Social and Emotional Learning Implementation with Latinx Learners

Brief 1: Ready for Implementation?

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Campus Events

About the Study

This issue brief is part of a five-part series that reports findings from research conducted by ACT in collaboration with Region One Education Service Center, a provider of educational services to over 430,000 students in South Texas who are primarily Latinx and from low-income communities. The research was funded by a NewSchools Venture Fund grant awarded to ACT's Center for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning and ACT's Center for Equity in Learning. The overarching goal of the research was to gain a better understanding of factors related to social and emotional learning (SEL), including program efficacy, program implementation, and family engagement. This issue brief focuses on SEL implementation and includes results from surveys completed by educators and administrators who participated in an SEL implementation study during the 2019–2020 school year. The goal of the study was to better understand educators' and administrators' attitudes toward and beliefs about SEL prior to SEL implementation.

So What?

This study utilized the Theory of Planned Behavior as an organizing framework through which to examine factors related to SEL implementation. Results show that educators and administrators value SEL, believe in its efficacy for improving student outcomes, and believe they are capable of implementing SEL successfully. However, they perceived less control over factors within their schools related to implementation, and lower perceived buy-in from external stakeholders. Despite these potential barriers to implementation, both educators and administrators reported relatively high intentions of implementing SEL programming in their schools.

Now What?

Results show that while educators and administrators value SEL, they also perceive conditions within their schools that stand as barriers to implementation. Programming designed to reduce some of these barriers, and support those administering SEL programming, could promote implementation outcomes. Future research could continue to explore educators' and administrators' perspectives on SEL implementation under the Theory of Planned Behavior framework with larger, more heterogenous samples, and consider the impacts on implementation dosage and fidelity.
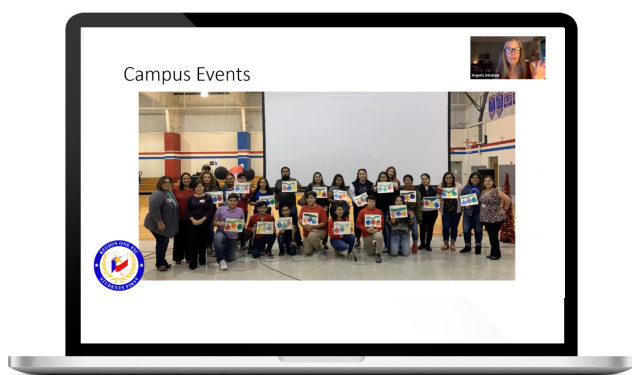
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Ready for Implementation?

Social and emotional (SE) skills can be defined as interpersonal, self-regulatory, and task-related behaviors that are important for adaption to and successful performance in educational and workplace settings (Casillas, Way, & Burrus, 2015). SE skills can be improved in schools and classrooms through intentional social and emotional learning (SEL) programming. Meta-analytic research shows that students receiving SEL programming demonstrate more positive attitudes toward school, fewer problematic behaviors, higher academic achievement, and stronger SE skill development than students in control groups not receiving SEL programming (Mahoney, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2018).

While the benefits of SEL programming are well-supported by research, successfully implementing educational interventions, including SEL, can be a challenge, particularly when working with learners who come from historically underrepresented groups and/or low-income communities, and whose needs may vary in significant ways from those of other populations. In a meta-analysis investigating factors related to successful implementation, Durlak and Dupre (2008) identified five main factors that can affect implementation: community-level factors, provider characteristics, characteristics of the intervention, organizational capacity relevant to the delivery of the intervention, and supports in place available to those implementing the intervention. In this study, we focused on community-level factors and the provider characteristics of those implementing SEL content. Community-level factors take into consideration the context in which a program will be implemented and the dynamics between stakeholders within the community. For example, school staff who are being pressured to implement programming by district-level administration may not be as effective in their implementation as staff who personally support implementation. Provider characteristics are also key factors in implementation. Durlak and Dupre (2008) found that providers who recognize the need for and potential benefits of an intervention and feel confident in their ability to successfully implement the programming are more likely to have successful implementations.

Current Study

To learn more about these factors in the context of SEL implementation, we surveyed educators and administrators from schools within Region One, a network of schools along the US-Mexico border in South Texas serving students who are 96% Latinx, 85% economically disadvantaged, and 38% English learners. All participants had already committed to participating in an SEL intervention study in the following school year, in which SEL lessons were delivered to students. We were specifically interested in learning more about community-level factors and provider characteristics that can either promote or hinder implementing SEL curricula.

We used the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) as an organizing framework through which to examine factors related to implementation. According to this theory, intentions to perform behaviors can be predicted by individuals' attitudes toward the behaviors, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These intentions, combined with the other factors, then account for variance in actual

Attitudes: The degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a behavior

Subjective norms: Perceived social pressures to perform a behavior

Perceived control: The perceived ease or difficulty of performing a behavior

Intentions: An individual's likelihood of performing a behavior, based on their motivations

behavior. To understand the prerequisites of behavior and provider characteristics, we surveyed educators and administrators in four areas related to SEL implementation: values and attitudes, subjective norms, perceived control, and intentions (in this case, the intention to implement SEL activities). In addition, we were interested in whether perceptions differed between educators and administrators in each area. By examining these factors in both educators and administrators, we aimed to gain a rich understanding of the provider characteristics of those implementing SEL content. Furthermore, comparing and contrasting educators' and administrators' values and attitudes, subjective norms, perceived control, and intentions can provide insight related to community-level implementation factors. Dissonance between educators' and administrators' responses could potentially indicate barriers to implementation.

Participants

Educators and administrators from 14 campuses throughout Region One in South Texas were invited to participate in two parallel surveys in the fall of 2020. All campuses were participating in an ongoing intervention study in which SEL lessons were implemented with eighth-grade students (see **Brief 3** for more details on the study protocol). Survey invitations were sent out before the start of the larger intervention study. All schools were also part of a larger Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) cohort, in which students partake in a regular SE skill assessment cycle intended to inform SE skill development.

A total of 37 respondents from 14 schools completed the educator version of the survey. Respondents were a combination of classroom teachers and GEAR UP facilitators due to differences across schools in how SEL programming is implemented. At some schools, GEAR UP facilitators, most of whom are former teachers, spent time at multiple schools delivering SEL programming. At other schools, permanent school-based staff were trained by GEAR UP facilitators to deliver the content themselves. In the rest of this report, we use the term "educators" to refer to all individuals who were directly delivering SEL content to students, whether they held the title of teacher or GEAR UP facilitator. Educators varied in the amount of teaching experience they had. Ten had less than five years of teaching experience (27.0%), 17 had between six and 15 years of teaching experience (45.9%), and 10 had 16 or more years of teaching experience (27.0%). Most educators identified as Hispanic/Latinx (89.2%). The remaining educators identified as White (2.7%) or two or more races (5.4%), or they preferred not to respond (2.7%). Finally, 73.0% of the educators identified as female.

A total of 15 respondents from nine campuses completed the parallel administrator version of the survey. Respondents to the survey were either principals or assistant principals. We use the term "administrators" to describe this group in the remainder of this report. Five respondents had less than five years of experience as a school administrator (33.4%), seven had between six and 15 years of experience as a school administrator (46.7%), and three had more than 16 years of experience as a school administrator (20.1%). Most administrators identified as Hispanic/Latinx (93.3%), and the remaining respondents identified as White (6.7%). Finally, 40.0% of the administrators identified as female.

Method and Analyses

As noted in the introduction, the survey we designed was grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which states that behavior can be predicted based on behavioral intentions, and that these intentions are influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective

norms, and perceived behavioral control. As empirical evidence supports this theory as a means of predicting behavior (e.g., Armitage & Conner, 2001), we used it as a framework to understand an educator's likelihood of implementing SEL. We developed items and computed mean scores to form scales that measured each of the following categories: attitudes toward SEL and beliefs about its value (8 items; Cronbach's α = .90 for educators and α = .95 for administrators), subjective norms regarding SEL implementation at each campus (11 items; α = .96 for educators and α = .88 for administrators), perceived control over SEL implementation (9 items; α = .82 for educators and α = .91 for administrators), and intentions to implement SEL (4 items; α = .94 for educators and α = .88 for administrators). All items used a one (strongly disagree) to six (strongly agree) point Likert scale, and each category is presented below in Tables 1–4.

We were interested in educator- and administrator-level responses to each item assessing attitudes toward SEL and opinions regarding its value. Across groups, we were interested whether there were item-level differences between educators and administrators. Last, we were interested to see if educators' and administrators' own beliefs regarding SEL differed from their subjective norms, perceived control over implementation, and intentions to implement curricula. Differences between individuals' own attitudes toward and valuation of SEL may indicate potential barriers to implementation.

Results

Values and Attitudes

Value and attitude items measured whether educators and administrators saw value in SEL, believed that SE skills are related to positive outcomes, and believed that instructional time should be dedicated to SEL. The items were identical in both the educator and administrator versions of the survey unless noted otherwise. Table 1 reports means and standard deviations for educators and administrators, as well as the magnitude of the difference between educators' and administrators' views. Effect sizes are reported as Hedges' g values, which can be interpreted in the same manner as the Cohen's d metric, but which apply a correction for small sample sizes in the computation. Cohen's (1992) effect-size interpretation guidelines state that for standardized mean differences, an effect of .20 can be considered small, an effect of .50 can be considered medium, and an effect of .80 can be considered large. Effects are reported in the direction of the educator group and include a 95% confidence interval. Effects reported as negative values indicate that educators had lower mean scores than administrators, and effects reported as positive values indicate that educators had higher mean scores than administrators. If zero appears in the confidence interval, there is no statistically significant difference between groups.

For each item measuring attitudes toward SEL and its value, means were relatively high (a maximum value of six indicated that respondents strongly agreed with each statement). This demonstrates that both educators and administrators held positive attitudes toward and beliefs about SEL. While educator responses tended to be systematically lower than those of administrators, effect sizes remained small for all items, and none reached statistical significance. Across all items, the educator mean score for attitudes toward SEL (M = 5.51, SD = 0.68) did not differ from the combined scores for administrators (M = 5.62, SD = 0.62, g = −0.16, 95% CI = −0.78, 0.45).

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Standardized Mean Differences for Values/Attitudes Items

Item	Educator M	Educator SD	Administrator M	Administrator SD	Standardized Mean Difference (g)
It is important to teach social and emotional skills in school.	5.57	0.69	5.64	0.74	−0.11 (−0.72, 0.51)
Time should be reserved during the school day for teaching social and emotional skills.	5.22	0.95	5.50	0.76	−0.31 (−0.93, 0.31)
I would teach social and emotional skills in my classes if tools were available for me to do so. / I would want teachers to teach social and emotional skills at my school.*	5.24	0.95	5.29	0.91	−0.04 (−0.66, 0.57)
It is just as important to teach social and emotional skills as it is to teach traditional academic content.	5.43	0.80	5.43	0.76	0.00 (−0.61, 0.62)
Strong student social and emotional skills are important for having a positive school climate.	5.59	0.60	5.79	0.43	−0.34 (−0.96, 0.28)
Strong social and emotional skills can have a positive benefit on academic readiness and performance.	5.65	0.48	5.71	0.47	−0.13 (−0.75, 0.48)
Strong social and emotional skills can have a positive benefit on college and career readiness.	5.68	0.47	5.79	0.43	−0.23 (−0.85, 0.38)
Strong social and emotional skills can have a positive benefit on important life outcomes such as health and happiness.	5.68	0.47	5.79	0.43	−0.23 (−0.85, 0.38)
Scale average	*5.51*	*0.68*	*5.62*	*0.62*	*−0.16 (−0.78, 0.45)*

Note. * indicates that the item wording differs between the educator (listed first) and administrator (listed second) versions of the survey. Effects are reported in the direction of the educator group and include a 95% confidence interval. Effects reported as negative values indicate that educators had lower mean scores than administrators.

Subjective Norms

The next set of items addressed educators' and administrators' perceptions of the subjective norms within their school settings. Items in both surveys focused on assessing perceived levels of support for SEL from district leadership, teachers, and parents. Table 2 reports all means, standard deviations, and Hedges' g values with effect sizes reported in the direction of educators. A single item measuring whether SEL was a part of district improvement plans was unique to the administrator survey. Of the administrators surveyed, 85.8% of respondents indicated some level of agreement with this statement.

Educators and administrators differed significantly in their perception of whether parents believe in the importance of SE skills, with administrators perceiving more buy-in from parents than educators. Across all items, the educator mean score for subjective norms regarding SEL (M = 4.20, SD = 1.33) did not differ significantly from that of the administrators (M = 4.77, SD = 0.96, g = −0.45, 95% CI = −1.07, 0.17), though ratings tended to be lower for educators than administrators. This potentially suggests that educators perceived more barriers within subjective norms than administrators did.

We were also interested in examining within-group differences between values and attitudes and other respective areas designated by the Theory of Planned Behavior (subjective norms, perceived control, and intentions). For subjective norms, we compared average ratings across all questions measuring attitudes and values (i.e., questions from Table 1) to average ratings across the subjective norm items (i.e., questions from Table 2) to determine whether individuals perceived that they valued SEL more highly than did others within their subjective norm groups. We found that, compared to their positive perceptions about their own beliefs, educators held significantly less-positive perceptions about their colleagues' beliefs about SEL (g = −1.43, 95% CI = −0.76, −2.11). The same trend held true for administrators, and though it was not statistically significant, there was a large effect (g = −0.71, 95% CI = −1.48, 0.05). In other words, both groups felt they regarded SEL more positively than their colleagues or other stakeholders (e.g., parents, students).

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Standardized Mean Differences for Subjective Norms Items

Item	Educator M	Educator SD	Administrator M	Administrator SD	Standardized Mean Difference (g)
My district leadership is supportive of teaching social and emotional skills in my school. / My school district is supportive of teaching social and emotional skills in my school.*	4.81	1.29	5.08	0.95	−0.22 (−0.83, 0.40)
Teachers in my school support the teaching of social and emotional skills.	4.46	1.14	4.77	0.83	−0.28 (−0.90, 0.33)
Parents in my school support the teaching of social and emotional skills.	4.11	1.15	4.62	0.65	−0.48 (−1.10, 0.14)
My district leadership believes in the importance of social and emotional skills. / My school district believes in the importance of social and emotional skills.*	4.68	1.25	5.31	0.75	−0.55 (−1.17, 0.08)
Teachers in my school believe in the importance of social and emotional skills.	4.68	1.03	5.00	0.58	−0.34 (−0.96, 0.28)
Parents in my school believe in the importance of social and emotional skills.	4.05	1.13	5.00	0.71	−0.90 (−1.54, -0.26)
My district allocates resources for the teaching of social and emotional skills.	3.89	1.65	4.64	1.34	−0.47 (−1.09, 0.15)
There are several teachers in my school who teach social and emotional skills in their classrooms.	3.59	1.55	4.29	1.54	−0.44 (−1.06, 0.18)
The broader school community believes in the importance of teaching social and emotional skills.	4.08	1.46	4.79	0.89	−0.52 (−1.14, 0.10)
Social and emotional learning is a priority at my school.	3.86	1.49	4.43	1.16	−0.39 (−1.01, 0.23)
Social and emotional learning is a priority for my entire school district.	3.95	1.53	4.57	1.16	−0.43 (−1.05, 0.19)
Our school improvement plan includes resources for the teaching of social and emotional skills.	n/a	n/a	4.64	1.22	n/a
Scale average	*4.20*	*1.33*	*4.77*	*0.96*	*−0.45 (-1.07, 0.17)*

Note. * indicates that the item wording differs between the educator (listed first) and administrator (listed second) versions of the survey. Effects are reported in the direction of the educator group and include a 95% confidence interval. Effects reported as negative values indicate that educators had lower mean scores than administrators.

Perceived Control

The third group of items addressed educators' and administrators' perceived control over their ability to implement SEL curriculum content within their school settings. Items in both surveys focused on assessing perceptions about whether teachers had the ability, content knowledge, and instructional time and support necessary to successfully teach SEL content. Table 3 reports all means, standard deviations, and Hedges' g values with effect sizes reported in the direction of educators. For three items that were negatively keyed (i.e., a more positive response indicates less perceived control), Table 3 reports reverse-scored values so that all means and effect sizes can be interpreted in the same direction.

Administrators held significantly more positive views about students' receptiveness to social and emotional skill lessons than educators did. No other item-level differences were statistically significant. Across all items, educators' ratings of perceived control (M = 4.31, SD = 0.79) did not differ significantly from administrators' ratings of perceived control (M = 4.25, SD = 0.91, g = 0.07, 95% CI = −0.50, 0.65).

For each group, we also examined whether there was a difference between individuals' attitudes toward SEL and their perceived control over their ability to implement SEL curricula. To do so, we compared average ratings across all questions measuring attitudes and values (i.e., questions from Table 1) to average ratings across the perceived control items (i.e., questions from Table 3). Similar to the pattern we observed within the subjective norms category, both educators' (g = −1.69, 95% CI = −2.22, −1.16) and administrators' (g = −1.76, 95% CI = −2.55, −0.97) perceived control ratings were significantly lower than the ratings of their beliefs about SEL. That is, despite holding positive views about the efficacy of SEL programming for improving student outcomes, educators and administrators perceived less control over factors associated with actually implementing said programming successfully.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Standardized Mean Differences for Perceived Control Items

Item	Educator M	Educator SD	Administrator M	Administrator SD	Standardized Mean Difference (g)
If I were asked to teach my students social and emotional skills, I would know what to do. / If teachers at my school were asked to teach social and emotional skills, they would know what to do.*	4.54	1.09	4.13	1.25	0.35 (−0.27, 0.97)
I have the ability to teach students about social and emotional skills. / Teachers at my school have the ability to teach students about social and emotional skills.*	4.70	0.94	4.47	1.06	0.24 (−0.38, 0.86)
I am not qualified to teach students about social and emotional skills. / Teachers at my school are not qualified to teach students about social and emotional skills.*†	3.85	1.42	4.20	1.37	−0.25 (−0.83, 0.33
I know enough about social and emotional skills to feel comfortable teaching them to students. / Teachers at my school know enough about social and emotional skills to feel comfortable teaching them to students.*	4.46	1.09	4.00	1.13	0.41 (−0.21, 1.03)
I do not have time to teach social and emotional skills to my students. / Teachers at my school do not have time to teach social and emotional skills.*†	4.22	1.40	3.60	1.45	0.44 (−0.14, 1.02)
My school has the tools (e.g., curriculum resources) that I need to teach social and emotional skills. / My school has the tools (e.g., curriculum resources) that we need to teach social and emotional skills.	3.92	1.46	4.62	0.96	−0.51 (−1.13, 0.11)
Students at my school would be receptive to a course in social and emotional learning.	4.41	0.90	5.15	0.56	−0.90 (−1.54, −0.26)
I can't teach social and emotional skills because I need to focus on teaching academic content. / Teachers at my school can't teach social and emotional skills because they need to focus on teaching academic content.*†	4.03	1.44	3.54	1.51	0.33 (−0.24, 0.91)
I have the support of my school principal to make social and emotional learning a priority in my classroom. / Teachers at my school have my support to make social and emotional learning a priority in their classrooms.*	4.62	1.26	4.92	0.95	−0.25 (−0.87, 0.37)
Scale average	*4.31*	*0.79*	*4.25*	*0.91*	*0.07 (−0.50, 0.65)*

Note. * indicates that the item wording differs between the educator (listed first) and administrator (listed second) versions of the survey. † indicates a negatively keyed item where reverse scores are reported so that higher values indicate higher levels of perceived control. Effects are reported in the direction of the educator group and include a 95% confidence interval. Effects reported as negative values indicate that educators had lower mean scores than administrators.

Intentions

Last, we asked educators and administrators about their intentions to implement SEL programming with their students. Items in both surveys measured intentions to spend instructional time teaching SEL to students and asked if the level of effort would increase from previous years due to participation in the intervention study. Table 4 reports all means, standard deviations, and Hedges' g values with effect sizes reported in the direction of educators.

In both groups, means were relatively high for all items that indicated intentions to implement SEL curricula. There were no significant differences at the item level between educators and administrators, and all effects were small to medium in size. Across all items measuring intentions to implement SEL, the educator mean score (M = 5.16, SD = 0.92) did not differ from the mean score for administrators (M = 5.02, SD = 0.79, g = 0.16, 95% CI = −0.46, 0.77).

We again examined if there was a difference between individuals' attitudes toward SEL and their intentions to implement SEL curricula. To do so, we compared average ratings across all questions measuring attitudes and values (i.e., questions from Table 1) to average ratings across the intention items (i.e., questions from Table 4). On average, intention scores did not significantly differ from the values and attitudes scores for educators (g = −0.43, 95% CI = −0.89, 0.03). Administrators, however, showed lower levels of intentions to implement SEL compared to their perception of the value of SEL (g = −0.82, 95% CI = −1.59, −0.03). While administrators see SEL as important, there seems to be a discrepancy between seeing value in SEL and intending to implement it.

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations, and Standardized Mean Differences for Intentions Items

Item	Educator M	Educator SD	Administrator M	Administrator SD	Standardized Mean Difference (g)
I intend to teach social and emotional skills to my students this year. / I intend to have teachers at my school teach social and emotional skills to our students this year.*	5.05	1.05	4.93	0.92	0.12 (−0.49, 0.74)
I will try to improve my students' social and emotional skills this year. / I will do what I can to improve our students' social and emotional skills this year.*	5.16	0.96	5.36	0.75	−0.21 (−0.83, 0.40)
If I am provided with social and emotional learning curriculum materials, I will use them. / If teachers at my school are provided with social and emotional learning curriculum materials, I will ensure they use them.*	5.27	0.77	5.00	0.78	0.34 (−0.27, 0.96)
I will put forth more effort to teach social and emotional skills this year than I have in previous years. / Teachers at my school will put forth more effort to teach social and emotional skills this year than they have in previous years.*	5.14	0.89	4.79	0.70	0.41 (−0.21, 1.03)
Scale average	5.16	0.92	5.02	0.79	0.16 (−0.46, 0.77)

Note. * indicates that the item wording differs between the educator (listed first) and administrator (listed second) versions of the survey. Effects are reported in the direction of the educator group and include a 95% confidence interval. Effects reported as negative values indicate that educators had lower mean scores than administrators.

Implications and Conclusions

In summary, we found that both educators and administrators highly value SEL and believe that implementing SEL can help their students thrive academically and promote college and career readiness. Furthermore, educators demonstrated strong intentions to implement SEL programming. Overall, results show strong support for provider characteristics in that educators are invested in SEL, believe they are capable of implementing SEL successfully, and intend to do so.

Differences between educators' and administrators' perceptions of attitudes, subjective norms, perceived control, and intentions to implement were mostly small in magnitude and did not reach statistical significance. These results indicate a positive community-level condition in that all stakeholders within schools tasked with implementing SEL are generally in agreement. Some differences did emerge. For instance, administrators tended to perceive more buy-in from other stakeholders than educators (i.e., parent and student support for SEL programming). This could indicate that administrators may be less aware of all potential roadblocks to implementation than those working directly with students and families.

While differences between educators' and administrators' responses tended to be small in magnitude, we found larger, statistically significant effects when comparing responses within groups across categories. That is, differences emerged between educators' and administrators' own positive perceptions of SEL and their perceptions of categories such as subjective norms and perceived control. While individuals in both educator and administrator roles felt SEL was important and valuable, they felt that other key stakeholders did not necessarily perceive SEL to be as important as they did. Furthermore, they did not necessarily have full control over the time and resources needed to successfully implement SEL programming. Under the Theory of Planned Behavior, perceived control is pivotal in intended and actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, a lower perception of control from both educators and administrators, particularly when paired with highly positive beliefs about SEL and its value, indicates potential barriers to implementation.

To our knowledge, the data collected in this study provide a first application of the Theory of Planned Behavior to studying SEL implementation. As supported by the theory, having positive values and attitudes, subjective norms, perceived control, *and* intentions to complete a behavior will likely influence actual behavior. In this case, the behavior of interest is implementation of the SEL curricula within the scope of the intervention study. **Brief 3** reports implementation data and shows that many educators sampled within this initial survey did indeed carry out implementation as they set out to, despite logistic challenges brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Limitations of this study include a small sample of administrators, which led to reduced statistical power in conducting robust statistical analyses. Additionally, while these results shed light on SEL implementation in a region serving primarily students who are Latinx and come from low-income households, these results may not be widely generalizable. This is due to a relatively homogeneous sample: all participants came from the same state and region, had similar racial/ethnic backgrounds, and also were all working with a homogeneous sample of students. Further research could compare findings from this sample, particularly those concerning a lack of perceived control and subjective norms, with more representative samples. An additional consideration in interpreting these data is that all educators and administrators within this sample had already committed to an SEL implementation study—and thus their

beliefs about SEL and its value were already fairly positive. In schools not engaged in an SEL implementation study, mean scores across dimensions would likely be lower.

Future studies could explore educators' and administrators' perspectives on SEL under the Theory of Planned Behavior framework in more general settings. The items we used to measure educators' and administrators' attitudes were not validated items, but rather designed for the purpose of this study to use the Theory of Planned Behavior framework. While sample alphas for all scales were promising (.82–.96 for educators and .88–.95 for administrators), estimates are likely inflated given small sample sizes. Further work could also be done with larger, more representative samples to validate this item pool as a measure of intentions to measure SEL implementation. Given the difficulties surrounding SEL implementation, this could be a useful tool for schools wishing to implement curricula.

In summary, we found overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward SEL from both educators and administrators. Both groups clearly see the value in SEL programming for improving student outcomes. Although each group saw a great deal of value in SE skills, likely barriers for implementation were evident based on lower ratings in the areas of subjective norms and perceived control. Both groups perceived other stakeholders, such as parents and students, to have less-positive attitudes toward SEL than themselves, and saw obstacles to implementation, including limited support, insufficient instructional time, and limited resources. Despite these barriers, both educators and administrators still reported relatively high intentions of implementing SEL programming to the best of their ability throughout the school year. Intentions were rated lower by administrators than by educators, potentially due to competing priorities in designing student programming. **Brief 4** further unpacks some of these potential barriers to implementation and explores the need for supports.

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ACT Center for Equity in Learning

About ACT's Center for Equity in Learning

ACT's Center for Equity in Learning focuses on closing gaps in equity, opportunity, and achievement for underserved populations and working learners. Through purposeful investments, employee engagement, and thoughtful advocacy efforts, the Center supports innovative partnerships, actionable research, initiatives, campaigns, and programs to further ACT's mission of helping people achieve education and workplace success.
For more information, visit **equityinlearning.act.org**
@ACTEquity
@ACT

About ACT Research

ACT Research leads the field with authority and high-quality scientific evidence in support of education and workforce practices, solutions, and services. Our mission-driven team comprises a variety of backgrounds and disciplines and offers a wide spectrum of knowledge and skills, enabling us to deliver quality, high-impact products and services aligned to ACT's strategy and mission. Together, our research teams provide policymakers, educators, parents, and learners with research-based insights to inform their decision-making and deliver educators and workforce development professionals with tools and services needed for education and career navigation.
For more information, visit **www.act.org/research**

About NewSchools Venture Fund

NewSchools Venture Fund is a nonprofit venture philanthropy that invests in promising teams of educators and entrepreneurs with the vision and skills to reimagine learning. We help them accomplish their missions to achieve outstanding results for the students, educators and schools they serve. We are committed to helping students finish high school prepared and inspired to achieve their most ambitious dreams and plans. Through our investing, management assistance, network building and thought leadership, NewSchools helps to reimagine PreK-12 education.
For more information, visit **www.newschools.org**

About Region One Education Service Center

The Region One Education Service Center is part of a state-wide system of 20 regional education service centers created in 1965 by the 59th Texas Legislature to assist school districts across the state. Originally slated to work with school districts as a media center, the role of the education service center has expanded to work alongside school districts to carry out the three main objectives as stipulated in the TEC §8.002: to assist school districts in improving student performance in each region of the system; enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically; and implement initiatives assigned by the legislature or commissioner. Located in South Texas on the United States/Mexico border, Region One ESC serves 38 school districts and 10 charter school systems in the eight county areas of Brooks County, Cameron County, Hidalgo County, Jim Hogg County, Starr County, Webb County, Willacy County, and Zapata County.
For more information, visit **www.esc1.net/domain/3**