Social and Emotional Learning

Key Outcomes, 2010–2011 Through 2014–2015

Department of
Research and Evaluation
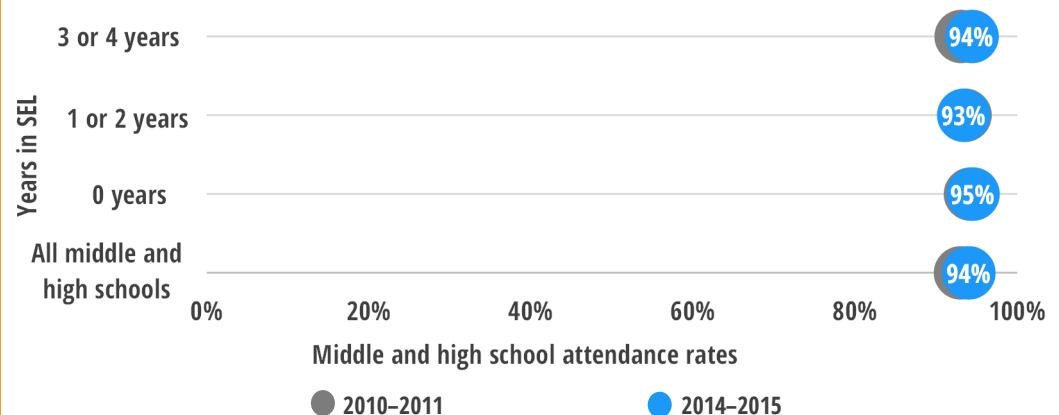AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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 district-wide SEL implementation (i.e., 2010–2011, when available) through 2014–2015. Key outcome measures (e.g., academic achievement, discipline, attendance, school climate, staff climate, staff perceptions of SEL, SEL implementation rubric ratings, and students' SEL competency ratings) were analyzed over time using the same baseline year of data (2010–2011, when available) to determine if change 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.

We found some instances in which schools with more years in SEL experienced greater improvements in SEL outcomes than did schools with fewer years in SEL. For example, elementary schools participating in SEL have experienced significant improvements in the State of Texas Assessments for Academic Readiness (STAAR) reading from 2011– 2012 to 2014–2015, while schools that have yet to join SEL did not.

Secondary schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL participation experienced greater improvements in attendance rates in 2014–2015 than did schools with 1 or 2 years of SEL participation (Figure 1). Finally, the percentage of change in average secondary school ratings of many school climate items increased more at secondary schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL experience from 2010–2011 to 2014–2105 than did the percentage of change in ratings at schools with fewer years of SEL experience.

These results also suggest that length of time in SEL is not necessarily indicative of the program's success. As outlined in the accompanying report (Lamb, 2015), the degree to which schools integrate SEL into their classrooms seems to have stronger program effects than does length of implementation time. These findings are important because they suggest that schools can begin to improve school outcomes by implementing SEL with fidelity.

Figure 1

Attendance rates at secondary schools with more years in SEL improved slightly more than did attendance rates at other secondary schools.

Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 AISD student attendance data

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Purpose

This report summarizes analyses of key outcome measures (e.g., academic achievement, discipline, school climate, staff climate, staff perceptions of SEL, SEL implementation rubric ratings, and students' SEL competency ratings) to determine if participation in SEL results in changes in these outcomes over time. When applicable, changes in outcome measures were computed since 2010–2011, the year prior to SEL implementation in AISD.

Analyses of Key Outcomes Over Time

This section describes analyses conducted with each of the key outcome variables from 2010–2011 (when applicable) through 2014–2015. All schools were included to determine if change 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. Throughout this report, small sample sizes precluded us from using statistical significance tests; instead, data were examined for trends and patterns.

Academic Achievement

Across school levels, students' achievement gains in reading and algebra were more pronounced among schools with more years of participation in SEL than schools with less participation in SEL. Among elementary schools, schools with more years of participation in SEL experienced slightly greater increases in State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) reading passing percentages from 2011–2012 to 2014–2015 than did schools with fewer years of SEL participation (Figure 2). Appendix A contains average passing rates in reading and math over time. There were no significant improvements over time for elementary math.

However, some schools with more SEL experience also started with higher STAAR passing percentages in 2011–2012 than did schools joining SEL in later years. To account for differences in starting points, we computed the percentage of change in school passing rates on STAAR reading and math from 2011–2012 (the year STAAR was implemented) through 2014–2015, regardless of when a school joined SEL. No clear pattern was evident. There was little or no relationship between percentage of change in passing rate and longevity in SEL (Figure 3).

Figure 2

Compared with Spring 2012, higher percentages of elementary students met the state standard in reading in 2015, especially at schools with more years in SEL.
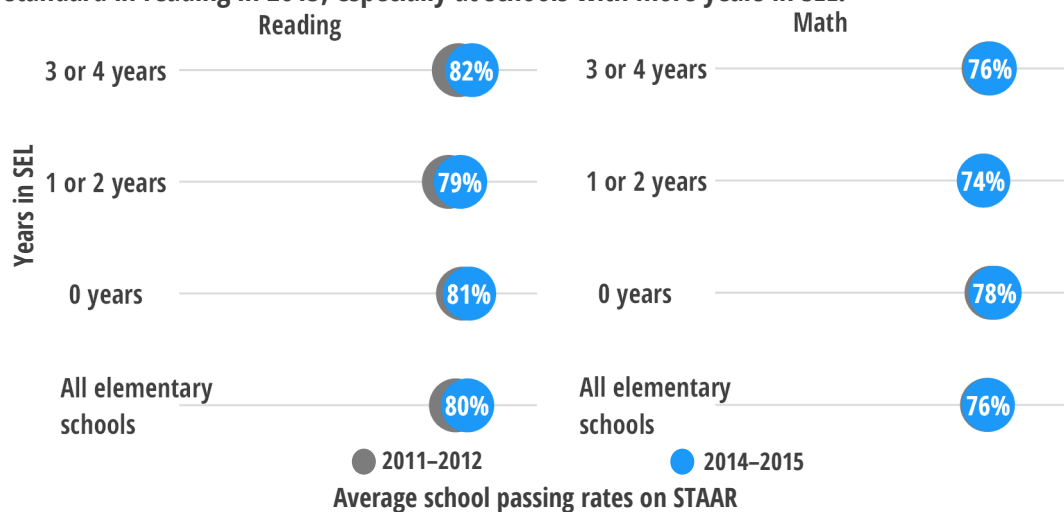
Source. 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 STAAR data, elementary schools only

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Data Analyzed in this report

STAAR

STAAR reading and math in 3rd through 8th grades from 2011–2012 to 2014–2015 were analyzed. Due to changes in the end-of-course (EOC) exams, only Algebra I data from 2013–2014 to 2014–2015 were included.

AISD discipline data

The percentages of students with discretionary infractions (excluding mandatory removals) from 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 were analyzed.

AISD attendance data

Attendance data, along with chronic absenteeism (i.e., 20 or more absences a year), between 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 were analyzed.

AISD Student Climate Survey

Students in grades 3–11 participate in the AISD Student Climate Survey. SEL-related items were analyzed from 2010–2011 through 2014–2015.

AISD Student Substance Use and Safety Survey (SSUSS)

A sample of students in grades 6–12 participate in the AISD SSUSS. SEL-related items were analyzed from 2010–2011 through 2013–2014.

SEL competencies

In 2014–2015, 7th- and 10th-grade students' ratings and 3rd-grade teachers' ratings of their students' SEL competencies were analyzed.

Staff climate and perceptions of SEL

The Teaching, Empowering, Leading, Learning (TELL) Staff Climate Survey is administered annually to all staff. SEL-related items from 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 were analyzed. Staff's perceptions of SEL from the 2014–2015 Employee Coordinated Survey (ECS) were also analyzed.

Figure 3

All elementary schools, regardless of SEL participation, experienced improved reading performance since 2011–2012, with little change in math over the same time period.
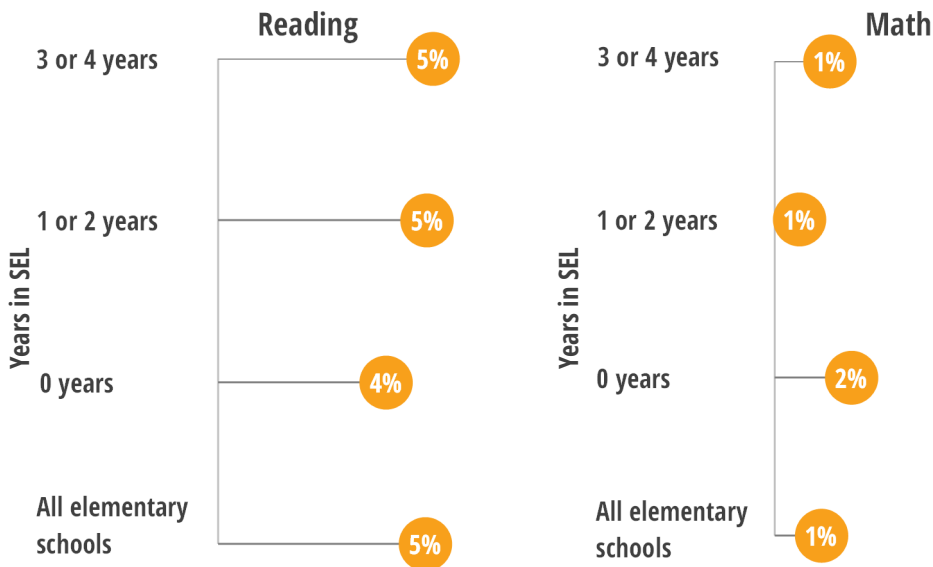
Average school percentage of change in STAAR passing rates, 2011–2012 through 2014–2015

Source. 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 STAAR data, elementary schools only

How to interpret the figures in this report

Throughout this report, **blue** represents **2014–2015 data** and **gray** represents baseline-year data.

Orange is used to represent the **percentage of change** in data from **baseline year through 2014–2015.**

Descriptive analyses examined changes in EOC Algebra 1 passing rates from 2013–2014 to 2014–2015 (too few schools had EOC data in other subjects). Schools participating in SEL for 3 or more years had higher average school passing rates in 2014–2015 (87%) than did schools with 1 or 2 years of SEL experience (83%). The average school passing rates in Algebra I decreased regardless of length of time with SEL, but the negative percentage of change in scores from 2013–2014 to 2014–2015 was less pronounced at schools with 3 or more years of SEL (-4%) than at schools with 1 or 2 years of SEL (-8%).

Discipline

Discretionary removals (excluding mandatory removals; see sidebar for detailed information) declined significantly from 2010–2011 to 2014–2015 for both elementary and secondary schools, regardless of length of time in SEL (Figure 4). Trends emerged whereby schools with more years in SEL experienced a greater decrease in disciplinary rates than did schools with fewer years in SEL.

Figure 4
Since 2010–2011, discretionary removals decreased districtwide.
Decreases in discipline rates were greater at middle and high schools with more SEL experience than at schools with no SEL experience; this pattern was less pronounced at the elementary school level.
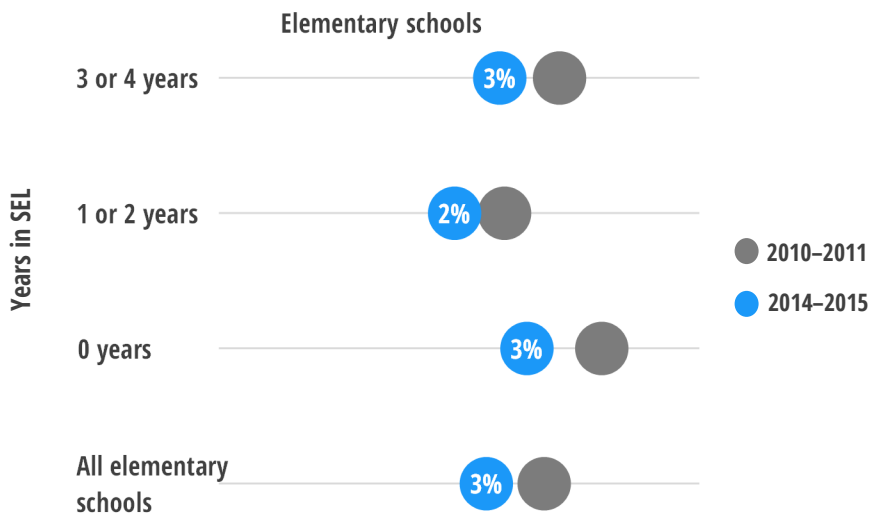
Elementary schools

Years in SEL

- 3 or 4 years: 3%
- 1 or 2 years: 2%
- 0 years: 3%
- All elementary schools: 3%

● 2010–2011
● 2014–2015

Average school rate of students with discretionary removals (excluding mandatory removals)

Middle and high schools

Years in SEL

- 3 or 4 years: 15%
- 1 or 2 years: 17%
- 0 years: 16%
- All middle and high Schools: 16%
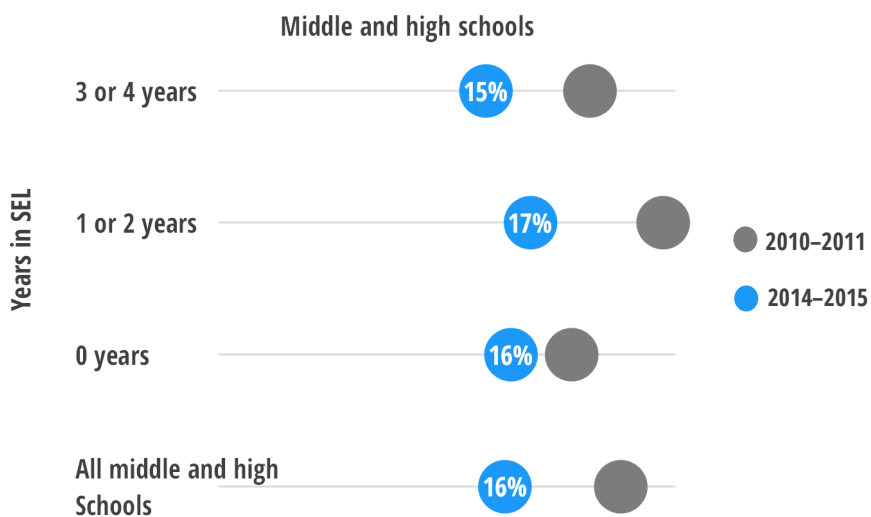
● 2010–2011
● 2014–2015

Average school rate of students with discretionary removals (excluding mandatory removals)

Source. 2010–2011 through 2014-2015 AISD student discipline data
Note. Elementary school data are included when the average school percentage of disciplinary referrals was greater than 1% in 2010–2011 and 2014–2015.

The percentage of change in discretionary removal rates from 2010–2011 to 2014–2015 was generally greater for elementary schools with 3 or 4 years in SEL than for those with fewer years in SEL (Figure 5). This trend was not found at the secondary level (Figure 6).

Elementary schools with more years in SEL generally showed a greater reduction in discretionary removals than did schools with fewer years in SEL.
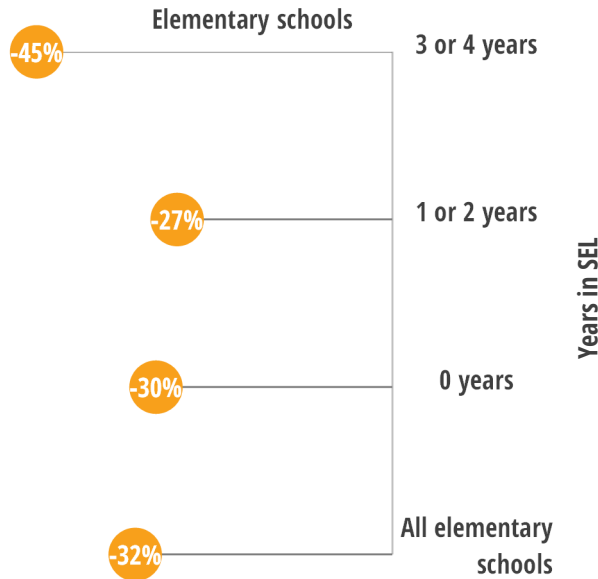
Elementary schools

-45% — 3 or 4 years

-27% — 1 or 2 years

-30% — 0 years

-32% — All elementary schools

Years in SEL

Average school percentage of decrease in disciplinary removals (excluding mandatory removals)

Source. 2010-2011 through 2014-2015 AISD student discipline data
Note. Elementary school data are included when the average school percentage of disciplinary referrals was greater than 1% in 2010–2011 and 2014–2015.

Secondary SEL schools with more years in SEL showed a greater reduction in campus discretionary removals than did schools with no years in SEL.
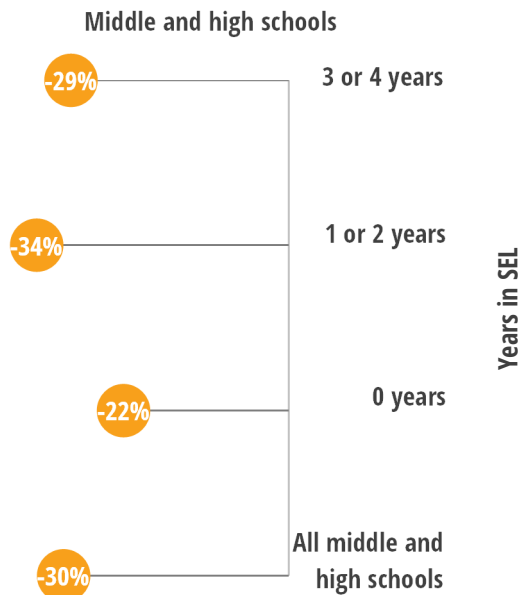
Middle and high schools

-29% — 3 or 4 years

-34% — 1 or 2 years

-22% — 0 years

-30% — All middle and high schools

Years in SEL

Average school percentage of decrease in disciplinary removals (excluding mandatory removals)

Source. 2010-2011 through 2014-2015 AISD student discipline data

Attendance and Dropout Rates

Between 2010–2011 and 2014–2015, attendance rates remained high (i.e., 96%) at the elementary school level regardless of length of time with SEL. At the secondary level, schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL participation experienced greater improvements in attendance rates in 2014–2015 than did schools with fewer (0, 1, 2) years of SEL participation (Figure 7). The percentage of change in attendance rates at secondary schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL participation also was greater than the percentage of change for schools with less SEL experience (Figure 8). Attendance data for elementary schools are available in Appendix B.

Figure 7
Attendance rates at secondary schools with greater years in SEL improved slightly more than did attendance rates at other secondary schools.
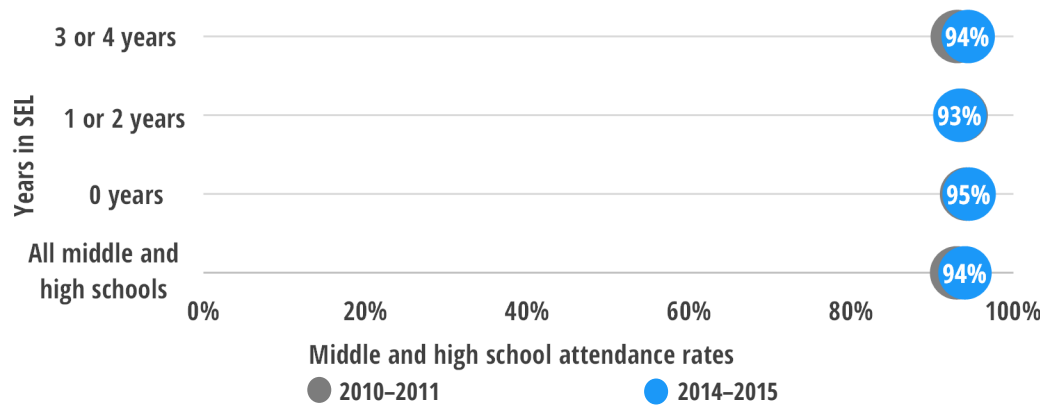
Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 AISD student attendance data

Figure 8
Attendance rates at secondary schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL experience increased by 1.5%, compared with a decrease of 0.2% at schools with 1 or 2 years of SEL experience.
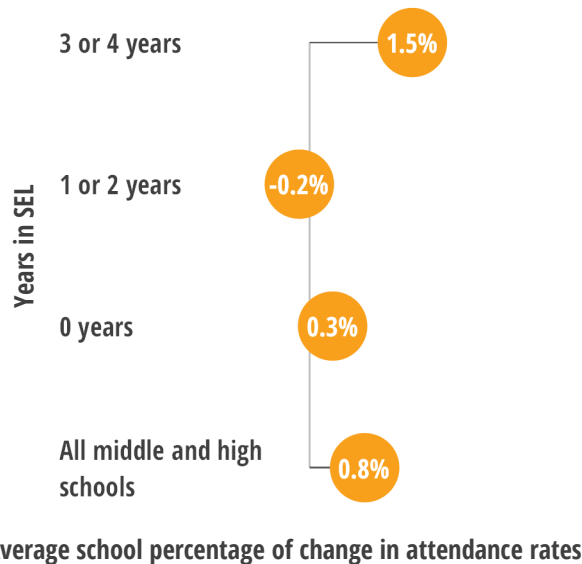
Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 AISD student attendance data

Additionally, we analyzed chronic absenteeism, or the percentage of students on a campus with 20 or more absences over the course of a school year. Secondary schools with 3 or 4 years in SEL experienced a greater reduction in chronic absenteeism than did schools with 1 or 2 years in SEL (Figure 9). Indeed, secondary schools with more years in SEL experienced a greater percentage of decrease in chronic absenteeism (19%) than did schools with fewer years in SEL (3%, Figure 10).

Figure 9
Secondary schools participating in SEL for 3 or 4 years experienced a greater decrease in chronic absenteeism than did schools participating in SEL for 1 or 2 years.

Middle and high school rates of chronic absenteeism
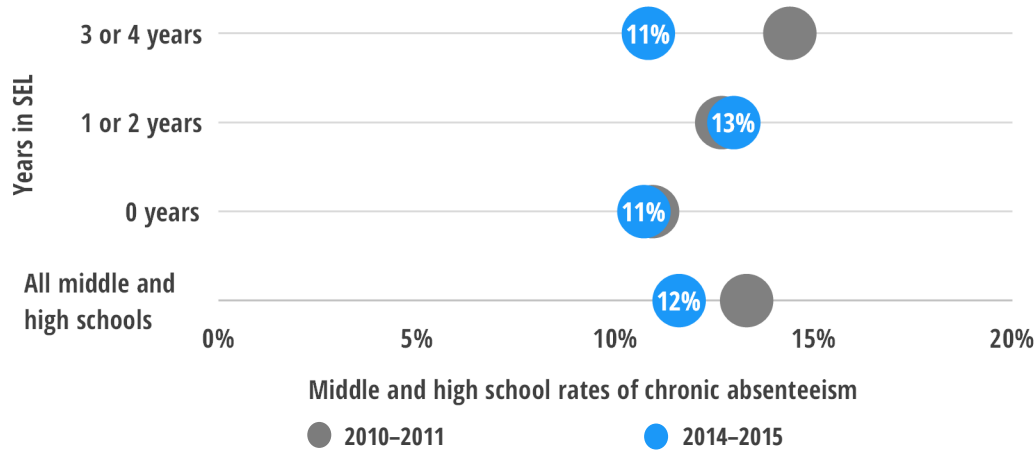
● 2010–2011   ● 2014–2015

Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 AISD student attendance data

Figure 10
The rate of chronic absenteeism decreased 19% at secondary schools participating in SEL for 3 or 4 years, compared with an increase of 3% at secondary schools participating in SEL for 1 or 2 years.

Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 AISD student attendance data

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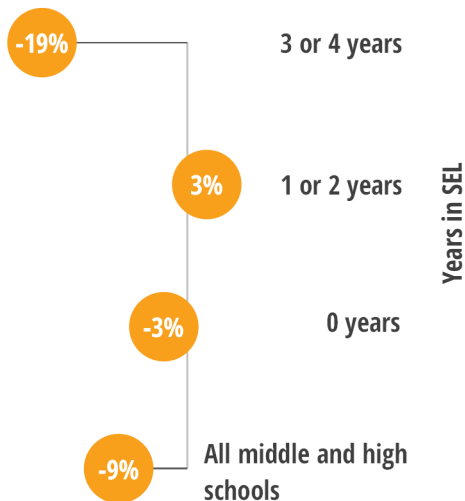
Because student dropout rates are generally greater at the high school level than at the middle school level, examinations of student dropout rates between 2010–2011 and 2013–2014 were conducted separately for middle and high schools. Middle schools with more years in SEL experienced a greater reduction in dropout rates than did middle schools with no years in SEL (Figures 11). Dropout rates were lowest at schools with more years in SEL in both 2010–2011 and 2013–2014.

Figure 11
The percentage of students dropping out at SEL schools with 3 or 4 years in SEL was smaller than the percentage of students dropping out at schools with fewer years in SEL.

Middle school average annual dropout rates
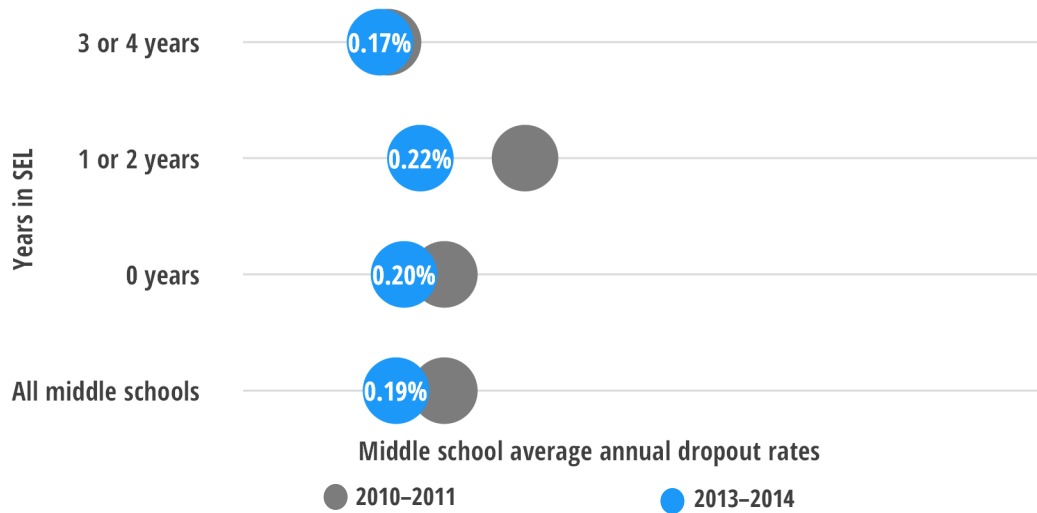
● 2010–2011   ● 2013–2014

Source. 2010–2011 through 2013–2014 AISD annual dropout rates

At the high school level, schools participating in SEL for more years experienced a greater reduction in dropout rates from 2010–2011 to 2013–2014 than did schools with less years of SEL experience (a decline from 5.0% to 1.4%; Figure 12).

Figure 12
High schools with greater longevity in SEL had fewer dropouts in 2013–2014 than did high schools with less time in SEL.

High school average annual drop out rates

● 2010–2011   ● 2013–2014

Source. 2010–2011 through 2013–2014 AISD annual dropout rates

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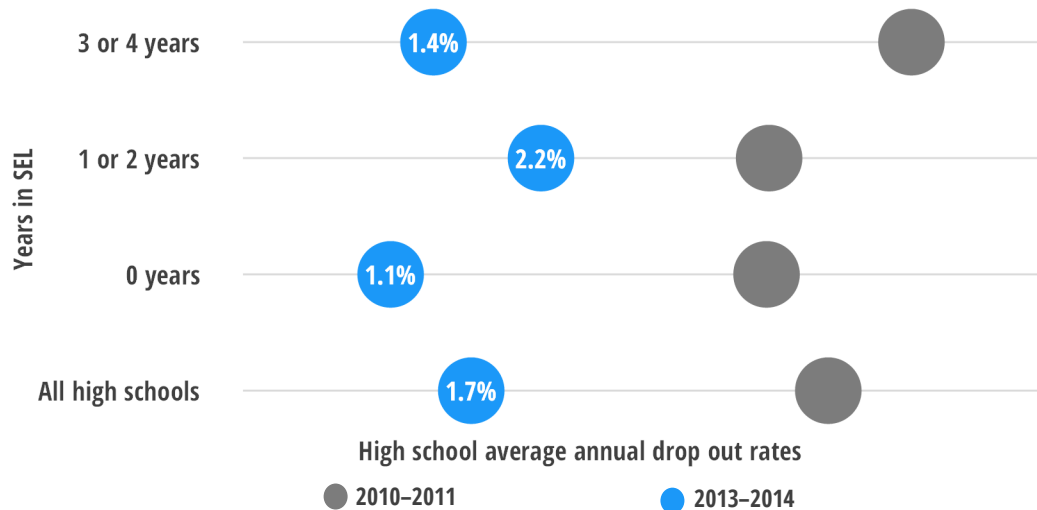
School Climate

Bullying-related items from AISD's annual Student Climate Survey and the SSUSS were analyzed over time. Districtwide middle and high school students reported slightly less experience with and frequency of bullying in Spring 2014 than in Spring 2011 (Figure 13).

Figure 13
Districtwide, secondary students' experiences with bullying declined slightly over time.

How often does student bullying occur at your school?

How often have you experienced any type of bullying at your school?
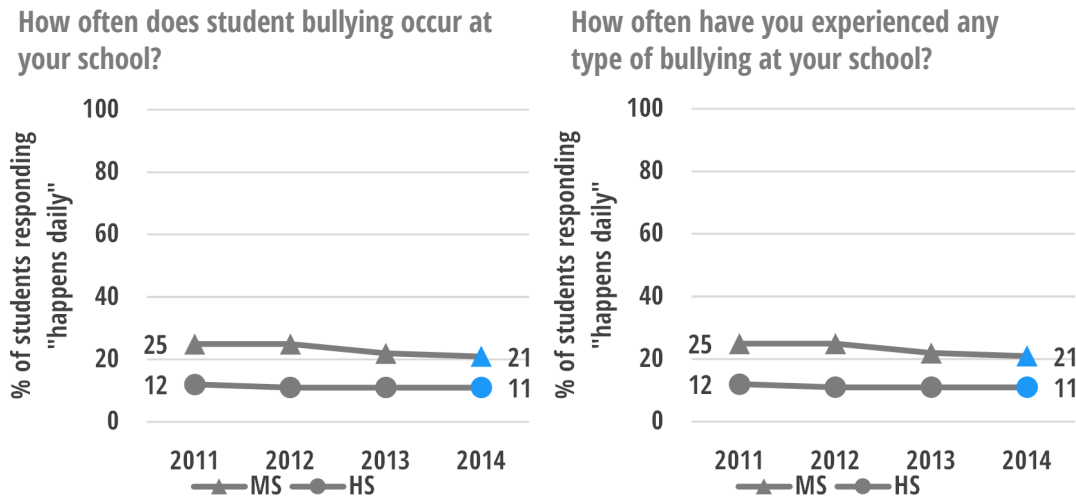
Source. 2010–2011 through 2013–2014 AISD SSUSS data

Average elementary school ratings of experiences with bullying increased more from 2010–2011 to 2014–2015 at schools participating in SEL for 3 or 4 years than at schools participating in SEL for fewer years (Figure 14). At the same time, however, students' ratings of the degree to which they showed respect to each other increased, suggesting a greater awareness of bullying may at least partially explain the increase in reported frequency of bullying (Figure 14). At the elementary school level, average school ratings

Figure 14
Ratings of respect and reported bullying frequency increased more at elementary schools with 3 or 4 years in SEL than at schools with fewer years in SEL.

My classmates show respect to each other.

Students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/taunted, threatened by other students).
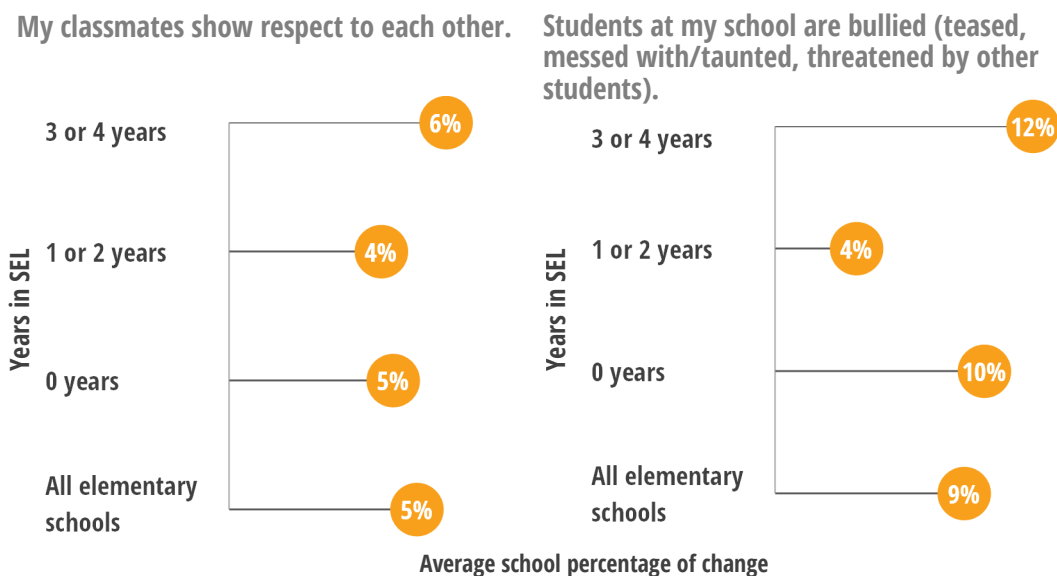
Source. 2010–2011 and 2012–2013 through 2014–2015 AISD Student Climate Survey data

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of student climate items remained high and favorable over time, regardless of longevity in SEL.

The percentage of change in average secondary school ratings of many AISD Student Climate Survey items was greater at schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL experience from 2010–2011 to 2014–2105 than at schools with fewer years of SEL experience (Figure 15). Students at schools with more SEL experience provided higher ratings over time to "Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions," "Adults at this school treat all students fairly," and "I feel safe at my school." Unlike at the elementary school level, secondary schools with 1 or 2 years in SEL experienced a greater percentage of increase in "Students at my school are bullied (teased, taunted, threatened by other students)" than did schools with more years in SEL (Figure 15).

Figure 15
Average secondary school ratings of many AISD Student Climate Survey items improved more at schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL experience than at schools with fewer years of SEL experience.

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/taunted, threatened by other students).

Average school percentage of change

Years in SEL

SEL Competencies

As part of AISD's participation in CASEL's Collaborative Districts Initiative (CDI) evaluation, students' SEL competencies were assessed in 7th, 10th (self-assessment), and 3rd (teacher assessment) grades. Change data were not computed because data were only available for 2014–2015. Ratings of 3rd-grade students from schools with more years in SEL tended to be higher across 14 domains than did ratings of 3rd-grade students from schools with fewer years in SEL. Ratings were generally favorable (e.g., above 3.0) across all items (Figure 16). Ratings were highest for the item "Gets along well with adults" and lowest for "Stays on task with distractions," regardless of SEL longevity.

Figure 16
Third-grade students from schools with 3 or 4 years of SEL experience were rated similarly to 3rd-grade students at schools with 1 or 2 years of SEL experience.

Item	1 or 2 years	3 or 4 years
Gets along well with adults.	3.47	3.52
Respects the property of others.	3.49	3.51
Shows the ability to decide between right and wrong.	3.29	3.39
Follows classroom rules.	3.31	3.34
Joins peer group activities smoothly.	3.23	3.33
Respects other people's viewpoints.	3.21	3.27
Expresses feelings that are appropriate for the situation.	3.13	3.25
Works well with others.	3.17	3.25
Responds constructively to being corrected by teachers.	3.22	3.23
Takes responsibility for his/her own actions.	3.23	3.27
Can control his or her behavior when angry, frustarted, disappointed, or excited.	3.20	3.21
Understands his or her own strengths or weaknesses.	3.19	3.19
Responds with empathy to others who are upset.	3.02	3.17
Is able to explain why he or she said or did something.	3.11	3.17
Accepts when things don't go his or her way.	3.16	3.22
Resolves disputes constructively.	3.13	3.15
Is comfortable sharing feelings in a culturally appropriate way.	2.99	3.11
Notices and complements others.	2.93	3.08
Responds appropriately to negative peer pressure.	3.07	3.08
Stays on task even with distractions.	2.91	3.01

● 1 or 2 years in SEL (*n* = 108)   ● 3 or 4 years in SEL (*n* = 192)

Third-grade students' average SEL compentency ratings

Source. 2014–2015 SEL competency survey data, 3rd grade students only
Note. Response options ranged from 1 = *rarely* to 4 = *almost always*, with a *"not able to rate/not sure"* option.

Seventh and 10th-grade students' responses did not vary systematically based on longevity in SEL, and responses were generally favorable (e.g., above 3.0; Figure 17). Responses to the item "I can say 'no' when my friends want me to do something I don't want to do" were highest, and responses to the item "I stop and think before doing anything when I get angry" were lowest, regardless of longevity in SEL.

Figure 17
Seventh and 10th-grade students' responses to SEL competency items were generally favorable, regardless of their school's participation in SEL.

	1 or 2 years in SEL (n = 13)	3 or 4 years in SEL (n = 14)
I can say "no" when my friends want me to do something I don't want to do.	3.53	3.48
I get along well with students who are different from me.	3.39	3.44
I understand my moods and feelings.	3.34	3.37
I am aware of how my moods affect the way I treat other people.	3.28	3.36
I care about other people's feelings and points of view.	3.29	3.23
I am able to work well with others.	3.26	3.29
I try to understand how other people feel and think.	3.18	3.25
I pay attention when I do things.	3.21	3.23
I have strong self-control.	3.21	3.20
When I make a decision, I think about what might happen afterwards.	3.13	3.10
If I can't figure something out, I try different solutions until one works.	3.09	3.10
If I get angry with a friend, I can talk about it and make things better.	3.03	3.07
I know how to disagree without starting an argument.	3.01	3.02
I keep focused on tasks I need to do even if I do not like them.	2.96	2.97
I stop and think before doing anything when I get angry.	2.82	2.81

● 1 or 2 years in SEL (*n* = 13) ● 3 or 4 years in SEL (*n* = 14)

Seventh and 10th-grade students' average SEL competency ratings
(axis: 1.00, 1.50, 2.00, 2.50, 3.00, 3.50, 4.00)

Source. 2014–2015 SEL competency survey
Note. Response options ranged from 1 = *rarely* to 4 = *almost always*.

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Staff Perceptions of SEL survey

As part of CASEL's CDI evaluation, a sample of AISD teachers from SEL schools rated items assessing their experiences with SEL. Analyses were conducted at the teacher level. Elementary school teachers' ratings were positive, regardless of their school's participation in SEL (Figure 18). However, teachers at schools with fewer years of SEL experience indicated they received more observation and coaching in social and emotional learning than did teachers at schools with more years of SEL experience (Figure 18). This could be because schools with more SEL experience required less ongoing support.

Figure 18
Elementary school staff's ratings of SEL-related items did not vary based on years in the program.

Please indicate how often you integrate social and emotional skills during your lessons in academic content areas*   3.56 ● 3.56

Teachers at my school are expected to promote the social and emotional development of all students.   3.39 ● 3.46

My school uses strategies that reinforce students' social and emotional skills outside the classroom.   3.23 ● 3.33

I feel confident in my ability to implement the social and emotional learning program that has been adopted at my school.   3.24 ● 3.27

My students have benefitted from SEL   3.19 ● 3.21

My principal models social and emotional competence in the way that she/he deals with students and faculty on an everyday basis.   3.11 ● 3.14

My students establish and maintain positive relationships.   2.98 ● 3.09

The district central office provides adequate materials and curricular resources to promote social and emotional development of all students at our school.   3.10 ● 3.08

The district central office provides adequate professional development and coaching support to promote social and emotional development of all students at our school.   3.06 ● 3.03

I know how to use data regarding students' social and emotional skills to inform my practice.   3.03 ● 2.98

My students set and achieve positive goals.   2.95 ● 2.98

My students make responsible decisions.   2.91 ● 2.96

My school uses data effectively in an ongoing cycle of inquiry to inform and improve social and emotional learning practice.   2.89 ● 2.95

My students understand and manage their emotions.   2.88 ● 2.91

How many times in the past year have you received observation and coaching in social and emotional learning**   1.87 ● ● 2.09

Elementary teachers' average responses to SEL-related items

● 1 or 2 years in SEL (*n* = 280)   ● 3 or 4 years in SEL (*n* = 317)

Source. 2014–2015 SEL competency survey (shortened version)
Note. Response options ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*, with a don't know option
*Response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 3 = *frequently* with don't know/NA as an option
**Response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 3 = *5 or more times*

At the middle school level, like at the elementary school level, teachers from schools with 1 or 2 years of SEL participation reported receiving more observation and coaching in SEL than did teachers from schools with 3 or 4 years in SEL (Figure 19). Additionally, teachers from schools with 3 or 4 years reported integrating SEL skills in lessons more frequently than did teachers from schools with 1 or 2 years in SEL. Unexpectedly, teachers at schools with fewer years of SEL participation reported that their principal modeled social and emotional skills more than was reported by teachers at schools with more years of SEL participation.

Figure 19

Middle school teachers from schools participating in SEL for fewer years reported receiving more observation and coaching in SEL than did their peers from schools participating in SEL for more years.

Teachers at my school are expected to promote the social and emotional development of all students. — 3.28 / 3.45

Please indicate how often you integrate social and emotional skills during your lessons in academic content areas* — 3.14 / 3.25

My school uses strategies that reinforce students' social and emotional skills outside the classroom. — 3.09 / 3.15

I feel confident in my ability to implement the social and emotional learning program that has been adopted at my school. — 3.06 / 3.19

The district central office provides adequate professional development and coaching support to promote social and emotional development of all students at our school. — 2.88 / 2.93

The district central office provides adequate materials and curricular resources to promote social and emotional development of all students at our school. — 2.93 / 2.96

My students establish and maintain positive relationships. — 2.88 / 2.98

My students have benefitted from SEL. — 2.84 / 2.88

My principal models social and emotional competence in the way that she/he deals with students and faculty on an everyday basis. — 2.80 / 3.10

My students set and achieve positive goals. — 2.79 / 2.88

My school uses data effectively in an ongoing cycle of inquiry to inform and improve social and emotional learning practice. — 2.77 / 2.78

I know how to use data regarding students' social and emotional skills to inform my practice. — 2.76 / 2.84

My students understand and manage their emotions. — 2.53 / 2.71

My students make responsible decisions. — 2.70 / 2.84

How many times in the past year have you received observation and coaching in social and emotional learning?** — 2.00 / 2.16

Middle school teachers' average responses to SEL-related items

● 1 or 2 years in SEL (*n* = 75)   ● 3 or 4 years in SEL (*n* = 102)

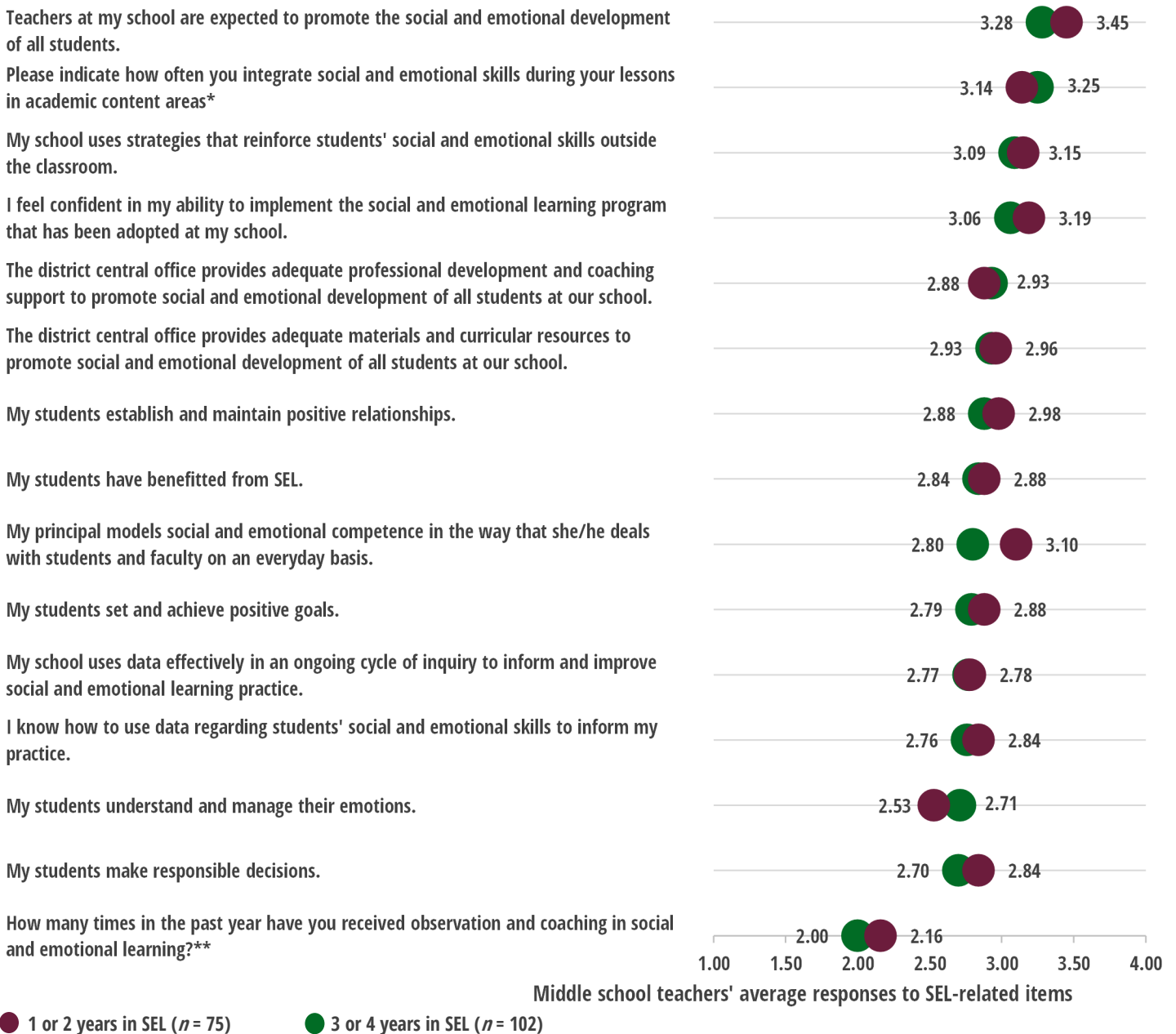*Source.* 2014–2015 SEL competency survey (shortened version)
Note. Response options ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*, with a don't know option
*Response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 3 = *frequently* with don't know/NA as an option
**Response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 3 = *5 or more times*

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At the high school level, teachers from schools participating in SEL for 3 or 4 years provided more favorable ratings on most items than did teachers from schools participating in SEL for 1 or 2 years (Figure 20). Teachers from schools participating in SEL for 3 or 4 years reported that they received more training in SEL skills and integrated SEL skills in academic lessons more frequently than did their peers from schools participating in SEL for 1 or 2 years. Additionally, ratings of the degree to which their principal modeled SEL skills did not vary based on years of experience in the program.

Figure 20

High school teachers from more experienced SEL schools responded more favorably to most survey items than did their peers from less experienced SEL schools.

Item	1 or 2 years	3 or 4 years
Please indicate how often you integrate social and emotional skills during your lessons in academic content areas*	3.03	3.28
Teachers at my school are expected to promote the social and emotional development of all students.	3.01	3.24
I feel confident in my ability to implement the social and emotional learning program that has been adopted at my school.	2.88	3.06
My school uses strategies that reinforce students' social and emotional skills outside the classroom.	2.86	3.02
My students have benefitted from SEL.	2.88	2.97
My principal models social and emotional competence in the way that she/he deals with students and faculty on an everyday basis.	2.95	2.97
The district central office provides adequate professional development and coaching support to promote social and emotional development of all students at our school.	2.68	2.90
My school uses data effectively in an ongoing cycle of inquiry to inform and improve social and emotional learning practice.	2.79	2.90
My students establish and maintain positive relationships.	3.05	2.90
I know how to use data regarding students' social and emotional skills to inform my practice.	2.86	2.85
My students set and achieve positive goals.	2.96	2.85
The district central office provides adequate materials and curricular resources to promote social and emotional development of all students at our school.	2.67	2.83
My students make responsible decisions.	2.85	2.77
My students understand and manage their emotions.	2.72	2.68
How many times in the past year have you received observation and coaching in social and emotional learning?**	1.50	1.93

High school teachers' average responses to SEL-related items

● 1 or 2 years in SEL (*n* = 111)   ● 3 or 4 years in SEL (*n* = 111)

Source. 2014–2015 SEL competency survey (shortened version)
Note. Response options ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*, with a don't know option
*Response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 3 = *frequently* with don't know/NA as an option
**Response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 3 = *5 or more times*.

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Conversations with secondary SEL coaches regarding the patterns observed in high school teachers' responses to these questions revealed that many believed it takes more time for SEL to gain traction and become fully implemented at middle and high schools than at elementary schools. One reason for this difference is that all teachers at the elementary school level teach Second Step SEL lessons and work with their students throughout the day and the school year to reinforce SEL skills. Middle school teachers are also expected to teach lessons using Second Step, with most students receiving lessons in advisory classes. At the high school level, SEL skills are taught using School-Connect and are primarily taught in advisory or MAPS courses only, with few high school teachers integrating SEL skills into their lessons or reinforcing SEL skills with their students throughout the year. Secondary SEL coaches have heard high school teachers describe difficulty implementing SEL into their lessons. As a result, many high school teachers seek additional help and support for integrating SEL into their daily lessons. SEL coaches reported that teachers from schools participating in SEL for a longer period of time had seen how their students benefitted from SEL, and as a result, the teachers became more interested in integrating SEL skills into their lessons. Conversely, secondary SEL coaches reported that many high school teachers in their first year or two of SEL implementation were more trepidatious about integrating SEL skills into their lessons than were teachers from more experienced SEL schools. This delay in commitment to SEL implementation may explain why high school teachers

from schools with more years in SEL reported receiving more observations of their teaching than did teachers from schools with fewer years in SEL. As one SEL coach described, after teachers become aware of how their students have benefitted from SEL, they are "hungrier" for learning how to integrate SEL into their lessons than they were before.
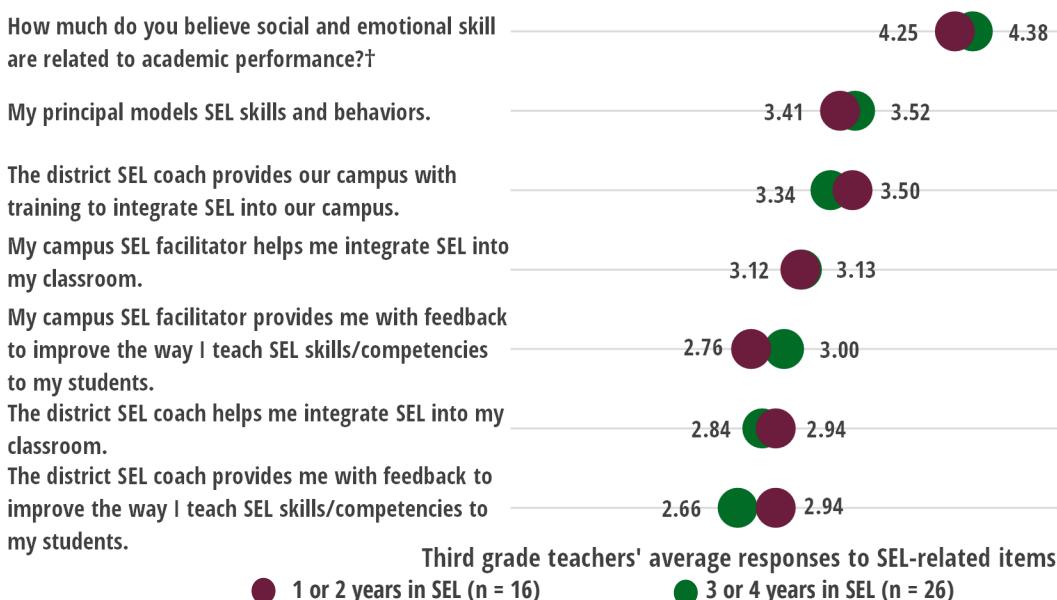
Third-grade Teachers' Perceptions of SEL

This year, in addition to answering CASEL's survey items regarding perceptions of SEL Survey, 3rd-grade teachers who provided ratings of their students' SEL competencies were asked to answer a few questions regarding their experiences with SEL.

In general, 3rd-grade teachers were positive in their responses, regardless of school longevity in SEL (Figure 21). Importantly, teachers believed that SEL skills contributed to their students' academic performance. Teachers also believed that their principal modeled SEL skills and behaviors, and that the district SEL coach provided their campus with training on SEL integration.

Teachers' responses were less favorable regarding personal assistance from the district SEL coach and campus SEL facilitator. Although the sample size was small, it appeared that 3rd-grade teachers did not receive as much direct help as they would have liked with SEL integration and would have appreciated more feedback on how they taught SEL skills. Interestingly, teachers at schools with fewer years of SEL experience provided higher ratings of district coaching than did teachers at schools with more years of SEL experience. This trend is similar to the trend described in the prior section, suggesting that schools with more years of SEL experience require and receive less involvement from their SEL coach.

Figure 21
**Third-grade teachers believed that SEL skills were related to their students' academic performance.**

How much do you believe social and emotional skill are related to academic performance?† — 4.25 / 4.38

My principal models SEL skills and behaviors. — 3.41 / 3.52

The district SEL coach provides our campus with training to integrate SEL into our campus. — 3.34 / 3.50

My campus SEL facilitator helps me integrate SEL into my classroom. — 3.12 / 3.13

My campus SEL facilitator provides me with feedback to improve the way I teach SEL skills/competencies to my students. — 2.76 / 3.00

The district SEL coach helps me integrate SEL into my classroom. — 2.84 / 2.94

The district SEL coach provides me with feedback to improve the way I teach SEL skills/competencies to my students. — 2.66 / 2.94

Third grade teachers' average responses to SEL-related items

● 1 or 2 years in SEL (n = 16)   ● 3 or 4 years in SEL (n = 26)

Source. 2014–2015 SEL competency survey (shortened version)
Note. Response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 4 = *all of the time* with don't know/NA as an option
† Response options ranged from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely*

Staff Perceptions of School Climate

We also evaluated school climate and culture by assessing AISD staff members' attitudes toward SEL-related items from the annual TELL Staff Climate Survey. School-level responses to the item "Overall, my campus is a good place to work and learn" and the *Managing Student Conduct* subscale (see sidebar) were analyzed from 2010–2011 through 2014–2015.

Regardless of years with SEL, elementary school staff were consistent in their favorable ratings of school climate over time (Figure 22).

Figure 22
Elementary school staff members' perceptions of school climate remained favorable over time, regardless of years in SEL.
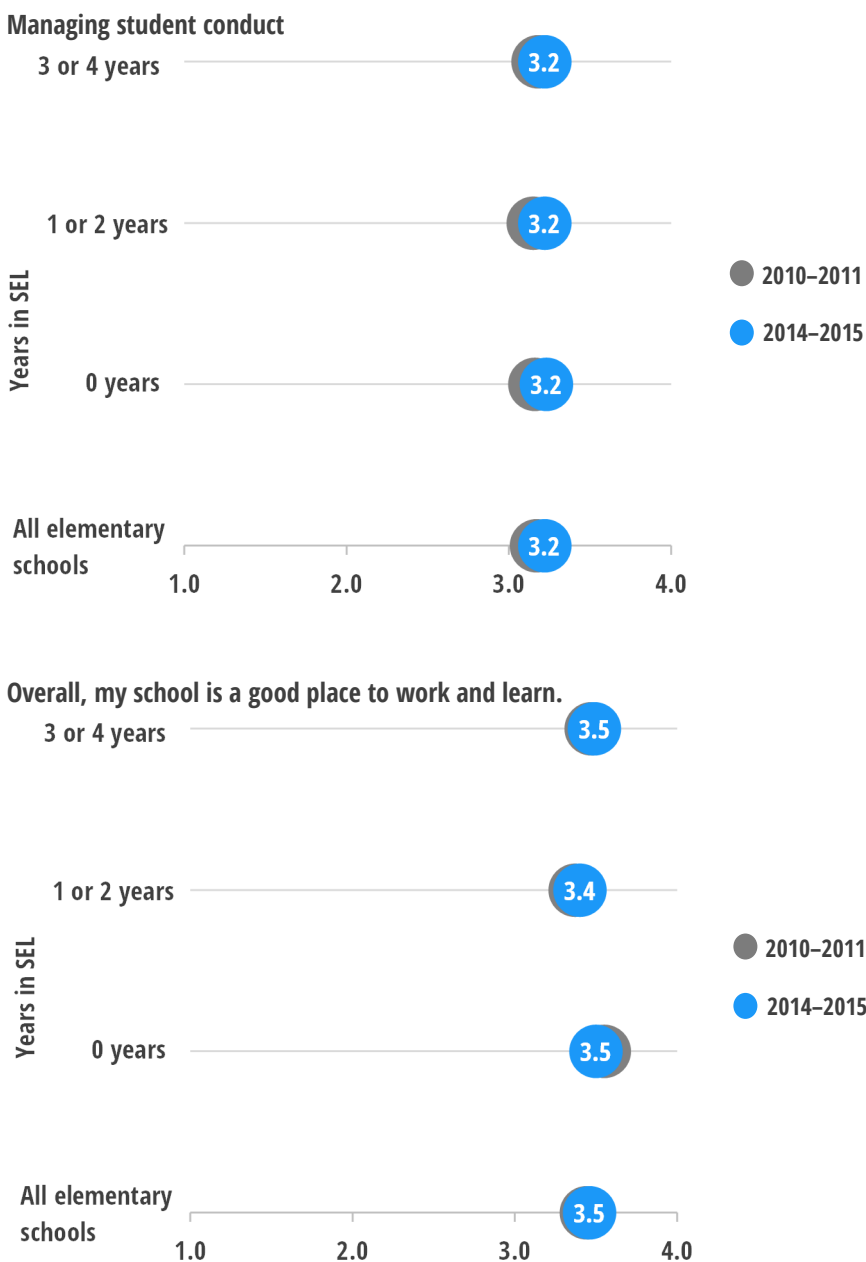
Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 AISD TELL Staff Climate Survey data
Note. Ratings are rounded to one decimal.

At the secondary level, managing student conduct ratings were higher in 2014–2015 than in 2010–2011; however, schools with 1 or no years of SEL experience improved the most (Figure 23). Interestingly, ratings of "Overall my school is a good place to work and learn" improved the most at schools with no years of SEL experience.

Secondary school staff members believed their school was a good place to work and learn, regardless of years in SEL.

Managing student conduct

Years in SEL		
3 or 4 years	3.0	
1 or 2 years	2.9	
0 years	3.0	
All middle and high schools	2.9	

1.0 2.0 3.0 4.0

Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.

Years in SEL		
3 or 4 years	3.3	
1 or 2 years	3.3	
0 years	3.4	
All middle and high schools	3.3	

1.0 2.0 3.0 4.0
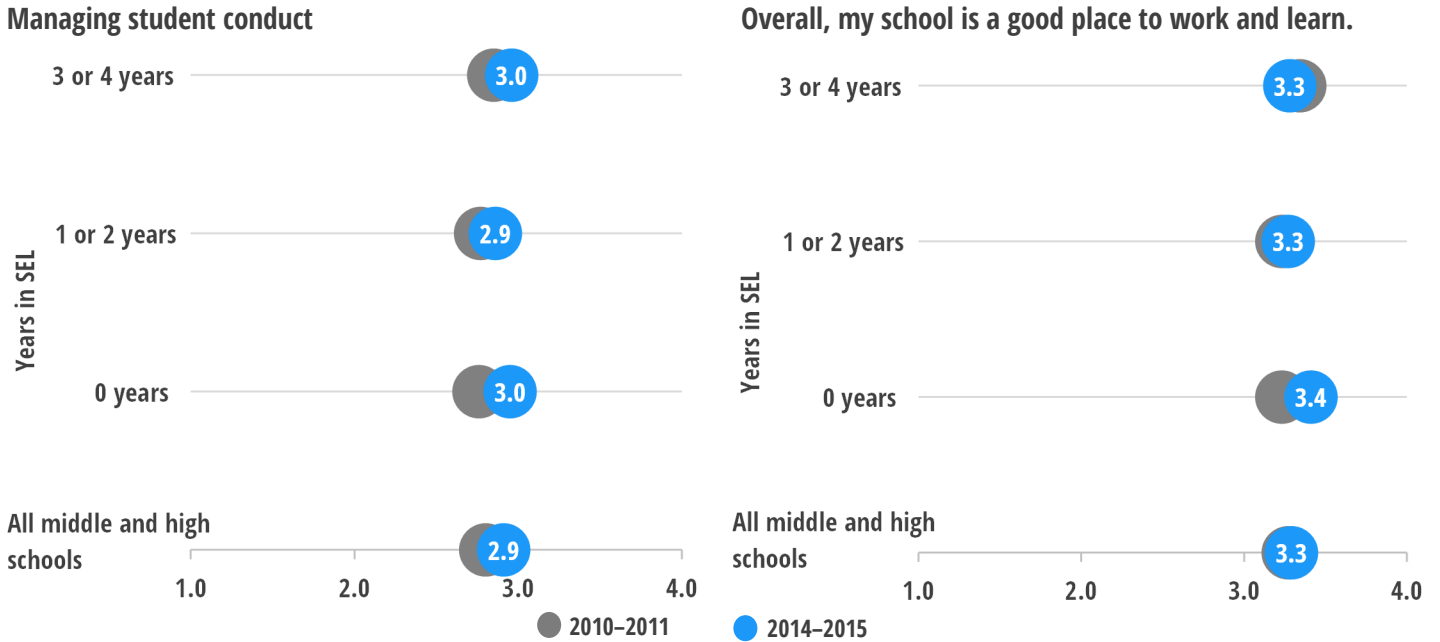
● 2010–2011   ● 2014–2015

Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 AISD TELL Staff Climate Survey data
Note. Response options ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree* and ratings are rounded to one decimal

Conclusion

Analyses examining change in outcome measures over time based on longevity in SEL yielded some positive results. For example, elementary schools participating in SEL experienced significant improvement in STAAR reading over time, while schools with no years in SEL did not experience gains. Additionally, elementary schools with more years in SEL experienced a greater reduction in discipline rates and had students who were rated as more competent in SEL skills than did schools with fewer years in SEL.

Positive outcomes were most pronounced at secondary schools with greater longevity in SEL. For example, attendance rates improved more at secondary schools participating in SEL for a longer period of time than at schools with fewer years of participation in SEL. Additionally, secondary schools with more years in SEL experienced a greater drop in chronic absenteeism and a greater reduction in dropout rates over time than did schools with fewer years in SEL. Secondary students' ratings of school climate items increased more at schools with greater longevity in SEL than at schools with fewer years in SEL.

Staff members' ratings of their experiences with SEL were generally positive, regardless of longevity in SEL. Teachers from elementary and middle schools with fewer years of SEL experience reported receiving more observation and coaching than did teachers from schools with more years of SEL experience. Conversely, high school teachers with more years of SEL experience reported receiving more training and coaching in SEL skills. Conversations with SEL coaches suggested that many high school teachers have difficulty implementing SEL into their lessons and seek out additional training and support from SEL coaches to learn how to best implement SEL into their classroom. SEL coaches also pointed out that many high school teachers did not fully commit to the program until they had seen the positive effects of SEL on their students. In this way, teachers from schools with more years of SEL participation were often more likely to seek out additional resources to help integrate SEL skills into their daily lessons. Further conversations with SEL program staff regarding this issue are planned.

Together, these results suggest that longevity in SEL has positive effects on student achievement, attendance, dropout rates, and school climate.

Appendix

Appendix A. Elementary school passing rates in reading and math over time, by years in SEL

Years in SEL	Subject	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
4 years	Reading	82%	86%	85%	85%
	Math	80%	82%	82%	81%
3 years	Reading	75%	78%	78%	79%
	Math	72%	76%	77%	72%
2 years	Reading	73%	73%	73%	76%
	Math	70%	71%	71%	72%
1 year	Reading	77%	79%	81%	80%
	Math	77%	79%	81%	76%
0 years	Reading	79%	82%	82%	81%
	Math	76%	80%	80%	78%

Source. 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 STAAR reading and math data.

Appendix B. Elementary school attendance rates over time, by years in SEL
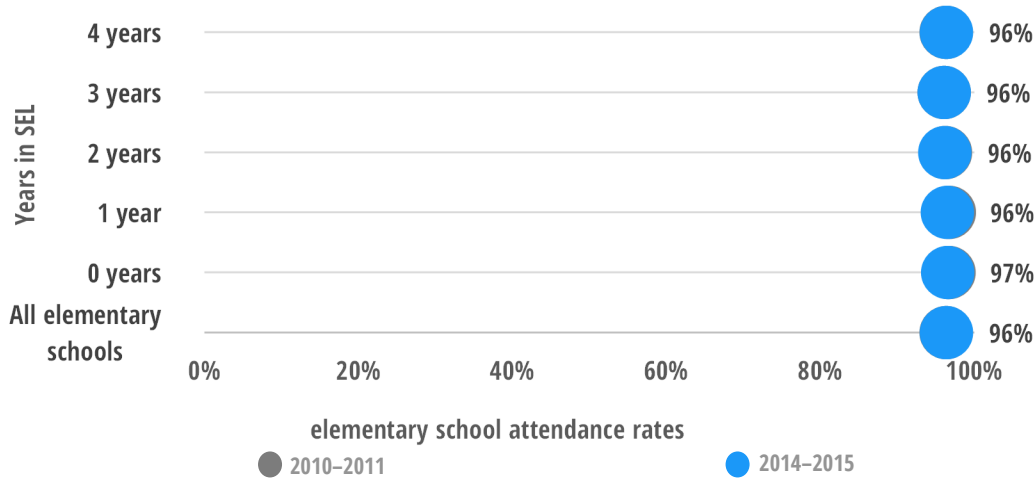
Source. 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 attendance data and 2014–2015 SEL implementation data.

References

Lamb, L. M. (2015). *Social and emotional learning: Implementation and program outcomes, 2010–2011 through 2014–2015.* (DRE publication No. 14.138). Austin, TX: Austin Independent School District.

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