programmatic fragmentation or result in conflicts with other programs already in place. Using a well-designed and evaluated program is also much less work for educators than creating their own program from pieces of existing programs.

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With the increased pressure to meet annual academic progress goals under NCLB, how can schools find the time to implement SEL?

There is a growing research base indicating that SEL programming improves student achievement and behavior. Children's emotions affect what and how they learn. Because SEL reduces distractions and barriers to learning, it results in fewer classroom disruptions. Instruction that does not explicitly address children's social and emotional needs may produce short-term gains in test scores, but is unlikely to result in sustained gains. By improving children's motivation to learn, time on task, and interpersonal skills, SEL is more likely to produce long-term improvements in their academic achievement.

What can principals do to address the new SEL standards?

As the primary leader in a local school, principals have a major responsibility for implementing SEL programming to address the new SEL standards by.

- Indicating to school personnel and families that they are committed to school-wide SEL as a priority
- Developing and articulating a shared vision of their students' social, emotional, and academic development
- Assuring that all teaching and non-teaching staff understand the SEL standards and their district's SEL policy
- Supporting completion of a school-wide needs and resources assessment
- Creating opportunities for teachers and support staff to participant in development of an action plan for SEL implementation
- Assuring that all staff members have initial and on-going professional development and support for implementing programming that addresses the SEL standards and policy
- Making sufficient resources available for implementing the SEL action plan
- Involving others in exercising school leadership functions and decision making
- Modeling win-win resolutions to conflict

What can teachers do to promote SEL?

In addition to providing instruction in social and emotional skills, teachers' involvement in promoting SEL standards goes beyond the classroom and includes the following:
- Participating on a school team or committee that selects an SEL program and oversees the implementation and evaluation of SEL activities
- Communicating regularly with students' families about SEL classroom activities to encourage reinforcement of SEL lessons at home.
- Modeling and providing opportunities for students to practice and apply SEL skills in the classroom
- Using participatory instructional methods that draw on students' experience and engage them in learning.
- Using SEL skills in teaching academic subjects to enhance students' understanding. For example, in language arts or social studies lessons, students can be encouraged to discuss

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how characters or historical figures did or did not express understanding of others' feelings or use good problem-solving skills.

What can parents to do to promote their child's SEL?

Parents can promote their child's SEL by learning more about their school's SEL initiative and modeling behaviors and adopting practices that reinforce their child's SEL skills at home. Examples of such efforts include:

- Participating in family informational meetings at their school to learn more about its SEL initiative
- Asking their child's teacher about how SEL is used at school
- Participating in their school's planning, implementation, and evaluation of SEL programming
- Participating in SEL trainings to become more familiar with SEL concepts being taught in their child's school
- Volunteering to assist in their child's classroom
- Participating with their child in SEL-related homework assignments
- Emphasizing their child's strengths before discussing what might be improved upon.
- Making a list of feeling words with their child and being an "emotions coach," encouraging him/her child to express feelings.
- Giving their children choices, asking what they can do to solve a problem and helping them identify pros and cons of alternative solutions
- Making sure that the consequences of misbehavior are fair and consistently enforced
- Encouraging their child to share and be helpful to others by participating in community service projects (http://www.casel.org/about_sel/SELhome.php).

What can student support services professionals do to promote SEL?

Student support services (SSS) professionals' knowledge of human behavior, program planning and evaluation, community resources, classroom management strategies, and the challenges to learning that students may be experiencing at home make them valuable members of an SEL steering committee. Their perspective on student needs and the resources being used to address these needs is essential to an adequate SEL needs and resources assessment. Since their work is not confined to the classroom, they also bring an important perspective to identifying school-wide SEL programming.

In small group work, SSS professionals can reinforce classroom instruction in SEL skills with students who need more practice. When conferring with parents on approaches to addressing learning challenges their child is experiencing, SSS professionals can use SEL language, which has been introduced in the classroom. When consulting with teachers on classroom management issues, they can assess problems and suggest solutions with reference to SEL skills and the characteristics of a safe and supportive learning environment. When developing and assessing student progress on IEP goals, they can relate these goals to specific SEL standards. SSS staff are also typically the link between schools and the community-based services that students may access. As such, they can extend the SEL framework to these relationships as well.

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Where can I find resources on evidence-based SEL programs and professional development for program implementation?

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has done a thorough review of 80 nationally available SEL programs. Programs were rated on how well they address criteria such as support for instruction in SEL skills, quality of professional development, and evidence of effectiveness in impacting SEL-related student behaviors. The results of this review were published in *Safe and Sound: An Educational Leader's Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs*, which is available as a free download from the CASEL web site (www.casel.org/home/index.php). ISBE and the School Policies and Standards Committee of the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership, with technical support from CASEL, are working with Regional Offices of Education to establish a statewide effort to implement classroom, schoolwide, and districtwide programming for SEL standards implementation. Materials available through this effort will include a PowerPoint slide presentation and user's guide for educators who want to provide an introductory overview of the SEL standards to members of their school community. Some of the links listed under SEL resources on the ISBE web page also describe evidence-based SEL programs and available professional development opportunities.

Key readings in SEL that may be of interest include the following:

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2005). *The Illinois edition of safe and sound: An educational leader's guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning programs.* Chicago, IL: Author. (http://www.casel.org/projects_products/safeandsound.php)

Denham, S. and Weissberg, R. P. (2003). In M. Bloom & T.P. Gullotta (Eds.), *A blueprint for the promotion of prosocial behavior in early childhood.* New York: Kluwer/Academic Publishers. (www.casel.org/projects_products/earlychildhood.php)

Elias, M.J., Zins, J.E., Weissberg, R.P., Frey, K.S., Greenberg, J.T., Haynes, N.M., Kessler, R., Schwab-Stone, M.E., & Shriver, T.P. (1997). *Promoting social and emotional learning: Guidelines for educators.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. (www.casel.org/projects_products/pastprojects.php)

Greenberg, M.T., Weissberg, R.P., O'Brien, M.U., Zins, J.E., Fredericks, L. Resnik, H., & Elias, M.J. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American Psychologist, 58(6/7)*, 466-474. (www.casel.org/downloads/AmericanPsychologist2003.pdf)

Osher, D., Dwyer, K., & Jackson, S. (2004). *Safe, supportive, & successful schools: Step by step.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West Educational Services.

Zins, J. E., Weissberg, R. P., Wang, M. C., & Walberg. H. J. (Eds.). (2004). *Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say?* New York: Teachers College Press. (www.casel.org/sel_resources/books.php)

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See the CASEL web site (www.casel.org) for additional SEL readings.

Where can I find funding to support SEL programming?

As a starting point, school improvement planning teams should examine how current prevention and youth development efforts could be best coordinated to offer quality SEL programming. Are current practices efficient? Is money being spent on redundant or ineffective programming? Can current programming be changed to make it less expensive, or can several existing programs be replaced with one more comprehensive effort? Can an SEL program that effectively prevents disruptive classroom behavior and promotes engagement in learning actually save time and dollars in the long run? Can the instructional day be reallocated to allow time for SEL professional development?

In addition to funds from your own district, some foundations and corporations also support such programming in the communities they serve. Several federal agencies sometimes fund programs related to the SEL standards:

- U.S. Department of Education (www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (www.cdc.gov.doc.do?id=0900f3ec801fd8f9)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (www.samhsa.gov/grants)
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/funding/funding.html)
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) (www.nih.gov/grants)

If I have a question about the SEL standards or need technical assistance, whom can I contact?

Staff at the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership, and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) are knowledgeable about the standards. Developers of SEL programs, such as those listed in CASEL's publication, *Safe and Sound: An Educator's Guide to Evidence-based Social and Emotional Learning Programs*, are also valuable resources on questions related to SEL.

INTRODUCTION

Design for Social and Emotional Learning Standards

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children develop awareness and management of their emotions, set and achieve important personal and academic goals, use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships, and demonstrate decision making and responsible behaviors to achieve school and life success. There is a strong research base indicating that these SEL competencies improve students' social/emotional development, readiness to learn, classroom behavior, and academic performance.

The SEL goals, standards, and benchmarks were initially developed by a broadly representative group of teachers, school administrators, student support staff, human services professionals, and parents with expertise in child development and learning, curriculum design, and instruction. After the standards were written, public comment and feedback provided the writing team with information used in revising the standards before adoption by the ISBE.

Criteria for SEL Standards

The standards and benchmarks were expected to meet the following criteria:
- Be clear and meaningful to educators, students, parents and the community
- Include an appropriate combination of knowledge and skills
- Be specific enough to convey what students should learn, but broad enough to allow for a variety of approaches to teaching and aligning curriculum
- Be specific enough to allow for classroom assessments to measure student progress
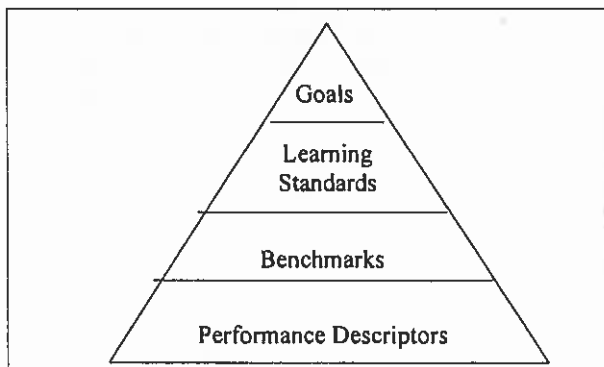
The SEL Standards Framework

Goals: The three SEL goals are broad statements that organize the knowledge and skills that comprise SEL content. Each goal has an explanation of why it is important.

Learning Standards: The ten SEL learning standards are specific statements of the knowledge and skills within a goal that students

Goals

Learning Standards

Benchmarks

Performance Descriptors

should know and be able to do. Taken together, the standards define the learning needed to achieve the goals, but each is general enough to apply to learning across the entire range of grade-level clusters. Standards are broader learning targets used to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Benchmarks: The benchmarks are learning targets that are more specific than standards. They specify developmentally appropriate SEL knowledge and skills for each standard at one of five grade-level clusters: early elementary (grades K-3), late elementary (grades 4-5), middle/junior high (grades 6-8), early high school (grades 9-

10), and late high school (grades 11-12). The benchmarks are not designed to be all-inclusive; instead they highlight important, representative features of each standard that instruction should emphasize at each grade-cluster. Benchmarks increase in developmental sophistication and become more rigorous from one grade-level cluster to the next. In addition, the SEL benchmarks lend themselves to being taught in integrated ways across the 10 standards within each grade-level cluster.

Performance Descriptors: The performance descriptors are the most specific learning targets that build upon the standards and benchmarks. They will be designed to help educators select and design curricula, classroom activities and instruction, and performance-based and other assessments aligned with the standards. Descriptors are also helpful in mapping curriculum or validating what a school or district has already developed and implemented. Performance descriptors offer a representative, rather than exhaustive, list of learning targets that provide greater detail of the specific SEL knowledge, reasoning, and skills highlighted in the standards.

Many of the SEL Standards can be correlated with the Illinois Learning Standards. There are many obvious connections especially in the learning areas of Health and Social Science. However, it is possible to integrate the SEL standards throughout all learning areas. Classroom activities can be designed to align with both the SEL knowledge and skills and knowledge and skills in other learning areas of the Illinois Learning Standards.

New York:

Directs the commissioner of education, in consultation and cooperation with the commissioner of mental health, to establish and implement rules and regulations requiring institutions granting degrees in education to require completion of a curriculum in the social and emotional development and learning of children as a condition of awarding any such degree; requires completion of such a curriculum as a condition for the granting of certification as a teacher.

Rationale:

Most discussions about American education have focused on the academic performance of students. Yet an overlooked and perhaps more vital component of education is social and emotional learning (SEL). And, the statistics are dramatic: 15% to 22% of the nation's youth experience social, emotional, and mental health problems requiring treatment; 25% to 30% of American children experience school adjustment problems; and 14% of students 12-18 years of age report having been bullied at school in the past 6 months. A child who comes to school anxious, afraid, or alienated is a child whose ability to learn will be significantly diminished.

Thus, there is growing evidence that suggests that a key component in meeting educational goals for children and youth, academic as well as social, and helping all children reach their highest potential is social and emotional learning. Social and emotional learning is the process through which children and adults develop the skills necessary to recognize and manage emotions, develop care and concern for others, make responsible decisions, form positive relationships, and successfully handle the demands of growing up in today's complex society.

Students of social and emotional learning have significantly better attendance records; their classroom behavior is more constructive and less often disruptive; they like school more; and they have better grade point averages. They are also less likely to be suspended or otherwise disciplined. Such proper classroom support can help close racial and economic achievement gaps. It is plainly obvious that such promising tools as SEL should be taught to prospective educators and used in classrooms.

This simple observation - that the children, who are given clear behavioral standards and social skills, allowing them to feel safe, valued, confident and challenged, will exhibit better school behavior and learn more - is of monumental importance as we attempt to improve our state's public schools. We should not have to choose between academic achievement and the development of character. Rather we should concentrate on both. The time has come to help restore balance to our state's classrooms and establish benchmarks for social and civic learning.

The government of Singapore prioritized social and emotional learning in their education system nationwide. Singapore students lead the world in technical brilliance--year after year they score at the top of international science and math competitions. Yet the international business community in Singapore complains that these same students are poor problem solvers, have difficulty coping with unexpected outcomes and set-backs, work poorly in the multi-racial work groups in which much of their work is carried out, and lack creativity. Singapore Ministry of Education scoured the globe for solutions-and decided their students needed SEL.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)
Standards and Benchmarks for the
Anchorage School District

KNOWLEDGEABLE. CAPABLE. CARING. RESPONSIBLE.
(I am, I can, I care, I will)

Rationale: Behind each word is an educational challenge. For children to become knowledgeable, they must be ready and motivated to learn, and capable of integrating new information into their lives. For children to become responsible, they must be able to understand risks and opportunities, and be motivated to choose actions and behaviors that serve not only

their own interests, but also those of others. For children to become caring, they must be able to see beyond themselves and appreciate the concerns of others.

The challenge of raising knowledgeable, capable, caring, and responsible children is recognized by nearly everyone. Each element of this challenge can be enhanced by thoughtful, sustained, and systematic attention to children's social and emotional learning (SEL).

When schools attend systematically to students' social and emotional skills, the academic achievement of children increases, the incidence of problem behaviors decreases, and the quality of relationships surrounding each child improves.

(From Promoting Social and Emotional Learning, Guidelines for Educators)
Definition: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors. It is the process through which students enhance their ability to integrate thinking, feeling, and behaving in order to achieve important life tasks. Within the school setting, SEL can best be accomplished through a layered approach of skills lessons, infusion into the curricula and classroom practices, and an environment of safety, respect, and caring which models SEL values

- **Self-Awareness:** Knowing what we are feeling in the moment: having a realistic assessment of our own abilities and a well grounded sense of self-confidence.
- **Self-Management:** Handling our emotions so they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand; being conscientious and delaying gratification to pursue goals; persevering in the face of setbacks and frustrations.
- **Social Awareness:** Understanding what others are feeling; being able to take their perspective; appreciating and interacting positively with diverse groups.
- **Social Management:** Handling emotions in relationships effectively; establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation, resistance to inappropriate social pressure, negotiating solutions to conflict, and seeking help when needed.

Illinois

Design for Social and Emotional Learning Standards
Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children develop awareness and management of their emotions, set and achieve important personal and academic goals, use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships, and demonstrate decision making and responsible behaviors to achieve school and life success. There is a strong research base indicating that these SEL competencies improve students' social/emotional development, readiness to learn, classroom behavior, and academic performance.

The SEL goals, standards, and benchmarks were initially developed by a broadly representative group of teachers, school administrators, student support staff, human services professionals, and parents with expertise in child development and learning, curriculum design, and instruction. After the standards were written, public comment and feedback provided the writing team with information used in revising the standards before adoption by the ISBE.
Criteria for SEL Standards

The standards and benchmarks were expected to meet the following criteria:

- Be clear and meaningful to educators, students, parents and the community
- Include an appropriate combination of knowledge and skills
- Be specific enough to convey what students should learn, but broad enough to allow for a variety of approaches to teaching and aligning curriculum
- Be specific enough to allow for classroom assessments to measure student progress

Goals

SEL Goal 1 - Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.

SEL Goal 2 - Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.

SEL Goal 3 - Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

The SEL Standards Framework

Goals: The three SEL goals are broad statements that organize the knowledge and skills that comprise SEL content. Each goal has an explanation of why it is important.

Learning Standards: The ten SEL learning standards are specific statements of the knowledge and skills within a goal that students should know and be able to do. Taken together, the standards define the learning needed to achieve the goals, but each is general enough to apply to learning across the entire range of grade-level clusters. Standards are broader learning targets used to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Benchmarks: The benchmarks are learning targets that are more specific than standards. They specify developmentally appropriate SEL knowledge and skills for each standard at one of five grade-level clusters: early elementary (grades K-3), late elementary (grades 4-5), middle/junior high (grades 6-8), early high school (grades 9-10), and late high school (grades 11-12). The benchmarks are not designed to be all-inclusive; instead they highlight important, representative features of each standard that instruction should emphasize at each grade-cluster. Benchmarks increase in developmental sophistication and become more rigorous from one grade-level cluster to the next. In addition, the SEL benchmarks lend themselves to being taught in integrated ways across the 10 standards within each grade-level cluster.

Performance Descriptors: The performance descriptors are the most specific learning targets that build upon the standards and benchmarks. They will be designed to help educators select and design curricula, classroom activities and instruction, and performance-based and other assessments aligned with the standards. Descriptors are also helpful in mapping curriculum or validating what a school or district has already developed and implemented. Performance descriptors offer a representative, rather than exhaustive, list of learning targets that provide greater detail of the specific SEL knowledge, reasoning, and skills highlighted in the standards.

Many of the SEL Standards can be correlated with the Illinois Learning Standards. There are many obvious connections especially in the learning areas of Health and Social Science. However, it is possible to integrate the SEL standards throughout all learning areas. Classroom activities can be designed to align with both the SEL knowledge and skills and knowledge and skills in other learning areas of the Illinois Learning Standards.