Social and Emotional Learning:

Implementation and Program Outcomes, 2010–2011 Through 2014–2015

Department of
Research and Evaluation
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Executive Summary

This report describes campus effects of the Austin Independent School District's (AISD) Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) program from the year prior to initial SEL implementation (i.e., 2010–2011 when available) through 2014–2015. Student performance on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) in reading and math, discipline, attendance, school climate, staff climate, and SEL implementation rubric ratings were analyzed over time to determine if changes in outcomes over the same time period were more pronounced at schools with more years in SEL than at schools with fewer years in SEL. Because SEL implementation has been shown to influence program success beyond years in SEL (Lamb, 2014; Lamb 2015), analyses in this report were conducted to determine which SEL outcome measures were related to SEL implementation ratings.

Similar to previous findings (Lamb, 2014a, 2014b), schools with higher SEL integration ratings on AISD's SEL implementation rubric experienced more positive program effects than did schools with lower SEL integration ratings. For example, after controlling for baseline performance, elementary schools with higher SEL integration ratings had higher 2015 passing rates in math (Figure 1). Additionally SEL integration ratings predicted secondary students' ratings of school safety and bullying. Other ratings on the SEL implementation rubric emerged as strong predictors of SEL outcomes. For example, implementation of peace areas positively predicted elementary school students' feelings of safety, and weekly SEL instruction positively predicted teachers' 2014–2015 ratings of managing student conduct at the secondary level.

Figure 1
After controlling for Spring 2012 school passing rates on STAAR math, 2015 SEL integration ratings positively predicted Spring 2015 passing rates for math.
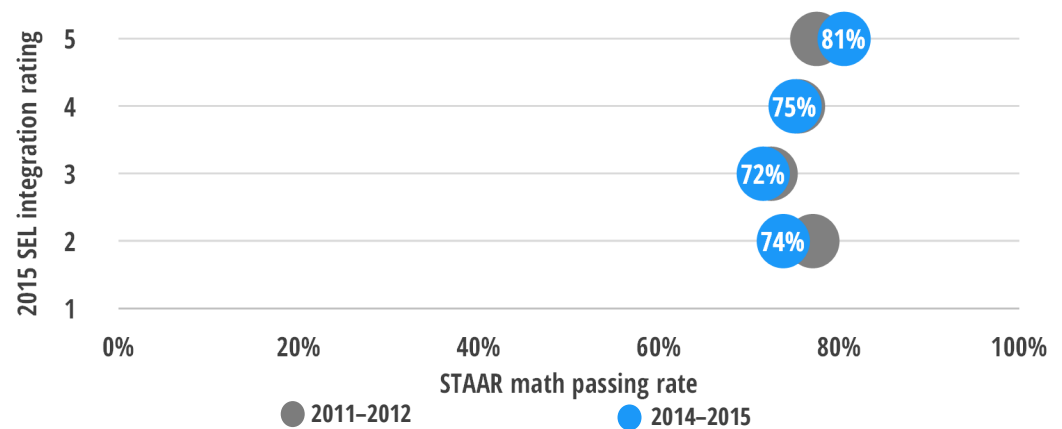
Source. 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 STAAR data and 2014–2015 AISD's SEL implementation rubric, elementary schools only

Finally, this report examined whether high-needs schools experienced more positive changes as a result of SEL participation than did non-high-needs schools. High needs schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL participation experienced greater gains than did non-high needs schools in students' ratings of "adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions," and "adults at this school treat all students fairly." Additionally, staff from high-needs schools reported more favorable ratings over time for "overall, my

school is a good place to work and learn," and for the subscale managing student conduct than did staff from non-high-needs schools.

Together, these results suggest that regardless of longevity in SEL, the degree to which schools integrate SEL and incorporate peace areas is also critical to the program's success. Additionally, identifying ways that high-needs schools have made gains over time will help program staff as they work with schools to help ensure that all students receive effective SEL instruction.

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Background

As part of the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)'s Collaborating Districts Initiative (CDI), AISD began phasing in a district-wide implementation of SEL in 2011–2012. With the help of funding provided by the NoVo Foundation, the St. David's Foundation, the RGK Foundation, the Tapestry Foundation, and others, AISD's Department of SEL has been able to support the implementation of SEL in all AISD schools by 2015–2016.

Using Second Step, SchoolConnect, and MAPS as curricula to guide SEL implementation in AISD, SEL coaches worked with campuses to integrate five core SEL competencies outlined by CASEL (see p. 5) into direct and indirect instruction. These five core SEL competencies were: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. To ensure these competencies were integrated into all aspects of a campus community, AISD's SEL program developed a four-pronged approach to implementation (see p. 6).

Using the five core competencies and the four-pronged implementation tool as a guide, staff in AISD's Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) worked with AISD's Department of SEL to develop a logic model (see p. 7) to help guide the ongoing evaluation of SEL in AISD.

This report summarizes analyses of relationships between academic achievement, discipline, attendance, school climate, staff climate, staff perceptions of SEL, and students' SEL competency ratings, and SEL implementation ratings. Analyses were also conducted to determine in what ways, if any, high-needs SEL schools experienced greater improvements in measures of interest compared with non-high-needs SEL schools.

What is Social and Emotional Learning?

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a process for helping children and adults develop fundamental skills for life effectiveness. SEL teaches the skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work effectively and ethically.~ AISD's SEL website

Figure 2
The five core competencies are integrated in AISD's SEL curriculum.

Based on CASEL's framework, AISD works to implement SEL by teaching students and staff lessons covering five key competencies (Figure 2):

Self-Awareness is the ability to recognize one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations. This can include labeling one's feelings, relating feelings and thoughts to behavior, accurate self-assessment of strengths and challenges, self-efficacy, and optimism.

Self-Management is the ability to manage emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals. This includes regulating one's emotions, managing stress, self-control, self-motivation, and setting and achieving goals.

Social Awareness is the ability to show understanding and empathy for others. This includes perspective taking, empathy, respecting diversity, understanding social and ethical norms of behavior, and recognizing family, school, and community supports.

Relationships Skills is the ability to form positive relationships by working in teams and dealing effectively with conflict. This can be seen in building relationships with diverse individuals and groups, communicating clearly, working cooperatively, conflicts, and seeking help.

Responsible Decision Making is the ability to make ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior. This can be seen in considering the well-being of self and others, recognizing one's responsibility to behave ethically, basing decisions on safety, social and ethical considerations, evaluating realistic consequences of various actions, and making constructive, safe choices for self, relationships and school.

How does AISD implement SEL?

AISD's approach: the AISD Department of SEL developed the four-pronged approach (Figure 3) to effectively implement SEL district wide. In doing so, each school works to ensure SEL is effectively integrated throughout its school and community.

SEL specialists: 13 SEL specialists help schools implement SEL with fidelity. Each school has the flexibility to cater the program to its specific needs. Each specialist helps support schools by highlighting positive work teachers are doing, or by working with school staff to target an area of need. For example, a specialist might model an SEL lesson, help a subject-area team integrate SEL into instruction, or provide professional development opportunities on bullying to the whole school.

SEL parent program specialist: two SEL parent program specialists work with all SEL schools to conduct training for parents to not only educate the whole family and community about SEL, but also to ensure that SEL does not begin and end at school.

SEL facilitators: to help foster school ownership of SEL, each school principal assigns an SEL facilitator (usually the school counselor) to help with the daily maintenance of SEL integration on their campus. The SEL specialists provide ongoing support to the facilitators who work more directly with school staff on school-wide SEL implementation.

Figure 3
AISD's Four-Pronged Approach to SEL Implementation

SEL Social & Emotional Learning

Explicit Instruction

Culture and Climate

Integration

Family and Community

Explicitly teaching the knowledge and skills of SEL instruction

Developing a positive culture and climate in school and classrooms for all members of the learning community.

Addressing SEL through other academic content and SEL skill practice

Creating opportunities for parents and families in the school community

How is SEL evaluated?

Figure 4

DRE's Logic Model, Used to Guide the Ongoing Evaluation of SEL

Problem

Without sufficient social emotional skills, learning is impeded.

Goal(s)

To provide the tools for academic achievement, sound decision making, and lifelong success.

Objective(s)

AISD students & staff will effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

Subproblems

1. Some students lack self-management, self-awareness, social-awareness, interpersonal, and decision-making skills.
2. Some AISD students & staff lack the understanding that their personal culture and background impact those they work with.
3. Some AISD students & staff do not adequately respect, understand, accept, and value diversity as an asset.

Activities

SEL campus activities:
• Implementation of SEL curriculum focused on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making:
  • Second Step, K-8
  • School-Connect, 9-12
  • Character Education
  • MAPS & learning strategies course; 9th grade
• Establish SEL steering committees
• Integrate SEL goals into campus processes
  • CIPs, curriculum standards, staff meetings
• Integrate SEL in the community
• Create a common SEL language across different SEL curriculum

SEL district activities
• Cultural Proficiency & Inclusiveness (CP&I)
• Apply for *No Place for Hate*® (*NPfH*) designation
• Conduct 3 schoolwide *NPfH* activities annually
• Respect for All
• Child Study Systems
• Increase the number of SEL resources
• Increase the number of parent training opportunities
• Increase the number of principal training opportunities

Output measures

• AISD will continue to be a *NPfH* District
• In 2015–2016, all participating staff at SEL schools will engage in ongoing professional development throughout each school year
• SEL will be offered in all 120 schools, serving all of the district's students
• All SEL curricula will use the common SEL language
• SEL learning standards are established
• All SEL campuses will create SEL steering committees
• All new principals and APs will receive SEL training

Short term outcome measures

• Student competencies in SEL skill areas
• Observational ratings of fidelity of implementation
• Students' ratings of academic self-confidence and behavioral environment, and bullying items pre- to post-SEL
• Students' ratings of bullying items on the Substance Use and Safety Survey (SUSS) pre- to post-SEL
• Staff ratings on TELL for managing student behavior pre- to post-SEL
• Teachers' ratings of students' personal development on report card (pre-K through 6)
• Focus groups with students, teachers, principals, and SEL coaches
• Parent ratings of SEL training sessions
• SEL coach time logs
• Academic gains on STAAR/EOC

Long term outcome measures

• Rate of certain disciplinary offenses and bullying behaviors
• District dropout rates (gr 7-12)
• District attendance rate
• District counselor referral rates
• Districtwide student ratings of academic self-confidence, bullying items, behavioral environment and SEL competencies
• Districtwide ratings of bullying items on SUSS
• Districtwide ratings for managing student behavior
• Districtwide CP&I survey ratings
• Districtwide academic achievement
• SEL is a part of CIPs, campus steering committees, curriculum, staff meetings
• Improved academic achievement on STAAR/EOC pre- to post-SEL

How did AISD phase in SEL?

4 years of SEL implementation (SEL began in 2011–2012): 26 schools

17 elementary schools

4 middle schools

2 high schools

1 special campus

3 years of SEL implementation (SEL began in 2012–2013): 32 schools

24 elementary schools

5 middle schools

2 high schools

2 years of SEL implementation (SEL began in 2013–2014): 16 schools

12 elementary schools

1 middle school

2 high schools

1 special campus

1 years of SEL implementation (SEL began in 2014–2015): 28 schools

19 elementary schools

6 middle schools

3 high schools

0 years of SEL implementation (SEL began in 2015–2016): 15 schools

11 elementary schools

2 middle schools

2 high schools

AISD's SEL Implementation Rubric

Each school receives a rating from its SEL coach across all nine implementation domains. Total scores can range from 5 to 45. The table is continued on the following page.

Domain	Implementation level				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1. Principal SEL/ coach meetings	One principal/ coach meeting– no additional goals	Once per semester principal/coach meeting – no campus-based goals agreed upon	Once per semester principal/coach meeting – goal based on campus needs/ data agreed upon but not implemented	Once per semester principal/coach meeting – goal(s) based on campus needs/data agreed upon and implemented with moderate success	Once per semester principal/ coach meeting – fully implement SEL goals based on campus needs/data in collaboration with SEL steering committee
2. Weekly explicit SEL instruction	Weekly explicit SEL instruction (30 minutes/week) using curriculum and resource provided by district – 10% of staff implementing (HS in advisory or seminar)	Weekly explicit SEL instruction (30 minutes/week) using curriculum and resource provided by district – 30% of staff implementing (HS in advisory or seminar)	Weekly explicit SEL instruction (30 minutes/week) using curriculum and resource provided by district – 50% of staff implementing (HS in advisory or seminar)	Weekly explicit SEL instruction (30 minutes/ week) using curriculum and resource provided by district – 70% of staff implementing (HS in advisory or seminar)	Weekly explicit SEL instruction (30 minutes/ week) using curriculum and resource provided by district – 90% of staff implementing (HS in advisory or seminar)
3. Implementation of peace areas	Implement Peace Areas (PK-5) / Peacemaking Process (6-12) in 10% classrooms/ common areas	Implement Peace Areas (PK-5) / Peacemaking Process (6-12) in 30% classrooms/common areas	Implement Peace Areas (PK-5) / Peacemaking Process (6-12) in 50% classrooms/common areas	Implement Peace Areas (PK-5) / Peacemaking Process (6-12) in 70% classrooms/common areas	Implement Peace Areas (PK-5) / Peacemaking Process (6-12) in 90% classrooms/ common areas
4. SEL Integration	Integration of SEL strategies or skills in instruction – evident in 10% of classrooms during campus visits	Integration of SEL skills or strategies in instruction – evident in 30% of classrooms in campus visits	Integration of SEL skills or strategies in instruction – evident in 50% of classrooms in campus visits	Integration of SEL skills or strategies in instruction – evident in 70% of classrooms in campus visits	Integration of SEL skills or strategies in instruction – evident in 90% of classrooms and other campus areas (e.g., cafeteria, bus, hallways) in campus visits
5. Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting	Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting – at least 5 meetings	Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting – at least 5 meetings, including 1 collaborative classroom visits	Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting – at least 6 meetings, including 2 collaborative classroom visits	Monthly SEL facilitator/ coach meeting – at least 7 meetings, including 3 collaborative classroom visits	Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting – at least 8 meetings, including 4 collaborative classroom visits
6. SEL PD/training	There is little or no campus based PD/ training related to SEL	Campus PD/training in SEL is offered to new staff; minimal ongoing SEL PD/ training offered to professional staff	All staff receive regular ongoing SEL PD/training – at least 2 different SEL trainings or one ½ day training; training provided by SEL specialist	All staff receive regular ongoing SEL PD/training (at least 2 trainings or one ½ day training); teachers are regularly given opportunities to collaborate on SEL-related activities; training by specialist and campus staff	All staff receive regular ongoing SEL PD/training (at least 2); teachers are regularly given opportunities to collaborate on SEL-related activities; school staff serve as campus experts in SEL and provide some of the SEL training

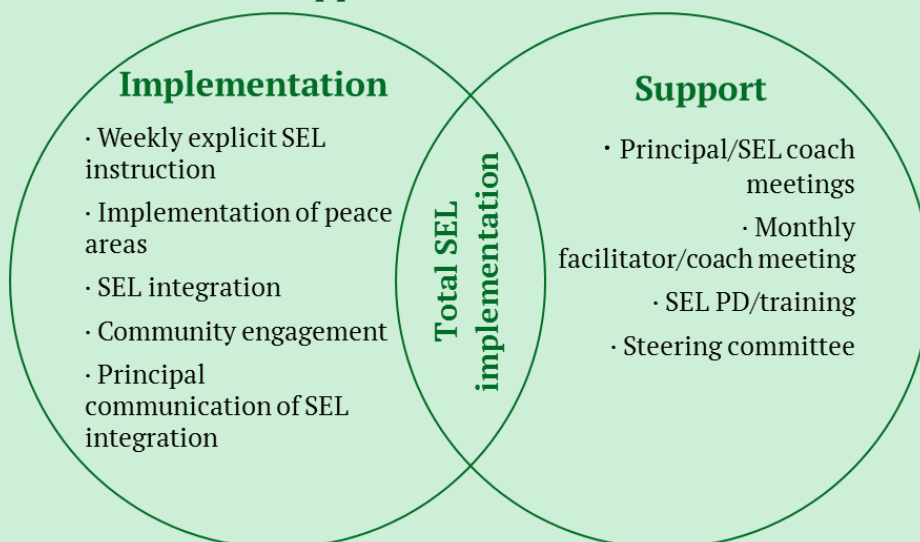*Note.* PK is prekindergarten. PD is professional development activities.

Implementation level

Domain	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
7. Community engagement	No efforts are made to integrate the campus community with campus SEL implementation	Campus community members are given limited information about SEL implementation and campus SEL plans	Campus communicates* regularly with community members regarding SEL implementation and campus SEL plans; parents and families are trained in SEL concepts (at least one session)	Campus communicates* frequently with community members regarding SEL implementation and campus SEL plans; parents and families are trained in SEL concepts (at least two sessions); at least one community event shows evidence of SEL integration	Campus communicates* consistently with community members regarding SEL implementation and campus SEL plans; parents and families are trained in SEL concepts (at least 3 sessions); at least two community events show evidence of SEL integration
8. Steering Committee	Campus steering committee is limited to facilitator	Campus steering committee: - intermittently reviews campus SEL implementation activities but makes no adjustments - representation from 25% of departments or grade levels	Campus steering committee: - regularly reviews campus SEL implementation making few adjustments to plans - communicates effectively with administration - representation from 50% of departments or grade levels	Campus steering committee: - regularly reviews campus SEL implementation - makes adjustments to vision and implementation of SEL - communicates effectively with administration - representation from 70% of departments or grade levels	Campus steering committee: - regularly reviews campus SEL implementation - makes ongoing adjustments to implementation of SEL to reflect campus needs - communicates effectively with administration - representation from 90% of departments or grade levels - parent or student included as member of committee
9. Principal communication of SEL integration	Principal/ administrative staff do not share information about SEL with campus staff	Principal/ administrative staff share information about SEL with campus staff only when requested; written materials about SEL are occasionally shared with campus staff	Principal/administrative staff regularly share information about SEL during meetings; written materials about SEL are shared regularly with campus staff	Principal/administrative staff frequently share information about SEL during meetings and other campus events; written materials about SEL are shared frequently with campus staff and families	Principal/administrative staff frequently share information about SEL during meetings; written materials about SEL are shared frequently with campus staff and families; principal/administrative staff requests feedback from campus staff and families regarding SEL implementation

Note. * communication might be in print or electronic, including social media.

Based on conversations with CASEL representatives and SEL program staff, a factor analysis was conducted to determine if meaningful subscales emerged from the implementation rubric (described in more detail in the technical report). As a result, the rubric was divided into two subscales: implementation and support.

Implementation

· Weekly explicit SEL instruction

· Implementation of peace areas

· SEL integration

· Community engagement

· Principal communication of SEL integration

Total SEL implementation

Support

· Principal/SEL coach meetings

· Monthly facilitator/coach meeting

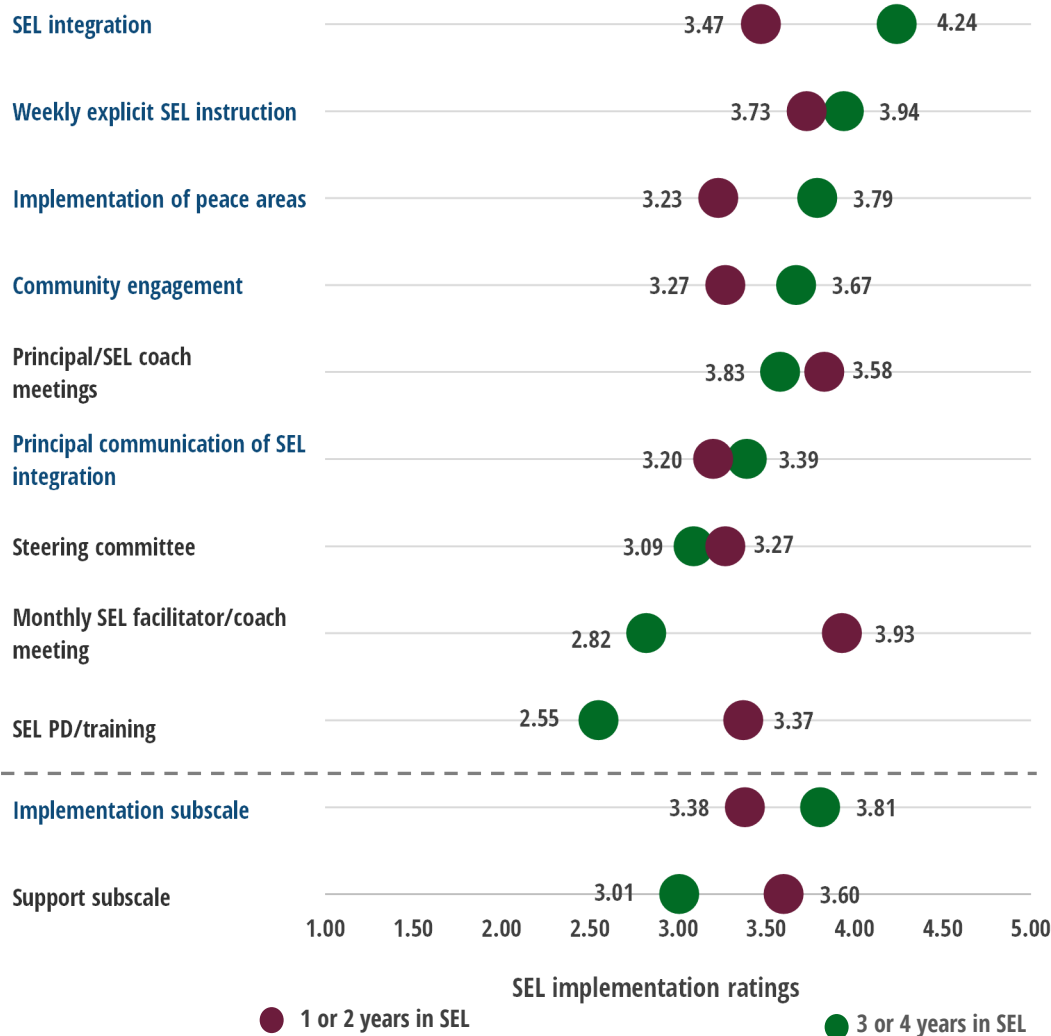· SEL PD/training

· Steering committee

SEL Implementation and Program Outcomes

According to previous research, SEL implementation, particularly integration of SEL skills in instruction, positively influences key outcomes (e.g., academic achievement and school climate; Lamb, 2014a, 2014b). First, we explored the relationship between longevity in SEL and program implementation. Because longevity in SEL is not necessarily indicative of the quality of program implementation (Lamb, 2014a, 2015), we examined the influence of SEL implementation level on program outcomes.

SEL implementation rubric

To understand the relationship between implementation and years in SEL, we compared average implementation scores for schools in SEL 1 or 2 years with scores for schools in SEL 3 or 4 years. Data were analyzed separately for each school level. Ratings of SEL integration and implementation of peace areas were significantly higher at elementary schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL experience than at elementary schools with 1 or 2 years of SEL experience (Figure 5). Schools newer to SEL received higher ratings on the

Figure 5
Elementary schools with more years in SEL received higher integration and implementation of peace area ratings than did schools with fewer years in SEL.

Domain	1 or 2 years	3 or 4 years
SEL integration	3.47	4.24
Weekly explicit SEL instruction	3.73	3.94
Implementation of peace areas	3.23	3.79
Community engagement	3.27	3.67
Principal/SEL coach meetings	3.58	3.83
Principal communication of SEL integration	3.20	3.39
Steering committee	3.27	3.09
Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting	3.93	2.82
SEL PD/training	3.37	2.55
Implementation subscale	3.38	3.81
Support subscale	3.60	3.01

SEL implementation ratings

● 1 or 2 years in SEL   ● 3 or 4 years in SEL

Source. 2014–2015 SEL implementation data
Note. Domains in **blue** are on the **implementation subscale**; domains in **dark gray** are on the **support subscale**.

support subscale and lower ratings on the implementation subscale than did schools with more SEL experience. Specifically, scores for monthly SEL facilitator/coach meetings and SEL professional development activities/training were higher at schools with fewer years of SEL participation than at schools with more years of SEL participation. These differences support what many elementary school SEL coaches have found in their daily work; that is, new SEL schools often require more support from their SEL coach, while more experienced SEL schools require less support from their SEL coach. Indeed, experienced SEL schools tend to have staff who help integrate SEL to suit their school's needs.

At the secondary level, scores for nearly all domains were significantly higher at schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL participation than at schools with 1 or 2 years of SEL participation (Figure 6). However, weekly explicit SEL instruction was significantly higher at schools with less SEL experience than at schools with more SEL experience.

Figure 6
Secondary schools with more years of SEL experience received higher implementation ratings in all domains than schools with fewer years of SEL experience.
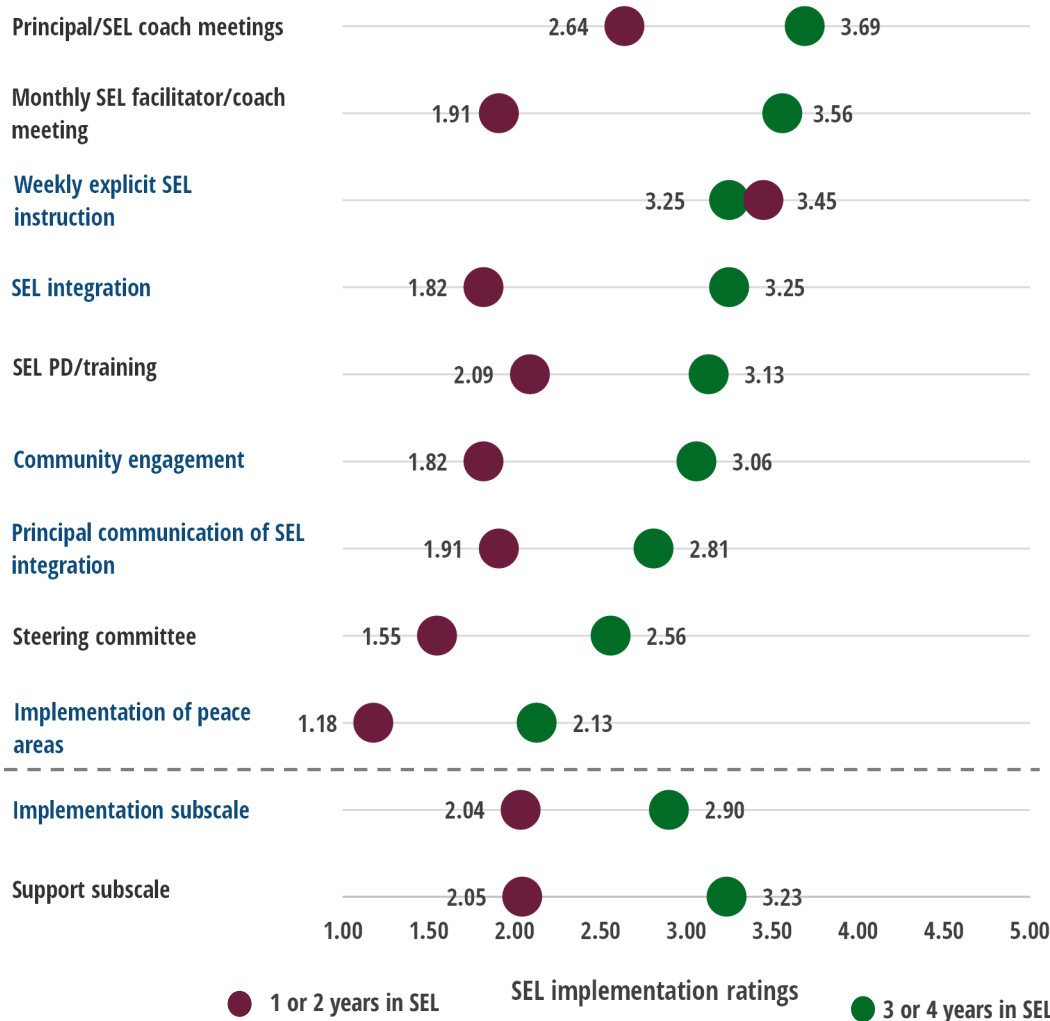
Domain	1 or 2 years in SEL	3 or 4 years in SEL
Principal/SEL coach meetings	2.64	3.69
Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting	1.91	3.56
Weekly explicit SEL instruction	3.45	3.25
SEL integration	1.82	3.25
SEL PD/training	2.09	3.13
Community engagement	1.82	3.06
Principal communication of SEL integration	1.91	2.81
Steering committee	1.55	2.56
Implementation of peace areas	1.18	2.13
Implementation subscale	2.04	2.90
Support subscale	2.05	3.23

SEL implementation ratings

● 1 or 2 years in SEL   ● 3 or 4 years in SEL

Source. 2014–2015 SEL implementation data
Note. Domains in **blue** are on the **implementation subscale**; domains in **dark gray** are on the **support subscale**.

Ratings on the SEL implementation rubric were significantly higher at the elementary school level than at the secondary school level, regardless of years in SEL, in the following domains: peace areas, SEL integration, community engagement, steering committee, principal communication of SEL integration, total SEL implementation score, and the implementation and support subscales (see Appendix A for a table with implementation scores, by level).

Further analyses suggested elementary schools generally scored higher than secondary schools, despite some variation in coaches' ratings. Analyses for each SEL coach showed one SEL coach rated schools significantly lower than did eight other coaches (coach 3 in Figure 7), and another SEL coach rated schools significantly higher than seven other coaches (coach 6 in Figure 7). It should be noted that coach 3 was a secondary school SEL coach, whereas coach 6 was an elementary school coach. Variation in implementation ratings across SEL coaches are likely in part a function of ratings generally being higher at the elementary school level than at the secondary level.

Figure 7
Secondary SEL coaches provided lower SEL implementation ratings than did elementary SEL coaches.
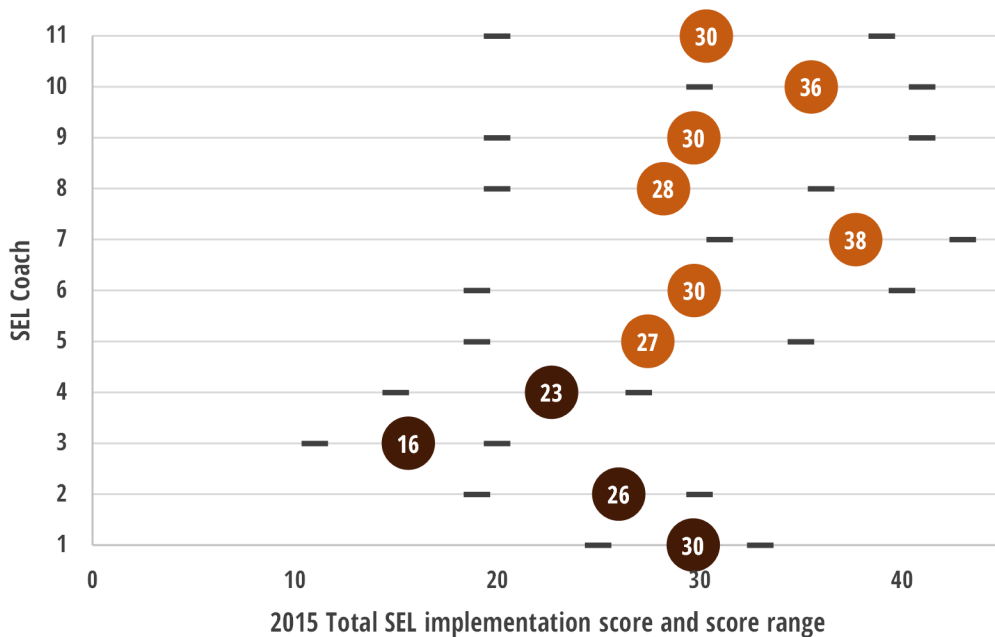
Source. 2014–2015 SEL implementation data
Note. Total implementation scores only are shown. SEL coaches with less than 5 ratings were excluded from this analysis.
The gray bars represent the highest and lowest total SEL implementation score for each coach.
Coaches 1 through 4 are secondary coaches and coaches 5 though 11 are elementary coaches.

Academic Achievement

After controlling for 2011–2012 STAAR performance, elementary schools with higher SEL integration scores had significantly higher STAAR math passing rates than did schools with lower SEL integration ratings (Table 1 and Figure 7). Math performance at schools with high SEL integration ratings improved, while performance at schools with low ratings declined. Campus participation in steering committees also was positively related to 2014–2015 STAAR math performance (Table 1).
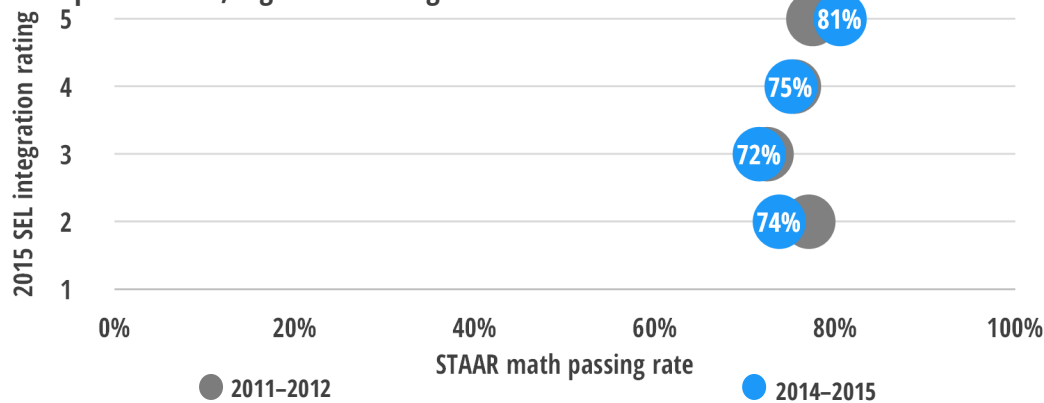
The same relationships were not found with reading performance (Table 1, Figure 8). Interestingly, implementation of peace areas and the frequency with which SEL coaches and facilitators met were negatively related to 2014–2015 STAAR reading performance (Table 1).

Table 1
SEL integration was positively related to 2015 passing rates in STAAR math.

SEL implementation rubric domains (*n* = 60)	2015 % met reading	2015 % met math
Principal/SEL coach meetings		
Weekly explicit SEL instruction		
Implementation of peace areas	-	
SEL integration		✓
Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting	-	
SEL PD/training		
Community engagement		
Steering committee		✓
Principal communication of SEL integration		
Implementation subscale		
Support subscale		
Total SEL implementation score		

Source. 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 STAAR data and 2014–2015 SEL campus implementation ratings.
Note. ✓significant positive weak-to-moderate correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40); – significant weak-to-moderate negative correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40).
Domains in **blue** are on the **implementation subscale**; domains in **dark gray** are on the **support subscale**.

Figure 8
After controlling for baseline year, SEL integration ratings predicted 2014–2015 STAAR math performance, regardless of length of time in SEL.

Source. 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 STAAR data and 2014–2015 SEL implementation ratings.
Note. β = 2.58, *p* = .06

Figure 9

SEL integration ratings did not predict 2014–2015 STAAR reading preformance.

Source. 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 STAAR data

Discipline and Attendance

At the secondary level, after controlling for baseline data (i.e., the 2010–2011 school year), high scores on domains relating to campus support for SEL (e.g., principal/SEL coach meetings, steering committee meetings, and the support subscale) were related to low 2014–2015 discipline and low chronic absenteeism rates (Table 2). Chronic absenteeism was computed as the percentage of students at a school who had 20 or more absences. After controlling for 2010–2011 rates, the degree to which steering committees were integrated into schools predicted lower discipline and chronic absenteeism rates in 2014–2015 (Figures 10 and 11). Additionally, schools with more

Table 2

Secondary schools with lower rates of chronic absenteeism and disciplinary infractions had more frequent meetings between their SEL coach and principal than did schools with higher rates of chronic absenteeism and disciplinary infractions.

SEL implementation rubric domains	Elementary (*n* = 62)		Secondary (*n* = 24)	
	2015 discipline	2015 chronic absenteeism	2015 discipline	2015 chronic absenteeism
Principal/SEL coach meetings			✓	✓
Weekly explicit SEL instruction				
Implementation of peace areas	-		-	
SEL integration				✓
Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting				✓
SEL PD/training				✓
Community engagement				✓
Steering committee			✓	
Principal communication of SEL integration			-	
Implementation subscale			-	✓
Support subscale			✓	✓
Total SEL implementation score				✓

Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 discipline (excluding mandatory removals) and attendance data and 2015 SEL implementation ratings.
Note. ✓ significant positive weak-to-moderate correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40); – significant weak-to-moderate negative correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40).
Domains in **blue** are on the **implementation subscale**; domains in **dark gray** are on the **support subscale**.

frequent SEL professional development activities/training had a lower percentage of students with chronic absenteeism than schools with less frequent professional development activities/training (Figure 11). This result suggests that schools offering targeted SEL professional development activities have fewer students missing 20 days of school or more than do schools that are less committed to teaching staff SEL skills.

Figure 10
After controlling for 2010–2011 discipline rates, secondary schools with steering committees that were incorporated into school planning had lower discipline rates in 2014–2015 than did schools with less incorporated steering committees.
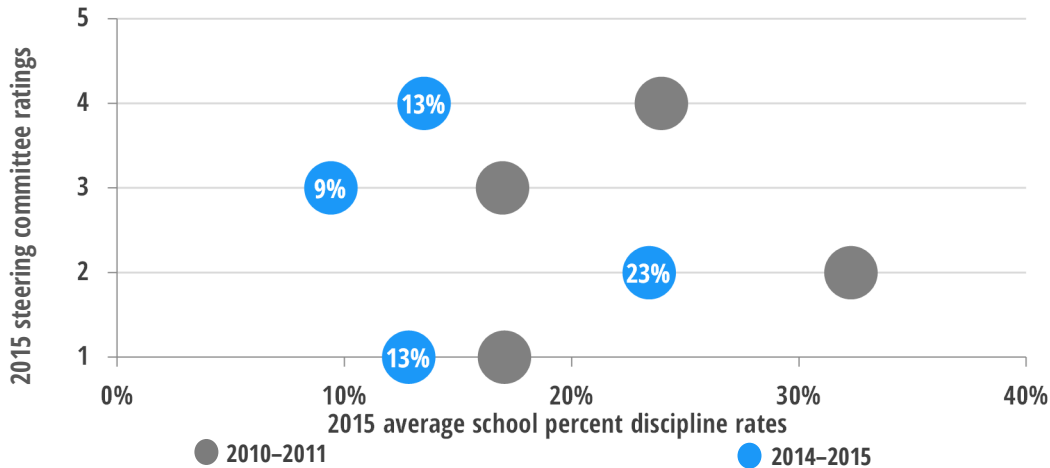
Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 discipline data and 2014–2015 SEL implementation ratings
Note. β = -1.77, *p* < .05

After controlling for 2010–2011 elementary discipline rates, no positive relationships were found between 2014–2015 discipline rates and SEL implementation ratings (Table 2). At the secondary level, schools with low chronic absenteeism rates also had high ratings on many SEL implementation scores (Table 2).

Figure 11
After controlling for 2010–2011 chronic absenteeism, secondary schools where more staff received regular, ongoing SEL professional development activities and training had lower chronic absenteeism in 2014–2015 than did schools where fewer staff received ongoing SEL professional development activities.
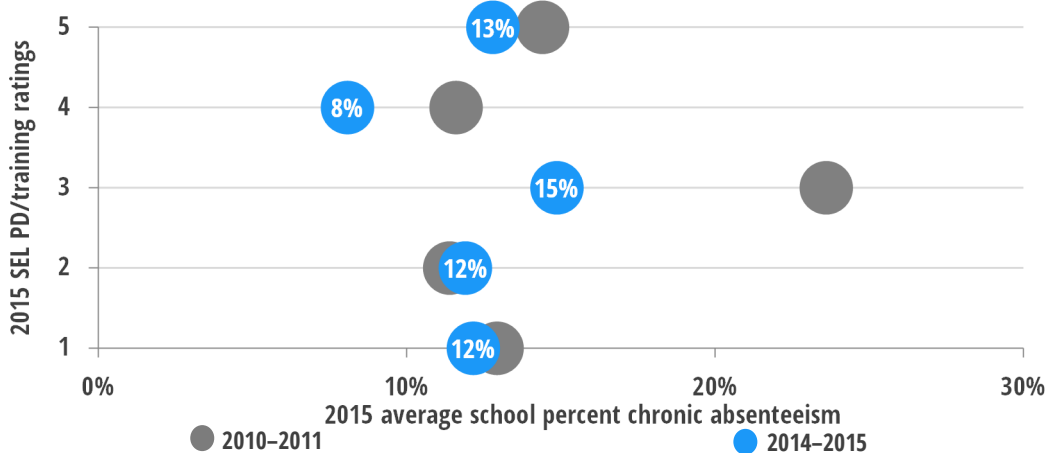
Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 attendance data and 2014–2015 SEL implementation ratings
Note. β = -1.13, *p* = .08

Similar relationships with attendance rates were not documented at the elementary school level due to high attendance rates and limited variability in the data.

Student Climate

We examined the extent to which SEL implementation ratings were related to Student Climate Survey responses for specific items (see sidebar). After controlling for 2010–2011 student climate ratings, elementary school students felt most safe in schools with high ratings of implementation of peace areas, principal communication of SEL integration, and overall support for SEL (Table 3). Schools with more frequent facilitator/coach meetings had lower student climate ratings in many areas than did schools with less frequent facilitator/coach meetings. It is possible that schools with more effective SEL implementation required less support from their SEL coach.

Table 3
Elementary schools with greater implementation of peace areas, SEL integration, principal communication of SEL integration, and the implementation subscale had more students reporting they felt safe at school than did schools with lower ratings on these domains.

SEL implementation rubric domains (n = 58)	Student Climate Survey items					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Principal/SEL coach meetings						
Weekly explicit SEL instruction						
Implementation of peace areas						✓	
SEL integration						✓	
Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting	-	-			-	-
SEL PD/training	-					
Community engagement						
Steering committee						
Principal communication of SEL integration						✓	
Implementation subscale						✓	
Support subscale						
Total SEL implementation score						

Source. 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 Student Climate Survey data and 2014–2015 SEL campus implementation ratings.
Note. Student Climate Survey items correspond with the following numbers:
1 = My classmates show respect to each other
2 = My classmates show respect to other students who are different
3 = Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions
4 = Adults at this school treat all students fairly
5 = I feel safe at my school
6 = Students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/taunted, threatened by other students)
Response options range from 1 = *Never* to 4 = *A lot of the time.* ✓significant weak-to-moderate positive correlation (r values between .20 and .40); – significant weak-to-moderate negative correlation (r values between .20 and .40).
Domains in **blue** are on the **implementation subscale**; domains in **dark gray** are on the **support subscale**.

Data suggest that schools where students' ratings of safety were high were also effectively implementing SEL. Students' ratings of school safety and bullying were positively related to almost all implementation domains. For example, ratings of "I feel safe at my school" were strong-to-very-strongly related to SEL integration. Moderate-to-strong relationships with students' perceptions of school safety ratings emerged with monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting, principal communication of SEL integration, and total 2015 SEL implementation score.

Student Climate Items

AISD Student Climate Survey (grades 3–11)

The following items from the behavioral environment subscale are considered integral to SEL integration (years of availability are included in parentheses):

1. My classmates show respect to each other (2010–2011 through 2014–2015).

2. My classmates show respect to other students who are different (2010–2011 through 2014–2015).

3. Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions (2010–2011 through 2014–2015).

4. Adults at this school treat all students fairly (2010–2011 through 2014–2015).

5. I feel safe at my school (2010–2011 through 2014–2015).

6. Students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/ taunted, threatened by other students) (2010–2011 through 2014–2015).

Additionally, more favorable ratings (i.e., lower ratings) of "students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/taunted, threatened by other students)" were strong to strongly related to high ratings of principal/SEL coach meetings and total 2015 SEL implementation score. Students' favorable ratings of bullying were also strong to moderately related to ratings of SEL integration and monthly SEL facilitator/ coach meetings. This suggests that at secondary schools where fewer students believed their peers were bullied, the SEL coach met with their principal and facilitator frequently and helped ensure SEL was effectively integrated.

> **After controlling for 2010–2011 ratings of "I feel safe at school," 2014–2015 secondary school ratings of school safety were positively related to all but two SEL implementation rubric domains.**

Table 4

Secondary schools where the peace-making process was implemented in most classrooms had higher ratings on nearly all Student Climate Survey items than did schools where the peace-making process was implemented in fewer classrooms.

SEL implementation rubric domains (*n* = 24)	Student Climate Survey items					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Principal/SEL coach meetings						✓✓✓
Weekly explicit SEL instruction		✓			✓	
Implementation of peace areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SEL integration	✓				✓✓	✓✓
Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting	✓				✓	✓✓
SEL PD/training					✓	✓
Community engagement	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Steering committee				✓		
Principal communication of SEL integration					✓	✓✓
Implementation subscale	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Support subscale					✓	✓✓
Total SEL implementation score	✓	✓		✓	✓✓	✓✓

Source. 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 Student Climate Survey data and 2014–2015 SEL campus implementation ratings.
*Note.* Student Climate Survey items correspond with the following numbers
1 = My classmates show respect to each other
2 = My classmates show respect to other students who are different
3 = Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions
4 = Adults at this school treat all students fairly
5 = I feel safe at my school
6 = Students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/taunted, threatened by other students)
Response options range from 1 = *Never* to 4 = *A lot of the time.* ✓significant weak-to-moderate positive correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40); ✓✓significant moderate-to-strong positive correlation (*r* values between .40 and .60); ✓✓✓significant strong-to-very strong positive correlation (*r* values between .60 and 1.0). – significant weak-to-moderate negative correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40).
Domains in **blue** are on the **implementation subscale**; domains in **dark gray** are on the **support subscale**.

After controlling for 2012–2013 average secondary school ratings of "students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/taunted, threatened by other students)," SEL integration significantly predicted more favorable 2014–2015 ratings (Figure 12); that is, after controlling for baseline year, schools where SEL was integrated into most classrooms also had lower ratings of bullying.

Figure 12
Secondary schools with higher SEL integration had more favorable 2014–2015 ratings of "students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/taunted, threatened by other students)" than did schools with lower SEL integration ratings.
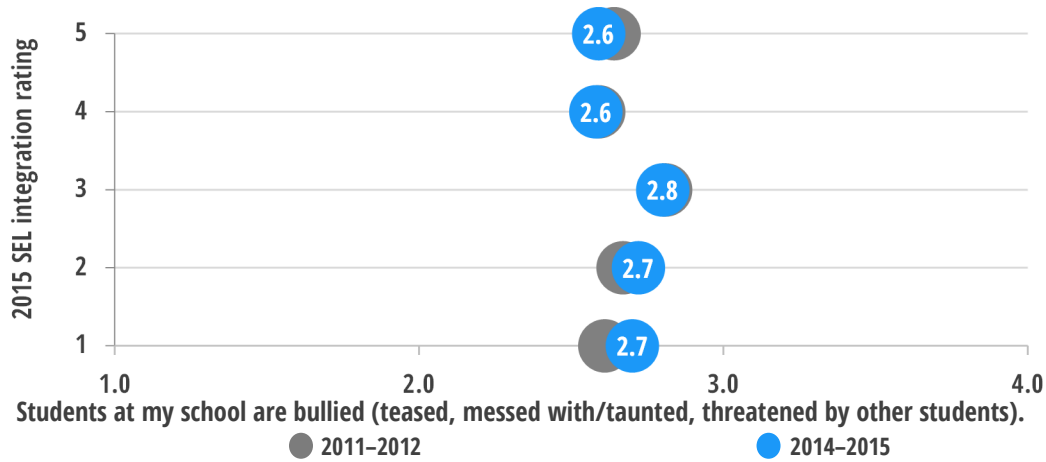
Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 Student Climate Survey data and 2014–2015 SEL implementation ratings
Note. Because this item is negatively worded, low scores are favorable. Ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth.
β = -.03, p < .01

Although not as strong of a relationship, at the secondary level, schools with high ratings of SEL integration had students who reported feeling safe at their school (Figure 13). This suggests that the degree to which SEL incorporated into school climate and culture results in students' positive perceptions of school safety.

Figure 13
After controlling for baseline ratings of school safety, schools with high SEL integration ratings had higher 2014–2015 average school ratings of "I feel safe at my school" than did schools with lower SEL integration ratings.
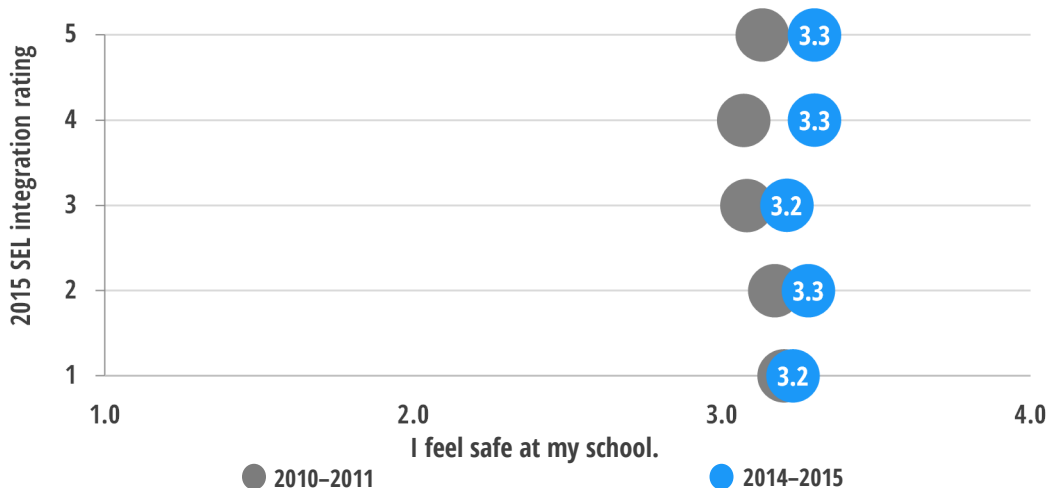
Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 Student Climate Survey data and 2014–2015 SEL implementation ratings
Note. Ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth. β = .04, p = .07

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Elementary school ratings of implementation of peace areas predicted positive 2014–2015 ratings of school safety, after controlling for 2011–2012 ratings of "I feel safe at my school" (Figure 14). This suggests that schools where peace areas were implemented in most classrooms and common areas had students who were more likely to feel safe at school than did schools where peace areas were implemented in fewer classrooms and common areas.

Elementary schools where peace areas were implemented into most classrooms had students who provided higher 2014–2015 ratings of "I feel safe at my school" than did schools where peace areas were implemented with less fidelity.
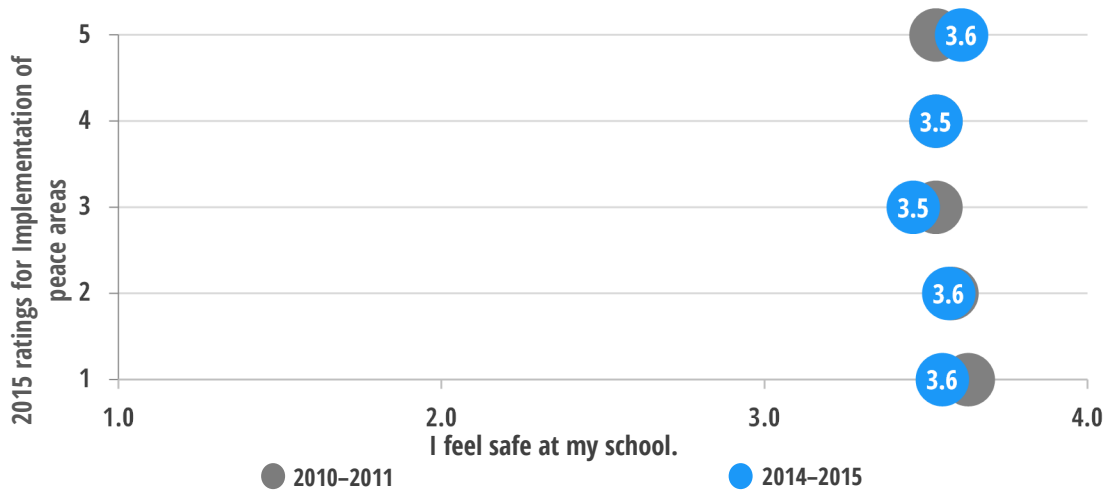
Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 Student Climate Survey data and 2014–2015 SEL implementation ratings
Note. Ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth. $\beta = .03$, $p = .06$

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Staff Climate

We examined the extent to which SEL implementation ratings were related to AISD TELL staff climate responses for specific items (see sidebar). After controlling for baseline TELL ratings, elementary schools with more frequent principal/SEL coach meetings had more teachers who believed their school effectively managed student behavior (i.e., managing student conduct) and that their school was a good place to work than did schools with less frequent principal/SEL coach meetings (Table 5; Figures 15 and 16).

Table 5
Elementary schools with more effective principal/SEL coach meetings and secondary schools with more frequent weekly explicit SEL instruction had more teachers who endorsed high ratings of managing student conduct and believed their school was a good place to work and learn than did schools with lower ratings on these domains.

SEL implementation rubric domains	TELL items	
	Managing student conduct	**Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.**
Elementary (*n* = 60)		
Principal/SEL coach meetings	✓	✓
Weekly explicit SEL instruction		
Implementation of peace areas		
SEL integration		
Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting		
SEL PD/training		
Community engagement		
Steering committee		
Principal communication of SEL integration		
Implementation subscale		
Support subscale		
Total SEL implementation score		
Secondary (*n* = 24)		
Principal/SEL coach meetings		
Weekly explicit SEL instruction	✓	✓
Implementation of peace areas		
SEL integration		
Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting		✓
SEL PD/training		
Community engagement	-	
Steering committee		
Principal communication of SEL integration	-	
Implementation subscale		
Support subscale		
Total SEL implementation score		

Source. 2014–2015 ECS SEL staff perception survey data and 2014–2015 SEL campus implementation ratings
Note. ✓significant weak-to-moderate positive correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40); – significant negative weak-to-moderate correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40).
Domains in **blue** are on the **implementation subscale**; domains in **dark gray** are on the **support subscale**.

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Figure 15
Elementary schools with more frequent principal and SEL coach meetings had higher 2014–2015 average school ratings of managing student conduct than did schools with less frequent principal and SEL coach meetings.
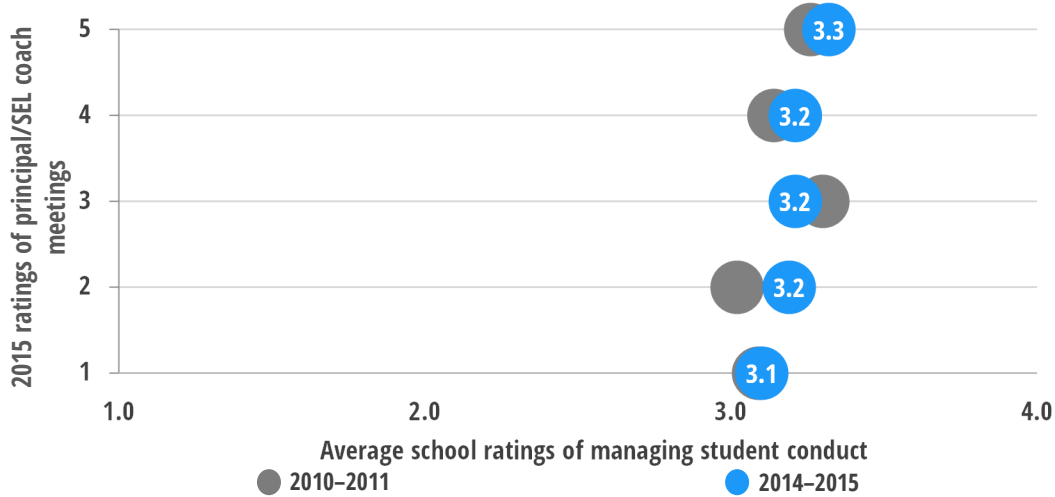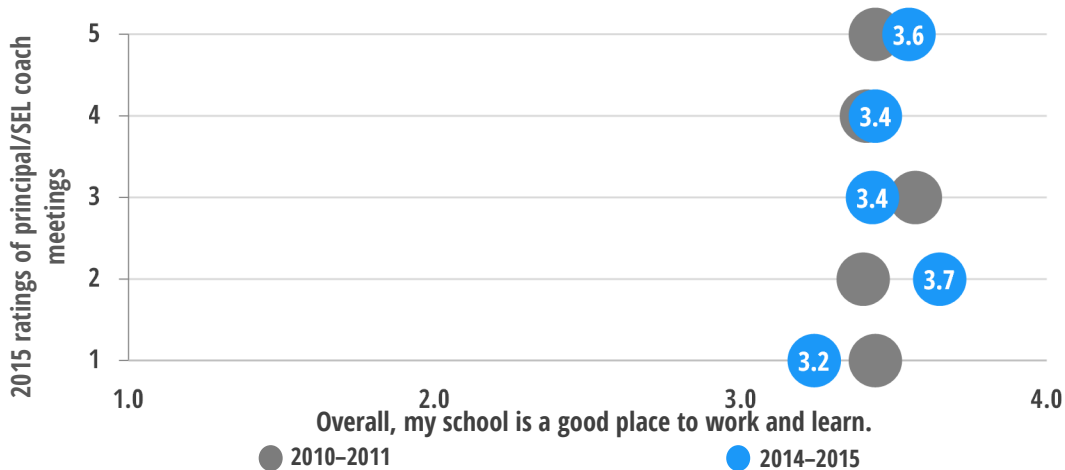

Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 TELL data and 2014–2015 SEL implementation data
Note. Ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth. β = .04, p < .05

That is, schools where the principal worked closely with their SEL coach to establish clear SEL goals for their school seemed to have students and staff who worked together to manage students' behavior.

Additionally, elementary schools with more frequent principal/SEL coach meetings had more favorable ratings of overall school climate than did schools with less frequent principal/SEL coach meetings (Figure 16). In discussions with SEL coaches, many believed that the degree to which the principal supported the program, modeled SEL skills, and worked with SEL program staff to integrate SEL into daily activities was integral to effective SEL implementation.

Figure 16
Elementary schools with more frequent principal and SEL coach meetings had higher ratings of "overall, my school is a good place to work and learn" than did schools with less frequent principal and SEL coach meetings.

Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 TELL data and 2014–2015 SEL implementation data
Note. Ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth. β = .06, p < .05

At the secondary level, schools with more frequent weekly explicit SEL instruction had more teachers who believed their school managed student behavior and that their school was a good place to work and learn than did schools with less frequent explicit SEL instruction (Table 8). Additionally, after controlling for baseline school ratings of managing student conduct, schools where most staff implemented SEL instruction had staff who worked together to manage and support student behavior (Figure 17). Interestingly, teachers ratings of managing student conduct were negatively related to school ratings of community engagement and principal communication of SEL integration.

Secondary schools with more frequent explicit SEL instruction had high staff ratings of managing student conduct than did schools with less frequent explicit SEL instruction.
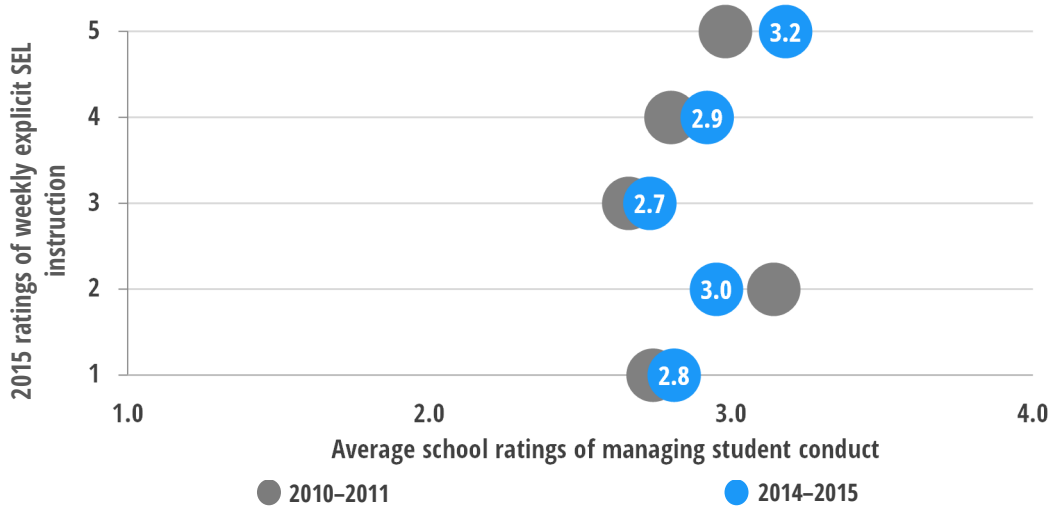
Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 TELL data and 2014–2015 SEL implementation data
Note. Ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth. β = .05, p = .06

In what ways did high-needs SEL schools improve after 3 or 4 years in SEL?

Schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL experience were categorized as high needs and non-high needs, based on the following criteria:

- Schools received a high-needs score of 1 if they were in the bottom quartile[1] in any of the following areas: 2010–2011 attendance rates, 2010–2011 student ratings of "I feel safe at school," 2010–2011 staff ratings of "overall, my school is a good place to work and learn," and 2010–2011 staff ratings of managing student conduct.

- Schools also received a score of 1 if they were in the top quartile in the following areas: 2010–2011 discipline rates, and 2010–2011 student ratings of "students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/taunted, threatened by other students)."

- Scores were summed across all six areas so that scores ranged from 0 to 6. Due to the small number of schools meeting these criteria, elementary, middle, and high schools were combined.

- Schools with a score of 3 or greater were considered high needs ($n = 23$) and schools with 2 or less were considered non-high needs ($n = 35$).
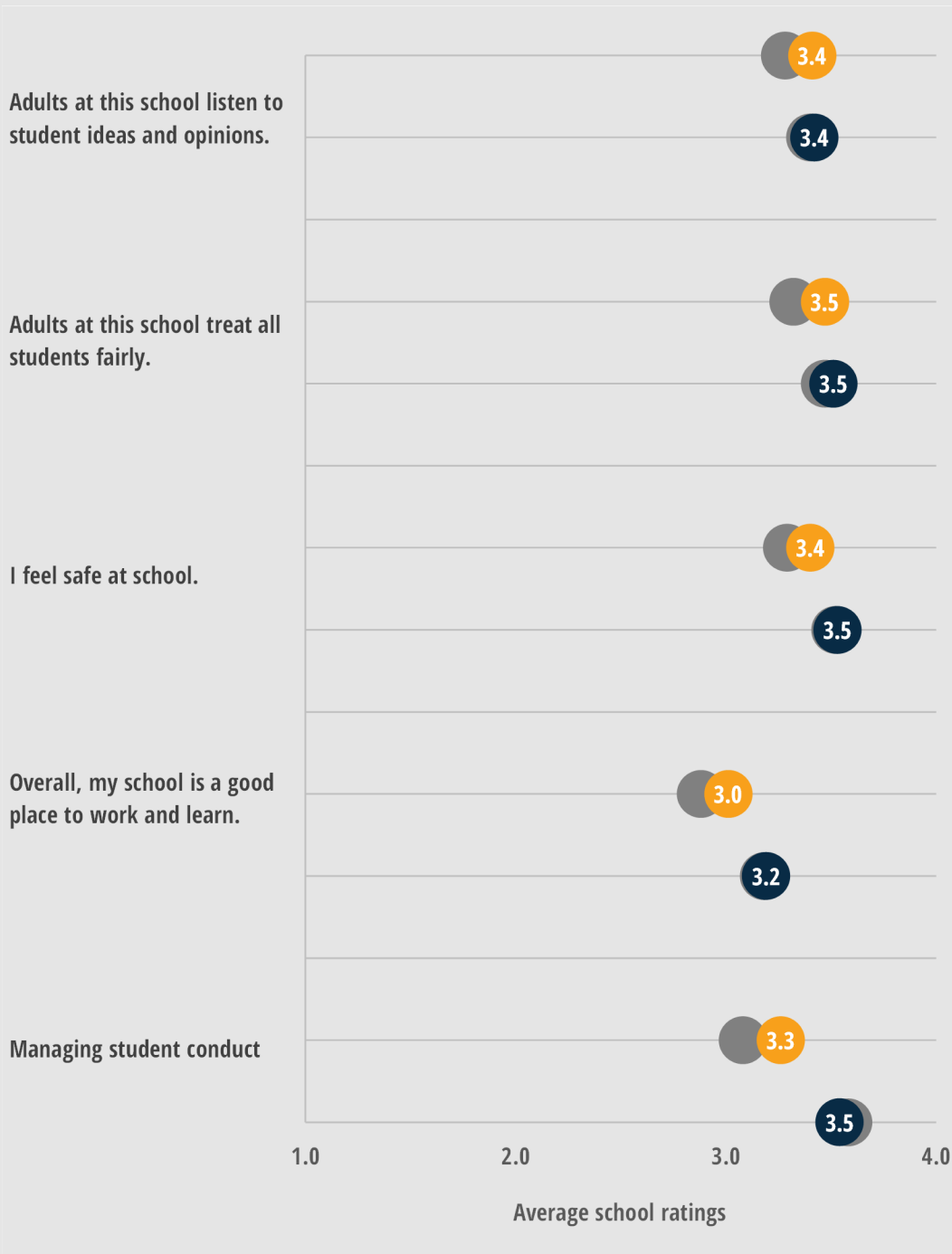
Descriptive analyses compared outcome measures of interest from baseline year through 2014–2015 to determine if high-needs schools experienced greater improvement over time than did non-high-needs schools. High-needs schools with 3 or 4 years in SEL experienced greater improvements across several outcomes than did non-high-needs schools with 3 or 4 years in SEL (Figure 19). Importantly, students' ratings of "I feel safe at my school" improved more over time at high-needs schools than did students' ratings of "I feel safe at my school" at non-high-needs schools. Also important, staff members ratings of "overall my school is a good place to work and learn" and managing student conduct improved more over time at high-needs schools than did staff ratings of these items at non-high-needs schools (Figure 18).

[1] Quartile rankings were based on schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL experience only; ALC was excluded from the analysis.

Figure 18
High-needs schools experienced greater improvement over time than did **non-high-needs schools** with respect to students' perceptions of their relationships with adults at their school and school safety.

Staff ratings of work environment and managing student behavior at **high-needs** schools also improved more over time than did staff ratings at **non-high-needs** schools.

Category	Rating
Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions.	3.4 / 3.4
Adults at this school treat all students fairly.	3.5 / 3.5
I feel safe at school.	3.4 / 3.5
Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.	3.0 / 3.2
Managing student conduct	3.3 / 3.5

Average school ratings

1.0　2.0　3.0　4.0

● 2011–2012 ratings for non-high needs schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL

● 2011–2012 ratings for high needs schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL

● 2014–2015 ratings for non-high needs schools with 3 or 4 years in SEL

● 2014–2015 high needs schools with 3 or 4 years in SEL

Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 Student Climate Survey and TELL data
Note. Response options on the Student Climate Survey range from 1 = *Never* to 4 = *A lot of the time*, response options on the Staff Climate Survey range from 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 4 = *Strongly agree.* Ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Although less pronounced, STAAR reading and math performance improved slightly more at high-needs SEL schools than at non-high-needs SEL schools (Figure 19).

Improvements in STAAR reading and math from 2011–2012 to 2014–2015 were slightly higher at high-needs SEL elementary schools than at non-high-needs SEL elementary schools.

% Met reading

% Met math

% Met STAAR reading and math

- ● 2011–2012 ratings for non-high-needs schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL
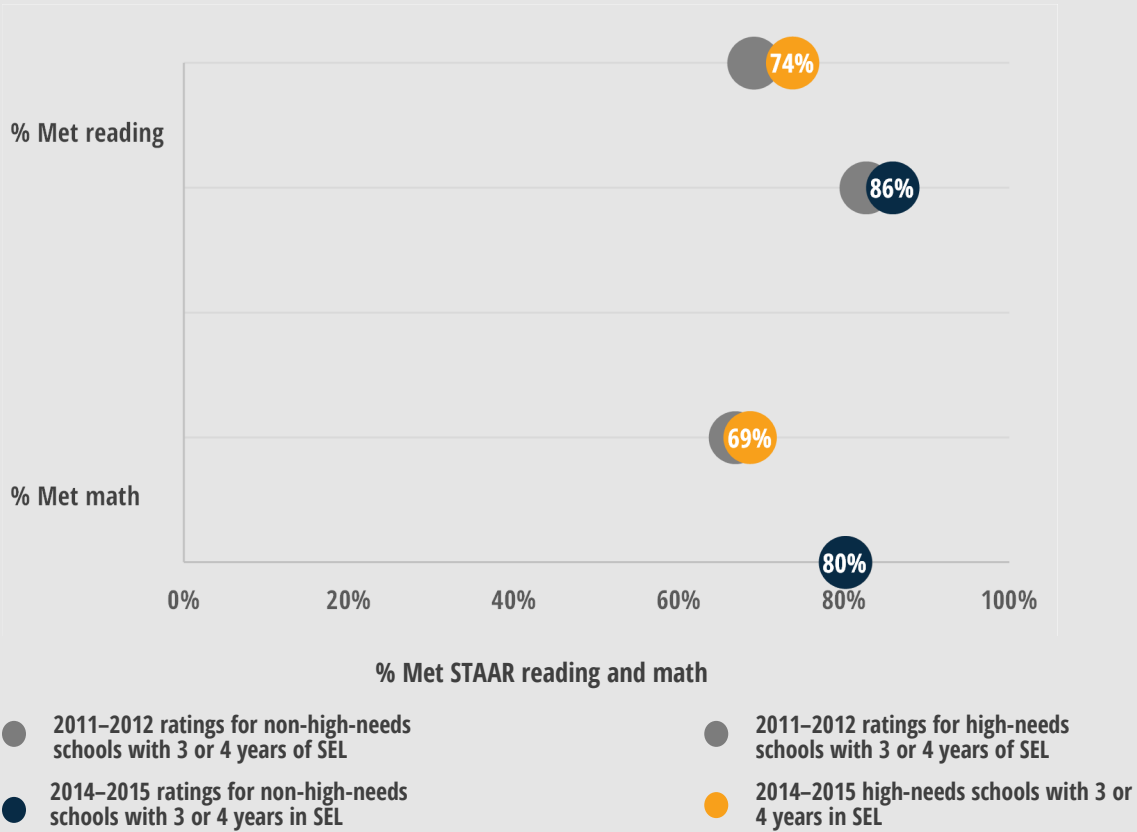- ● 2014–2015 ratings for non-high-needs schools with 3 or 4 years in SEL
- ● 2011–2012 ratings for high-needs schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL
- ● 2014–2015 high-needs schools with 3 or 4 years in SEL

Source. 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 STAAR data

Conclusion

Collectively, these results reflect the hard work that SEL program staff have been doing to implement SEL districtwide. Importantly, the degree to which schools integrated SEL skills and implemented peace areas were related to several positive outcomes, regardless of their length of time in SEL. For example, SEL integration predicted elementary school students' 2014-2015 performance in math and secondary students' ratings of school safety and bullying. Implementation of peace areas was also positively related to secondary students' SEL skills in areas related to conflict management. Additionally, implementation of peace areas predicted elementary school students' feelings of safety. SEL integration and implementation of peace areas are elements of SEL that schools can target, regardless of their length of time in SEL, to begin to see the positive effects of SEL. Finally, the results highlighting the gains made by high-needs SEL schools further suggest that schools can make positive improvements on their campus in areas related to SEL (e.g., school climate), regardless of where they started or what background characteristics define their school. This knowledge will help program staff work with schools in the coming years as the program expands districtwide.

These results suggest that schools where teachers spend more time integrating SEL into their daily lesson plans have teachers who believe their students follow the school rules, and that school staff work together to enforce school rules. These two results highlight a key area of SEL programming: creating a positive school climate that teaches students how to manage their behaviors so teachers can focus more time on teaching than on managing students' behavior. Indeed, many SEL coaches believed that once SEL skills are mastered in the classroom, teachers spend less time redirecting students' behavior and managing students' problems and more time on actively teaching their lessons. So, for example, students who can work out a problem on their own in a peace area allow teachers to continue teaching the lesson and let those students who are having a problem resolve it on their own, rather than stopping the lesson for the entire class to intervene. Given that SEL has been implemented districtwide, the degree to which campuses integrate SEL skills will become more important to consider when examining program effects instead of longevity in the program.

Future research

Forthcoming reports include an analysis of these same outcome variables over time, and an analysis of students' perceptions of their own SEL competencies and how they relate to other outcomes of interest (e.g., student achievement data, attendance, student report card data, student climate data).

Appendix

Appendix A. SEL Implementation Rubric Ratings, by Level

SEL implementation rubric domains	Elementary (n = 63)	Secondary (n = 26)
Principal/SEL coach meetings	3.70	3.23
Weekly explicit SEL instruction	3.84	3.42
Implementation of peace areas	3.52*	1.77
SEL integration	3.87*	2.65
Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting	3.35	2.88
SEL PD/training	2.94	2.65
Community engagement	3.48*	2.54
Steering committee	3.17*	2.08
Principal communication of SEL integration	3.30*	2.46
Implementation subscale	3.60*	2.57
Support subscale	3.29*	2.71
Total SEL implementation score	31.17*	23.69

Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 STAAR, discipline, attendance, Student Climate, TELL AISD Staff climate data, and 2014–2015 SEL implementation data
Note. Domains in blue are on the implementation subscale; domains in dark gray are on the support subscale.
* indicates rating is significantly higher across level, p < .05

outcomes	SEL implementation domain											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Elementary (*n* = 63)												
% Met Reading 2014–2015			-		-							
% Met Math 2014–2015				✓					✓			
2015 discipline												
2015 chronic absenteeism			-									
My classmates show respect to each other.					-	-						
My classmates show respect to other students who are different.					-							
Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions.												
Adults at this school treat all students fairly.												
I feel safe at my school.			✓	✓	-				✓	✓		
Students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with, threatened by other students).					-							
Managing student conduct	✓											
Overall, my school is a good place to work and	✓											
Secondary (*n* = 26)												
2015 discipline	✓		-					✓	-	-	✓	
2015 chronic absenteeism	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
My classmates show respect to each other.			✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓
My classmates show respect to other students		✓	✓				✓			✓		✓
Adults at this school listen to student ideas and				✓			✓					
Adults at this school treat all students fairly.				✓			✓	✓		✓		✓
I feel safe at my school.		✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
Students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with, threatened by other students).	✓✓			✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Managing student conduct			✓						-		-	
Overall, my school is a good place to work and			✓									

Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 STAAR, discipline, attendance, Student Climate, TELL AISD Staff climate data, and 2014–2015 SEL implementation data

Note. SEL implementation domains correspond with the following numbers: 1 = Principal/SEL coach meetings, 2 = Weekly explicit SEL instruction, 3 = Implementation of peace areas, 4 = SEL integration, 5 = Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting, 6 = SEL PD/training, 7 = Community engagement, 8 = Steering committee, 9 = Principal communication of SEL integration, 10 = implementation subscale, 11 = support subscale, and 12 = Total SEL implementation score. Numbers in **blue** are on the **implementation subscale**; domains in **dark gray** are on the **support subscale**.
✓significant weak-to-moderate positive correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40); ✓✓significant moderate-to-strong positive correlation (*r* values between .40 and .60); ✓✓✓significant strong-to-very strong positive correlation (*r* values between .60 and 1.0). – significant weak-to-moderate negative correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40); – significant negative weak-to-moderate correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40).

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Funding

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December 2015

Publication 14.138