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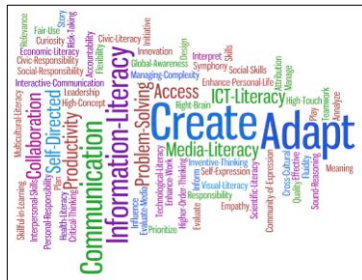
LEARNING FROM SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE: SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN THREE DIVERSE URBAN HIGH SCHOOLS

SCOPE BROWN BAG SEMINAR SERIES
APRIL 28, 2014

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21st century education



The opportunity gap



The “Academic” is
Social & Psychological

Psychosocial resources

E.g., identity safety, belonging, mindset,
engagement, resilience

(e.g., Battistich et al., 1999; Becker & Luthar, 2002; Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Carter, 2013;
Dweck, 2006; Farrington et al., 2012; Osterman, 2002; C. M. Steele, 2010)

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS: MAIN APPROACHES



(cf. Battistich et al., 1999; Farrington et al., 2012; Martin & Dawson, 2009)

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- **Social emotional learning (SEL) helps students build and maintain psychological resources in practice by educating the “whole student”**
- **SEL: Know self and emotions, connect to others, engage in positive relationships, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, avoid negative behaviors**
- **SEL-based strategies has been found to:**
 - Foster personal, social, and academic success among students
 - Mitigate gaps in opportunity for students in under-resourced contexts and for students of color

(e.g., Becker & Luthar, 2002; CASEL, 2007; Elias, 2009; Farrington et al., 2012; Greenberg et al., 2003; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013; Zins et al., 2004)

“MAINSTREAM” SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING: IMPRESSIONS?

VIDEO

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING: THE UPSIDE & THE DOWNSIDE

**SEL: WHAT CAN BE
EFFECTIVE**

**SEL: WHAT CAN BE
PROBLEMATIC**

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING: THE UPSIDE & THE DOWNSIDE

SEL: WHAT CAN BE EFFECTIVE

- + Highlights importance of psychosocial factors in “measurement era”
- + Takes holistic view of students
- + Is practice-oriented
- + Links SEL to academic outcomes

SEL: WHAT CAN BE PROBLEMATIC

- Makes normative assumptions
- Aims to control or regulate students’ behavior
- Stigmatizes “bad behaviors” of “those kids”
- Promotes a deficit view of students

SEL: WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

- **How is effective SEL practiced in high school contexts?**
- **How can or should SEL be tuned to meet the needs of students in diverse socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic schooling contexts?**
- **How might a systemic, comprehensive approach to SEL function as a model of school-wide practice?**



(e.g., Becker & Luthar, 2002; Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Durlak et al., 2011; Farrington et al., 2012; Hoffman, 2009; Humphrey, 2013; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Lee et al., 2003)

SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION & SEL

- **Integrates focus on students' social and emotional needs with practices that are:**
 - Asset-based
 - Culturally-relevant or sustaining
 - Empowering
- **Fosters agency, leadership, capacity to transform life and that of others in community**
 - "Expanded" vision of SEL
- **Incorporates related fields, such as:**
 - Culturally-responsive pedagogy
 - Multicultural education
 - Service learning, civic engagement
- **Overlapping and distinct skills/competencies**
 - E.g., perspective-taking, social responsibility; diversity literacy, inequality



(e.g., Adams et al., 2007; Ball, 2000; Banks, 2007; Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Carlisle et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002a; Delpit, 1995; Kirshner & Ginwright, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Morrison et al., 2008; Paris & Alim, 2014; D. M. Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: LEARNING FROM MODELS OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE

- 1. How is SEL conceptualized and implemented at these high schools?**
 - How do the schools practice an "expanded" vision of SEL that incorporates a focus on social justice education?
- 2. How do these schools use SEL practice to meet the needs of their respective student communities?**
- 3. How does effective SEL practice provide psychological resources for students and foster personal, social, and academic success?**

ECOLOGICAL APPROACH: SCHOOL AS SOCIOCULTURAL SYSTEM



(cf. Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Bryk et al., 2010; Cohen & Geier, 2010; Cole, 1996; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002b; Eccles & Roser, 2011; Markus & Conner, 2013; Thapa et al., 2013)

MULTI-METHOD CASE STUDY DESIGN

- Detailed selection process: Expert nomination, school-wide SEL and social justice education focus, strong student outcomes
- 3 school sites, 4 - 6 days of site visits per school

QUANTITATIVE DATA SOURCES

- **School and district record data**
 - E.g., graduation rate, state achievement test performance
- **Student survey**
 - 10th & 12th grade students
 - Items primarily drawn from Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2002)
 - Student educational experiences
 - Comparison of SEL schools to national sample

QUALITATIVE DATA SOURCES

- **Observations**
 - E.g., classrooms, school events
- **Document analysis**
 - E.g., school website, student handbook
- **Interviews & focus groups**
 - Students
 - Teachers, administrators, counselors
 - Parents
 - Community partners

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS, GRADUATION RATES, & DROP-OUT RATES

	El Puente Academy for Peace & Justice New York, NY	Fenway High School Boston, MA	International School of the Americas San Antonio, TX
Enrollment	219	320	465
Graduation rate (5-year)	80%	92%	100%
Attrition (dropout)	11%	5%	0%
Student race/ ethnicity	Latino: 87% Black: 10% White: 2% Asian: 1% Other: N/A	Latino: 46% Black: 41% White: 6% Asian: 4% Other: 3%	Latino: 55% White: 36% Asian: 4% Other: 3% Black: 2%
Free/reduced lunch	79%	67%	23%
English language learners	18%	12%	0%

EL PUENTE ACADEMY FOR PEACE & JUSTICE



- **Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, NYC**
- **Founded by El Puente CBO in 1993 as part of small schools movement in NYC**
 - Started as after school program (GED and college enrollment)
 - Combat violence and decline of once vibrant Latino neighborhood
 - El Puente = “The Bridge”
- **Model for youth development within context of community development and empowerment**
- **Core idea: A social justice organization trying to do a school; not a school trying to do social justice**

FENWAY HIGH SCHOOL



- Fens neighborhood of Boston, MA
- Established in 1993, inspired by small schools movement
 - Started as after school program for “at-risk” youth
 - Joined Coalition of Essential Schools in 1989 → foster personalized, equitable, and academically challenging schools
 - Became a Boston “pilot school” in 1994
- Model to increase educational opportunity through safety, close personal relationships, and a relevant and in-depth curriculum
- **Core idea:** The school itself is a tool to correct injustice and inequality for students

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS



International School of the Americas
PIONEERS ON THE ROAD OF LEARNING

- Located in San Antonio, TX (northern San Antonio)
- Founded in 1994 as part of small schools movement
 - Partnership between Trinity University and district
 - Part of Coalition of Essential Schools and Asia Society Schools networks
- Model based on Thomas Sergiovanni’s work on small schools and caring school community; with global lens and real-world focus
 - All students are “gifted” and will achieve with support
- **Core idea:** Question what it means to act at one’s fullest potential as a learner, leader, and global citizen

DATA OUTLINE

Part 1: Student survey

- Assessing student experiences

Part 2: Schools

- Learning from practice
 - Conceptualizing SEL
 - Climate & culture
 - Features & structures
 - Practices



SURVEY SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

	SEL Schools n = 363	National Schools n = 2063
Number of schools	3	100
Gender	Female: 61% Male: 39%	Female: 52% Male: 48%
Student race/ethnicity	Latino: 62% White: 21% Black: 12% Asian: 3% Other: 2%	Latino: 31% Black: 28% White: 19% Asian: 17% Other: 5%
Mother/Female guardian education	High school degree: 34% College degree: 46%	High school degree: 42% College degree: 19%
Father/Male guardian education	High school degree: 34% College degree: 42%	High school degree: 39% College degree: 19%

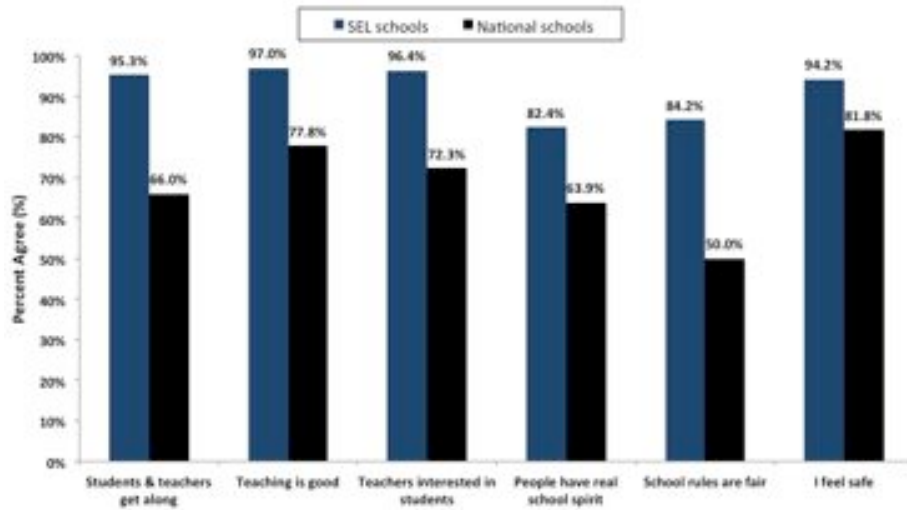
- **National sample matched variables:** School type (public high schools), location (urban), SES (free/reduced lunch rate)
- **Survey response rates:** El Puente (61%), Fenway (66%), ISA (86%)

STUDENTS IN BOTH SEL SCHOOLS & NATIONAL SCHOOLS ARE LIKELY TO...

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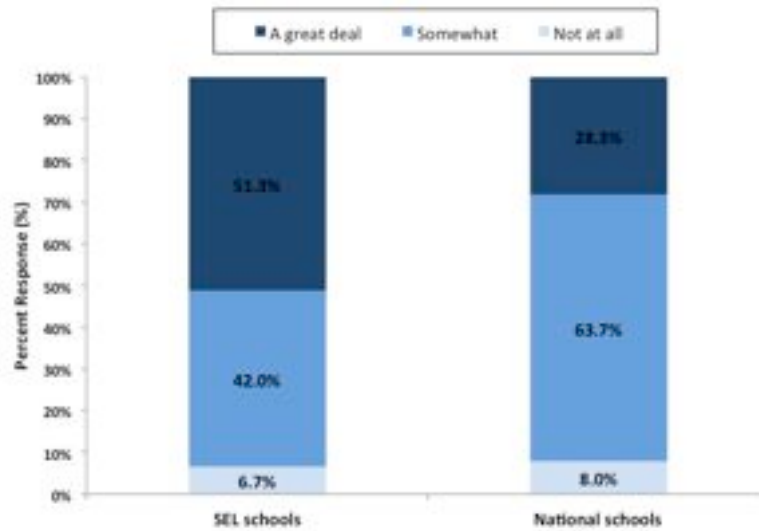
- ✓ **Value education, try to do their best in school**
- ✓ **Be motivated to get a good job and increase their future opportunities**
- ✓ **Endorse similar life values**
 - E.g., Being successful, providing better life for children
- ✓ **Report similar levels of parental support and engagement in their education**

STUDENTS IN SEL SCHOOLS REPORT MORE POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE & RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS



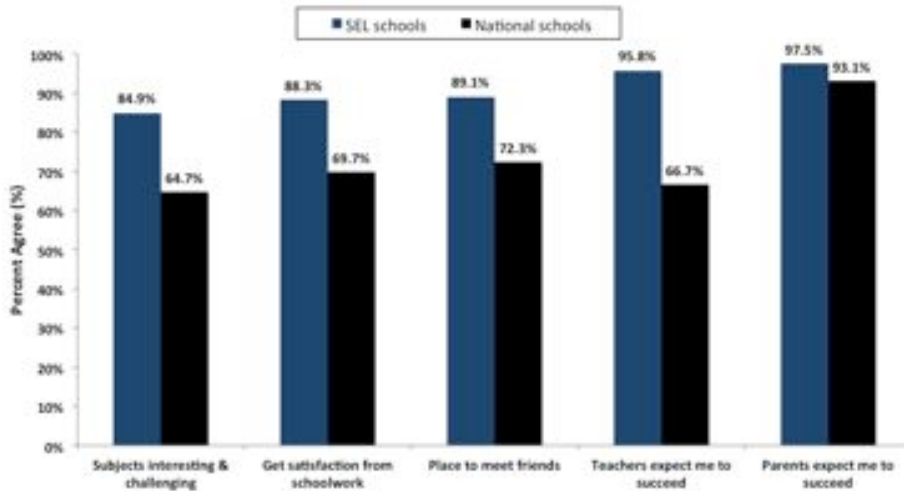
Across items, $\chi^2 = 34.72 - 143.99, p < .05 - .001$

STUDENTS IN SEL SCHOOLS LIKE SCHOOL MORE



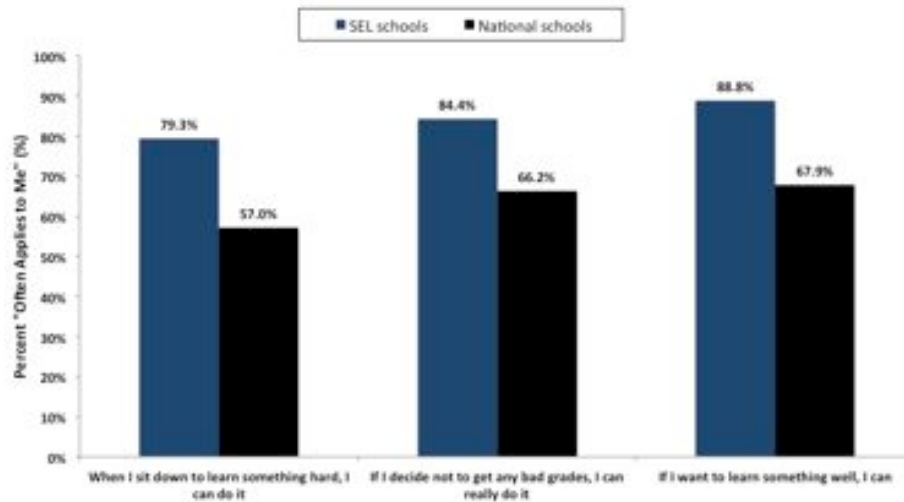
$\chi^2 = 74.73, p < .001$

STUDENTS IN SEL SCHOOLS REPORT MORE POSITIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES & SUPPORT



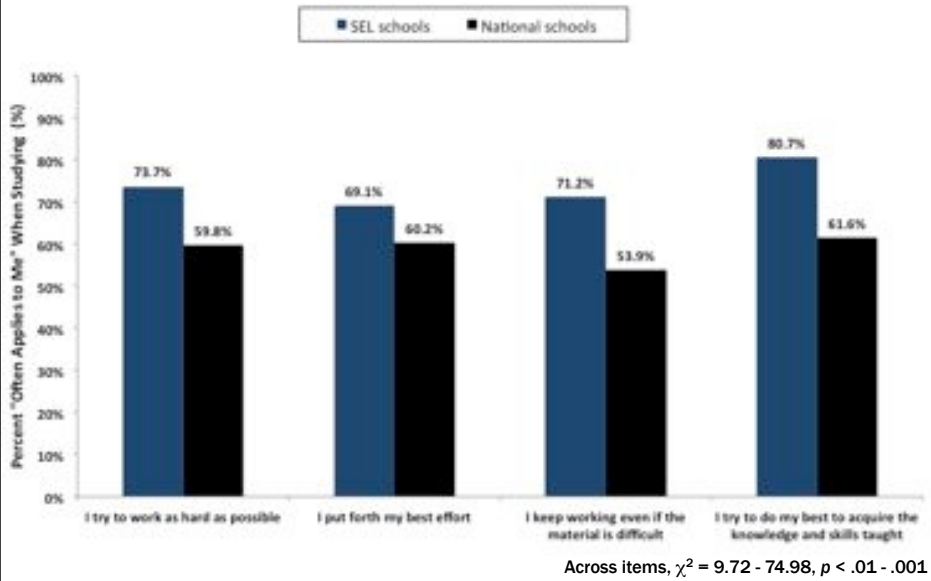
Across items, $\chi^2 = 9.98 - 124.60, p < .01 - .001$

STUDENTS IN SEL SCHOOLS FEEL MORE EFFICACIOUS ABOUT LEARNING

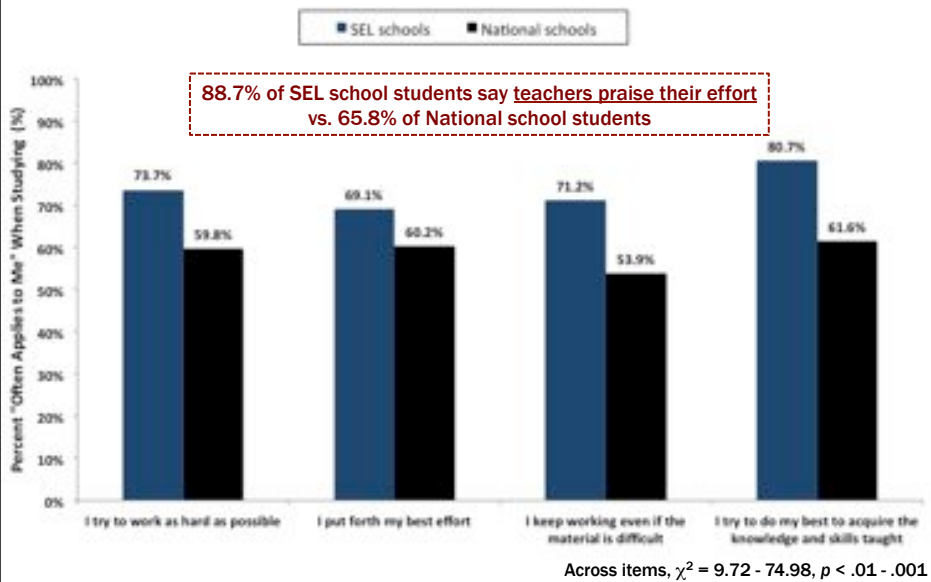


Across items, $\chi^2 = 43.94 - 60.11, p < .001$

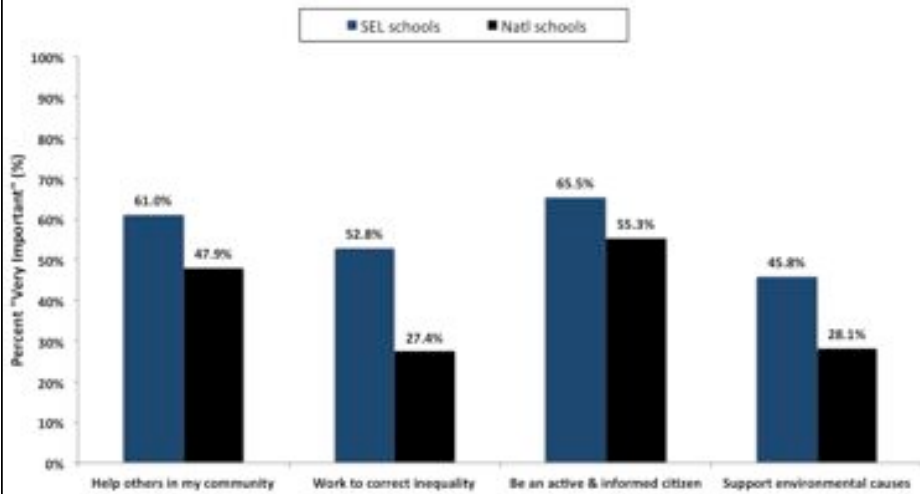
STUDENTS IN SEL SCHOOLS SHOW MORE RESILIENCE & GROWTH MINDSET



STUDENTS IN SEL SCHOOLS SHOW MORE RESILIENCE & GROWTH MINDSET

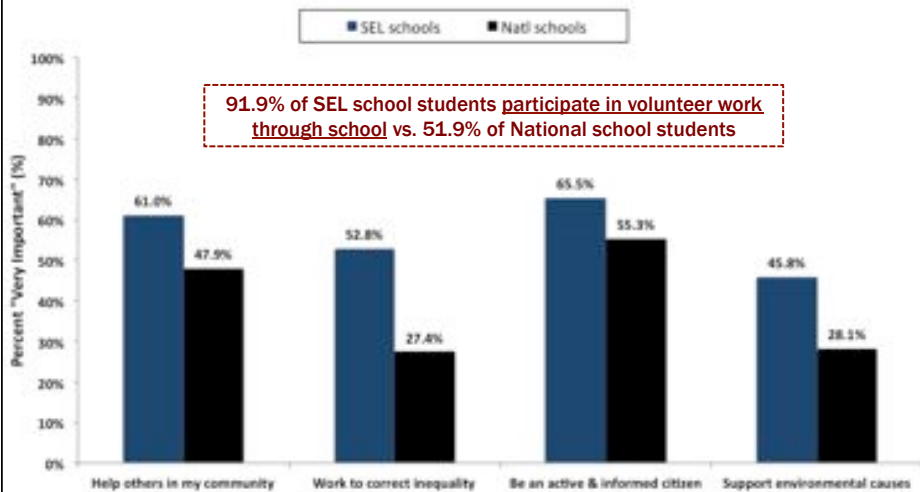


STUDENTS IN SEL SCHOOLS ARE MORE SOCIALLY ENGAGED



Across items, $\chi^2 = 13.36 - 196.58, p < .01 - .001$

STUDENTS IN SEL SCHOOLS ARE MORE SOCIALLY ENGAGED



91.9% of SEL school students participate in volunteer work through school vs. 51.9% of National school students

Across items, $\chi^2 = 13.36 - 196.58, p < .01 - .001$

PLANS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Students in SEL schools are more likely than students in National schools to:

- ✓ **Plan to go to graduate or professional school (59.6% vs. 34.7%)**
- ✓ **Discuss going to college with their parents (73.1% vs. 46.8%)**
- ✓ **Receive help and support from teachers, counselors, and peers in pursuing and applying to college**

Across items, $\chi^2 = 79.32 - 94.07, p < .001$

STUDENT SURVEY: RESULTS SUMMARY

- **Students in SEL schools**
 - Report more positive educational experiences
 - Show higher levels of psychological support, engagement, and empowerment
 - Are more socially engaged
- **SEL schools can better equip students with critical psychological resources for personal, social, and academic success**
 - E.g., engagement, resilience, growth mindset
- **Not school size alone**
 - National sample stratification: Small vs. medium-large schools

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CONCEPTUALIZING SEL THROUGH SOCIAL JUSTICE

- **SEL and social justice education are inextricably linked**
 - ✓ Grows from broader understanding of social responsibility and interdependence (school community vs. wider community)
- **El Puente starts with a social justice education perspective and supports it through SEL: *make change* → *support students***
- **Fenway and ISA start with an SEL perspective and use it to serve and inspire social justice: *support students* → *make change***
- **El Puente and Fenway use their models of education as tools to fight inequality in their student communities**
 - ✓ Asset focus: Affirm students' cultures and backgrounds
 - ✓ Self-determination focus: Cultivate sense of belonging, hope, and aspiration

SEL IS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS (NOT REGULATION)

“Every staff member knows every student’s name and their stories – it is our mode of operation.” – *El Puente Teacher*

“We encourage students to develop relationships with teachers and administrators because this is the support system.” – *El Puente Counselor*

“Some come in hungry. They may come in upset. If we get pissed off, nothing gets done. Instead we ask them how they’re doing and try to meet them where they are.” – *Fenway Teacher*

“Academics is important but SEL is essential to build a relationship with students. This is especially important considering the students’ backgrounds and difficulties that they face. Their environment plays an important role in their academics.” – *Fenway Teacher*

“The teachers – you just go ask them a question...they’re your family and you can always go talk to them.” – *ISA Student*

“Everyone knows who you are—they know who your children are...the teachers all know you. It’s nice to feel that your child is noticed and that they know who your child really is.” – *ISA Parent*

SEL IS ABOUT EMPOWERMENT (NOT OBEDIENCE)

“We do not follow a clinical model of problem and deficit, but focus on potential and empowerment of young people and community for self-determination.” – *El Puente Founding Principal*

“They will have to struggle but they can do it. We believe in their success... When students discuss feeling the burden of knowing something is unfair and feeling unable to change it, we give [them] the knowledge that they are not the first and won’t be the last to experience it, but together we can experience it differently... [It] comes from sense of who you are, and confidence, from emotional learning, understanding that you have the right to be there [i.e., college], that you can do it, that you bring something to the table. Emotional learning is understanding and feeling confident that you have a right to that help.” – *El Puente College Counselor*

“There’s a kid who’s a real community activist... He want to college in New York City and was really honest about being around kids [very different from him]... How to find your place in that? How are you going to be the change on campus? They know how to do that because of their Fenway experience.” – *Fenway Counselor*

“The group dynamics push them into discovering their leadership capabilities and skills—you see it right from the get go.” – *ISA Parent*

SEL IS ABOUT SUPPORTED GROWTH & RESILIENCE (NOT “INDIVIDUAL” GRIT)

“They show them that, ‘No, I can’t do it,’ is not the answer. ‘You can do it.’ Each year I seen my son **grow, grow, grow!** They focus on the students all year round with the Saturday classes, night school, tutoring lunchtime and after school. They want students to achieve so that they are prepared for college and the real world.” – **El Puente Parent**

“We want the students to be able to withstand a challenging college or work environment and follow their aspirations. Students might end up in an all-white college as a person of color. We need to **teach students resilience** over four years so **they have choice.**” – **Fenway Teacher**

“What do you do about a failure in math? Do you give up or find ways to get better? You need to **ask for help.** Academic **stamina** is important.” – **Fenway Teacher**

“You have to be dedicated and on top of things, so you don’t slip—but **teachers will be there to help you.**” – **Fenway Student**

“There is always opportunity to **continue improving...** We don’t want them to settle.” – **ISA Teacher**

“I was going back on my [online portfolio] and looking at past things I had done... Just to see the **growth.** I do think **we learn from our mistakes...**ISA enforces that—to move forward, of if you do make a mistake...it’s not the end of the world. We’ll **build on it and make it better.**” – **ISA Student**

SCHOOL AS SYSTEM: KEY LEVELS

Level of school system	Definition	Examples
School climate & culture	A school’s physical and social environment and the norms, values, and expectations that structure that environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School mission and vision • Core values • Expectations of graduates
School features & structures	School design features and organizational structures that shape how the school and its activities are organized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory • School schedule • Counseling and support services
School practices	Formal and informal daily practices that reflect what people do, how they interact, how they learn, and how they engage in relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and learning strategies • School traditions and activities • Classroom participation practices

(cf. Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Bryk et al., 2010; Cohen & Geier, 2010; Cole, 1996; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002b; Eccles & Roser, 2011; Markus & Conner, 2013; Thapa et al., 2013; Wren, 1999)

CLIMATE & CULTURE: CROSS-CASE THEMES

- **SEL shapes school mission, vision, norms, values, and expectations of both students and adults**
 - ✓ Student-centered ethos
 - ✓ Relationship and community oriented
 - ✓ Focus on growth, reflection, resilience, and agency
 - ✓ Focus on physical and emotional safety and respect
 - ✓ Cultivate critically aware, multicultural perspective
 - ✓ Foster social responsibility and social action
- **Intentional culture deeply rooted in SEL**
 - ✓ Acculturate students and adults as community members
 - ✓ Importance of teacher and administrator buy-in, modeling
- **SEL permeates social climate and physical environment**

ISA: CLIMATE & CULTURE

Mission

The mission of the International School of the Americas (ISA) is to challenge all members of the school community to **consistently reflect on and question what it means to be acting at one's fullest potential as a learner, leader, and global citizen**. Students and teachers are asked to use their education to improve themselves, their school, and the local and global community.

ISA: CLIMATE & CULTURE

Graduate Profile: Life-Long Learners

- ✦ Life-long learners are conscientious citizens who actively participate in their local and global communities because they realize they are part of an interdependent world.
- ✦ Life-long learners are inquisitive and seek to investigate and make meaning of the world around them.
- ✦ Life-long learners recognize different perspectives and seek to understand the opinions, viewpoints, and philosophies of others.
- ✦ Life-long learners actively engage in dialogue as a means of resolving conflict, recognizing that often the most positive outcomes are achieved through discussion and mutual agreement.
- ✦ Life-long learners are creative in their approach to solving problems; they rely on a wide array of background knowledge and skills from multiple disciplines and creatively combine that knowledge to generate new and productive outcomes.

ISA: CLIMATE & CULTURE



ISA: CLIMATE & CULTURE

"I know [ISA is] not like most high schools, because I have friends that go to the different high schools around the district, and at ISA, the teachers expect more from you, and they trust you more, and they teach you more, and they care more." – **Student**

"The first thing that struck me about ISA is how willing everyone is to help each other out. It's like a family." – **Student**

"I chose to come here. [At the other school] there weren't many different kinds of people, they were all one kind of people... [I wanted to be] with people that I know are going to be in the same situation and that I can feel comfortable around." – **Student**



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FEATURES & STRUCTURES: CROSS-CASE THEMES

- **Utilize design features and organizational structures of effective small schools and leverage them to support SEL**
 - ✓ Small school community
 - ✓ House/academy system
 - ✓ Advisory classes
 - ✓ Non-traditional scheduling
 - ✓ Distributed governance, strong leadership, teacher empowerment
- **Also use particular features and structures to foster SEL**
 - ✓ Progressive, grade level themes that organize advisory, curriculum, and activities
 - ✓ Expanded, collaborative, and flexible staff roles
 - ✓ Student support staff dedicated to SEL
 - ✓ Community partnerships and learning opportunities (required projects, service, internships, travel; social awareness and action)
 - ✓ College support programs (multicultural-straddlers and border-crossers)
 - ✓ Restorative disciplinary policies

FENWAY: FEATURES & STRUCTURES

Advisory

- ✦ 9th grade: Transition to Fenway and strategies (e.g., stress reduction, study skills, safety practices). Fenway Toolkit.
- ✦ 10th grade: Discovering who you are and how you can serve others (e.g., 40-hour community service requirement). Fenway Toolkit.
- ✦ 11th grade: What is the nature of the world around us? Focus on 11th grade review, college and career prep.
- ✦ 12th grade: What can we do about it? Focus on preparing for future (e.g., financial literacy and college transition skills).

Student Support Staff

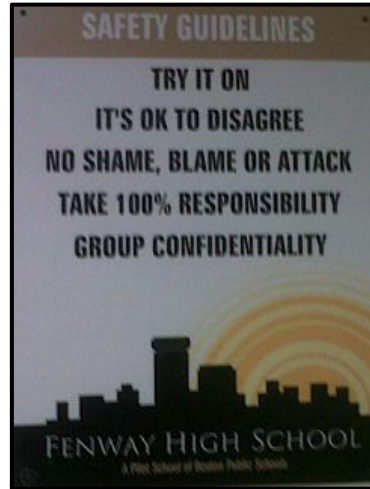
- ✦ Three coordinators, one per house (3 houses, merged for 12th grade)
- ✦ “Take the pulse of the culture of the school” and run 9th grade advisory
- ✦ Close contact with everyone in school (e.g., 2-hour House meetings on Tuesdays with teachers)
- ✦ Centrally located, open office; unavoidable community space
- ✦ Link SEL to personal, social, and academic outcomes

FENWAY: FEATURES & STRUCTURES

“For the first three years, we’re in the same class with the same people. You’re really close. The whole point of advisory is that.” – **Student**

“We do conflict resolution and peer mediation. One of our safety guidelines is that ‘it’s ok to disagree’... Kids come back and say ‘I’ve used the peer mediation stuff!’ They come back and communicate to us and it’s nice.” – **Student Support Coordinator**

“We talk a lot about being ready to deal with college... We try to talk to students, prepare them what to expect, especially when attending these smaller, white, liberal arts colleges. Students say the Fenway community prepared them well... More of them have navigated these experiences of culture shock much more beautifully than I would have. A student [going to college] said, ‘There are white students everywhere, but I talked to some Fenway students there. I’m fine.’” – **Student Support Coordinator**



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PRACTICES: CROSS-CASE THEMES

- **Curricular and instructional practices support SEL in terms of both content (e.g., coursework) and process (e.g., teacher facilitation)**
 - ✓ Focus on relevant, real world content and application of knowledge
 - ✓ Humanities, social sciences, STEM, and the arts; interdisciplinary learning
 - ✓ Learning is collaborative, project-based, and iterative
 - ✓ Learning is also critical, questioning, and personalized
- **Formal and informal daily practices foster interdependence, community, and collective efficacy**
- **Teachers and other adults in school are widely available and accessible to students**
 - ✓ Relationships extend beyond school day and typical boundaries
 - ✓ El Puente and Fenway students can rely on teacher/administrator/counselor support at all times
- **At El Puente and Fenway, student clubs and activities enable students to acknowledge their cultures and provide support around common issues and transitional or novel experiences (e.g., adulthood, internships, college)**

EL PUENTE: PRACTICES

Courses, projects, & assessments

- 9th grade pre-algebra: *Finance My Life*
- Humanities projects: *The American Dream*
- Science projects: *Inequality in Poor Communities*
- Senior praxis class: *See, Analyze, Act*
 - Stop & frisk workshop: Personal experience, policy analysis, public education

Instruction

- Checking in
- Giving props
- Student voice
- Critical perspective and reflection
- Each one, teach one
- Collaboration



EL PUENTE: PRACTICES



“Through the creative process, a young person can create an idea and explore the many different ways both individually and collectively to make it a reality.”

- *El Puente's Integrated Arts Project Handbook*

SCHOOLS: RESULTS SUMMARY

- **SEL is understood and practiced in ways that overlap with, and also importantly diverge from, mainstream conceptions**
 - Informed by a social justice education perspective
 - Focus on relationships, empowerment, and supported growth and resilience
 - Tuned to meet needs of student communities
 - Connects students to local communities and wider world beyond school
- **A whole-school approach to SEL**
 - Is reinforced coherently through schools' culture and climate, features and structures, and formal and informal practices
 - Applies to both students and adults in the school
- **SEL in high schools**
 - Focuses on significant adolescent experiences and transitions
 - Needs to prepare students for the transition to college, work, and life beyond the school

INSIGHTS & IMPLICATIONS

- **SEL and social justice education**
 - Better meet needs of low-income students and students of color in diverse, urban school settings
- **Closing the opportunity gap**
 - Do more to address context in which learning takes place
 - Provide students with critical psychological resources
 - Necessary for effective practice and policy that incorporates “non-cognitive” factors
- **Practice and policy**
 - Caution around universal, interventionist approaches
 - Caution around “non-cognitive” mindset
 - Small is good, but practice could be honed
 - Implementation is key; adults need SEL too

THANK YOU

El Puente, Fenway, & ISA

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Bethany Rogers

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