Core Function	Personalized Learning: Social/Emotional Competency

Effective Practice	Providing instruction, modeling, classroom norms, and caring attention that promotes students' self-respect, management of emotions, concern for others, and responsibility

Indicator: The School Community Council ensures that all volunteers understand social/emotional competency and their roles relative to its enhancement in students. (F2)

Explanation: The evidence suggests that the Social/Emotional Competency promotes self- and social awareness and management, as well as how to make responsible decisions. These skills have been shown to improve academic, social, and behavioral outcomes. The school must provide SEL training and support for volunteers so that they fully understand the Social/Emotional Competency and can implement these supportive practices for students.

Questions: What resources will the school provide for volunteers to better understand Social/Emotional concepts? How will the school incorporate social and emotional concepts into daily routines and interactions? How can volunteers work with school staff and families to promote the Social/Emotional Competency in students?

What is the Social/Emotional Competency?

The Social/Emotional Competency fosters a level of concern and respect for oneself and others strengthening skills of self-management and productive decision-making (Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015; Educator Competencies, 2015; Redding, 2016). Specifically, social-emotional learning (SEL) helps students use their "sense of self-worth, regard for others, and emotional understanding and management to set positive goals and make responsible decisions" (Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015, p. 2). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (2012) identifies five primary skills in the Social/Emotional domain:

- Self-awareness: Being able to identify and understand one's own emotions, thoughts, behaviors, and abilities;

- Self-management: Being able to regulate these emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in the pursuit of positive and healthy goals;

- Social awareness: Being able to understand and relate to others, identify social supports and resources, and understand social norms for how to act;

- Relationship skills: Being able to communicate and work well with others and develop positive and meaningful relationships; and

- Responsible decision-making: Being able to make productive decisions about how to behave and interact with others, based on an understanding of norms, consequences, and others' needs.

Weissberg and Cascarino (2013) write that, "SEL programming is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful" (p. 10). Yet many of these skills need to be explicitly taught to children and adolescents, especially as they pertain to the

learning process. School staff and volunteers should not only teach these concepts but should also model and provide opportunities for their application throughout the school day, in the context of a safe environment for socializing and learning (Wiessberg & Cascarino, 2013; Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015).

The five SEL skills are developed within this positive learning environment, but they are put to use both at school and in the community at large. Research has shown that students who have had training in the Social/Emotional Competency are better students, better citizens, and better employees later in life, with reduced rates of negative or risky behaviors and disciplinary issues (CASEL, 2012; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013; CASEL, 2015). The Social/Emotional Competency is therefore critical for students of all ages to learn and master; students need a solid foundation in self-concept and empathy for others at an early age, but the ability to navigate "increased independence, peer pressure, and exposure to social media" in adolescent and teenage years is critical for their academic and personal success (CASEL, 2015, p. 6).

How Can Schools Ensure that Volunteers Understand and Help Promote the Social/Emotional Competency?

Teachers and parents are not the only adults involved in children's educational experiences and therefore not the only ones who can help students improve their self-concept and social relationships. Between after-school and summer programs, as well as school day volunteers, there are many other adults who are influential in how students feel about themselves, their learning, and their peers. Redding (2016) defines a school community as, "the people intimately associated with a school—students, their families, teachers, administrators, school staff, and volunteers—bound together by their common interest in the students served by the school" (p. 12). Bayerl (2014) writes:

By working together toward shared goals for the youth they serve, schools and community-based youth development organizations can ensure that their efforts are aligned and complementary and that every young person has the opportunities and supports they need to develop the skills and mindsets that support success in school and beyond. (p. 18)

All members of the school community can provide additional academic and emotional supports for students, but for them to be most effective, they need to be familiar with the goals and strategies of the classroom (Bayerl, 2014). The onus is on the school to fully integrate volunteers and community partners into its work and values, treating them as equals and as meaningful contributors in the task of educating children (Bayerl, 2014). When advertising their needs or requests for volunteers, schools can incorporate these values and competencies into job descriptions, scopes of work, and onboarding conversations (Redding, 2016).

For volunteers who are unfamiliar with SEL, they may need to be explicitly taught, just like the students with whom they work. It is as important to model these practices with adult learners as it is with children because SEL is something that can benefit everyone in both a personal and professional way (CASEL, 2012; Redding, 2013). Schools should provide professional development opportunities for volunteers and partners in their building about the Social/Emotional Competency and how they can use it to support student achievement. These professional development sessions can be just for these stakeholders, or they can be shared training with school staff (Bayerl, 2014; Redding, 2016).

Volunteers should understand that simple changes in how they relate to, respond to, and encourage children have a big impact on their feelings about themselves, their peers, and school in general (Redding, 2006; Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012). Making this information as simple and actionable as possible is important for helping volunteers use it in their classroom or program; providing lists of proven strategies, activities, and instructional resources is a great way to help volunteers get started (Redding, 2014; Redding, 2016).

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