

**MAXIMIZING STUDENT POTENTIAL AND ACHIEVEMENT
THROUGH POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE (PSC) AND SOCIAL
AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)**

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education has approved the School Climate Guidelines (October, 2004) as a framework for the process of creating, implementing and sustaining positive school climate for all students of the State of Ohio;

WHEREAS, the Ohio Department of Education, having the responsibility to implement the School Climate Guidelines, has also approved Academic Content Standards which include Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) content standards within the skill sets for grades Pre-K through 12; and

WHEREAS, social and emotional problems experienced by children and adolescents, such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, juvenile delinquency, school drop-out rates, engaging in multiple risky behaviors and the juvenile arrest rate for violent crime have grown considerably over the past decade, and

WHEREAS, the school environment is like a “second home” where kids learn and experiment with developing social skills, and the school environment is recognized as one of the most influential socializing environments - outside of the family home - for any child to help him/her acquire social and emotional skills, and

WHEREAS, school climate has been determined to be a critical influence on students’ ability to reach their full potential in both academic achievement and social/life skills; and legislators, educators, and parents recognize the vital importance of a positive school climate on the social and emotional development of the student, and the impact it has on the development of our youth into valuable and contributing members of society; and

WHEREAS, Social & Emotional Learning (SEL), defined as the process of acquiring skills which include the ability to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, develop self control and the ability to handle challenging situations, and develop ethical skills such as integrity and perseverance, has been effectively proven by research to increase student academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, social and emotional development is an essential foundation of cognitive development and is directly related to academic achievement, and SEL has effectively been proven by research to support positive school climate and enhance and improve student achievement in academics when SEL is imbedded and interwoven across curricula; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Ohio PTA will advocate for required inclusion of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) content within the Academic Content Standards, core curricula, and the School Climate Guidelines; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Ohio PTA and its constituent organizations distribute information to promote the inclusion of SEL to educators, students, parents, and legislators and other partnering organizations and stakeholders; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Ohio PTA and its constituent organizations will support, advocate and work in a collaborative manner for policy and legislation that impacts and promotes positive school climate and student achievement through SEL; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Ohio PTA and its constituent organizations will advocate for all colleges and universities in the State of Ohio to adopt and implement SEL instruction into the education curriculum at the bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate levels; SEL instruction should be as important as other degree requirements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the OHIO PTA will submit this resolution to the National PTA in its proper form.

Rationale:

NOTE: For the purposes of this resolution here are some terms and acronyms that will be used and seen in this report: SEL = Social & Emotional Learning. SEL may also be referenced as-- CE = Character Education, Asset Building, EQ or Emotional Intelligence, Citizenship, Ethics. Ohio PTA = OPTA, National Education Association - NEA

The Strongsville Council PTA is bringing this resolution to the Ohio PTA Convention to bring to our collective attention and to advocate for Ohio PTA's collective action, through resolution, as to the benefit of maximizing student's reaching their full potential through Positive School Climate and Social & Emotional Learning.

To define: What is SEL? "SEL is the process through which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to recognize and manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations constructively" Competence in the use of SEL skills is promoted in the context of safe and supportive school, family, and community learning environments in which children feel valued and respected and connected to and engaged in learning. SEL is fundamental not only to children's social and emotional development but also to their health, ethical development, citizenship, motivation to achieve, and academic learning as well. ([Elias et al., 1997](#), and *CASEL, Safe and Sound*, 2005). Another source for definition of some terms: American Center for Civic Character: Includes also Ohio Center for Civic Character
<http://www.characterusa.org/resources.php#cat2>

Research clearly indicates that social and emotional development is an essential foundation of cognitive development and directly related to students' academic achievement; yet studies show that social and emotional problems experienced by our youth continue to grow and with that, the resulting consequences of increased violence and lower academic achievement. Recognizing that for any child, the school setting is one of the most influential socializing contexts (outside of the family), the Ohio State Board of Education developed School Climate Guidelines which include a framework for schools and school districts in the State of Ohio for creating, implementing and sustaining a safe and positive climate for all students. The Ohio Department of Education has created and approved the Ohio Academic Content Standards designed for educators to create and then assess and evaluate the outcome of curricula and instruction. Within these guidelines and standards are direct links for Social & Emotional learning skills (SEL) designed to teach grade/age appropriate SEL skills and knowledge to students within the school and class core curriculum. The SEL learning curricular connects provide students with the skills necessary to use critical thinking skills, recognize, reflect upon and manage their emotions; develop caring and concern for others; establish positive peer and adult relationships; make responsible, ethical decisions; thus enabling them to better handle challenging life situations.

There are 3 aspects to Social and Emotional Learning skills. Citizenship ethics, having to do with how we interact and treat ourselves and others (includes but not exclusive to: respect, empathy, kindness, honesty). Performance ethics, having to do with and include (but not exclusive to: responsibility, integrity, perseverance, critical thinking, teamwork) and the Drivers such as Courage, Patience and Endurance. (Center for the 4th & 5th R's www.cortland.edu/character), Much information in the study by Thomas Lickona, Matthew Davidson "Smart & Good High Schools, Report to the Nation Integrating Excellence and Ethics for Success in School, Work and Beyond." The importance of self-discipline, self control, the management of emotions and management of conflicts in a wide variety of situations also should not be under-estimated in helping students as well as adults to reach their full potential.

Legislators, educators, school services personnel and parents must promote and advocate for the purposeful implementation of the SEL standards connects into Ohio public schools and curricula. We need to create an environment/climate in schools where every child feels he/she belongs providing students with knowledge and value of these ideals and skills and to utilize these skills to "critically think and be aware" of the importance of Social & emotional skills within their homes, schools, employment and community life – throughout life (providing opportunity for life long learning). .

“Indeed, the important message of recent research is that enhancing children’s social, emotional, ethical and academic development is one inseparable goal, rather than a set of competing priorities”. CASEL article from “The other Side of the Report Card”, November 2002 issue of American School Board journal, copyright 2002.

The goal of this resolution is to bring SEL education into equal priority status within the academic educational core curriculum, as well as within all school buildings and facilities (including co-curricular & extra-curricular activities) in the state of Ohio, a consistent message of the importance and value of SEL skills in education and the educational environment and then utilizing of the Ohio Academic Content Standards and the Ohio School Climate Guidelines work toward focusing on these skills along with core academic skills at an age appropriate level for the benefit of all students Pre-K – 12 in the State of Ohio.

There is a resolution by the Ohio PTA on Character Education adopted in 1991. When asking how to proceed shall we propose an update to that resolution, the response brought from the OPTA Resolution committee to us was that a new resolution is the way to proceed on the topic of Positive School Climate and SEL..