

The CASEL Forum on Educating All Children for Social, Emotional, and Academic Excellence: From Knowledge to Action

On December 10, 2007, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) hosted a one-day forum in New York City that brought together a group of leading educators, social scientists, philanthropists, and policy makers to learn about and discuss an important and relatively new aspect of preschool to high school education: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

SEL helps children and even adults develop the fundamental social and emotional skills for life effectiveness. In SEL programming, schools, families, and communities partner to teach students how to build positive relationships, solve problems, exercise self-control, and behave ethically. Students learn a range of skills that include recognizing and managing emotions, developing caring and concern for others, communicating effectively, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively. Well-designed SEL programming teaches these skills as part of the standard curriculum, often combining them with instruction in traditional academic areas like reading and social studies. In addition, it reinforces the skills through a schoolwide emphasis on a positive, caring climate with high expectations for all students.

Since 1994, CASEL, an independent organization based at the University of Illinois at Chicago, has been an international leader in defining, establishing, and expanding the SEL field. The occasion for the December 2007 Forum was the conclusion of the latest phase of a research project spanning several years that breaks new ground in establishing clear linkages between SEL programming and a variety of positive outcomes for young people, including positive behaviors in and out of school and quantifiable academic success. At a time when today's schools are experiencing tremendous pressure to focus on students' academic achievement, SEL programming, according to the CASEL research, is clearly associated with improved academic performance in addition to numerous other positive outcomes.

The research, supported by the W.T. Grant Foundation, was jointly conducted by Joseph A. Durlak, Professor of Psychology at Loyola University Chicago, and CASEL President Roger P. Weissberg, Professor of Psychology and Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. It consisted of a meta-analysis of more than 700 reports and evaluations of existing SEL programs. The CASEL forum introduced preliminary findings from the meta-analysis, focusing on 207 school-based studies that met exacting criteria for scientific validity. These findings will be presented in more detail in several papers prepared for professional journals.

The Forum was a watershed event for CASEL. Founded in 1994 by a group that included Daniel Goleman, the best-selling author of *Emotional Intelligence*, and educator-philanthropist Eileen Rockefeller Growald, CASEL has worked systematically over the years to establish the field of SEL and enlist educators throughout the U.S. and abroad to expand the practice of school-based SEL programming. The December 2007 CASEL Forum was designed to build a much broader movement to implement SEL nationwide, building on a decade of research and new knowledge about the impact of SEL programming.

By the end of the day, the clear consensus of those present was that the Forum had achieved its major goals. Forum participants made numerous commitments of follow-up support and action. A front-page article in the December 17, 2007 issue of *Education Week* observed that "...the Dec. 10 meeting in New York...was aimed at charting a future course for the 13-year-old organization and the movement it helps promote. 'When kids are disaffected or they're not motivated and engaged, improving academic test scores is a real challenge,' Mr. Weissberg [said], 'and that can't be done unless you address students' social, emotional, and cognitive needs.'"

This report summarizes key ideas from the CASEL Forum. Readers who want to learn more about the Forum presentations and participants are encouraged to visit CASEL's website (www.CASEL.org--click on "CASEL's 2007 Forum").

FORUM OVERVIEW

The Forum had two major components: a morning “Knowledge” segment that explained SEL and shared news from the scientific front on SEL impacts on students, and an afternoon “Action” segment that defined the strategic next steps required to make SEL more broadly known and practiced in schools for maximum benefit to children. The Forum was moderated by Timothy P. Shriver, Chair of CASEL’s Board of Directors, the CEO of Special Olympics, and one of CASEL’s founders. These sessions were followed by a late-afternoon reception for an expanded group of invited guests that included representatives from the fields of education, philanthropy, and communications.

MORNING SESSIONS—WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT SEL

Welcome and Setting the Stage

The opening session introduced the Forum’s major conveners: Daniel Goleman, Eileen Rockefeller Growald, and Mark Greenberg, Professor of Psychology at Penn State, an acknowledged leader in the area of scientific research on SEL, and a member of CASEL’s Board of Directors. The session also provided an opportunity for brief self-introductions among the participants. It concluded with an outline of the days’ agenda and the Forum’s major goals.

Overview of CASEL and SEL

Timothy Shriver described his own involvement with the field of Social and Emotional Learning and CASEL as a way of illustrating the evolution of the field. In the 1980s Shriver played an active role in developing and coordinating the district-wide SEL program in the New Haven, Connecticut, public school system, widely recognized as a pioneer in SEL policy and practice. There he began working closely with Roger P. Weissberg, Daniel Goleman, Eileen Rockefeller Growald, and many others who are now at the forefront of SEL. He has remained closely involved with CASEL since the organization’s inception.

Video Presentation

At this point the Forum participants viewed a video presentation on SEL in the Anchorage, Alaska, school district produced for the Forum by the George Lucas Educational Foundation (GLEF). Representatives of GLEF, including filmmaker George Lucas, were among the Forum’s participants. The Anchorage public schools, portrayed in the 12-minute GLEF documentary, have included SEL programming throughout the district, K-12, for several years. Anchorage has found that SEL makes a significant difference in students’ attitudes toward school, has reduced problem behaviors, and has increased academic success. In addition, Anchorage has developed its own SEL learning standards and aligned its curriculum with those standards. In short, Anchorage is an exemplary school district committed to SEL as central to the educational process. In addition to the video presentation, Carol Comeau, superintendent of the Anchorage school district and Chair of the Council of the Great City Schools, was one of the key Forum presenters. More detailed information on GLEF’s involvement with SEL, including segments from the video shown at the CASEL Forum, is available on the GLEF website: www.edutopia.org (click on “Social and Emotional Learning”).

Recent Research Findings on School-Based SEL Programming and Student Success

This presentation by CASEL President Roger P. Weissberg offered preliminary findings from CASEL’s meta-analysis of 207 school-based SEL programs reaching nearly 300,000 students in grades K-12. Among the key points:

- CASEL’s focus from the beginning has been on identifying common ideas and practices inherent in a large number of diverse programs that address the social, emotional, and academic development of children and youth. The concept of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) provides a framework that

creates unity and coherence for a wide range of programs that address positive youth development, problem prevention, health promotion, and children's academic success.

- The meta-analysis of school-based SEL programs addressed four core questions:
 - Does school-based SEL programming positively affect students?
 - Do the impacts on student functioning endure over time?
 - Are SEL programs that are conducted by existing school staff effective?
 - Does the quality of implementation affect student outcomes?

- Findings from the recently completed meta-analysis of 207 school-based programs have been highly encouraging. They include:
 - SEL programming is associated with significant improvements in students' academic performance. These improvements have been on a par with or even greater than those achieved through other major educational interventions, such as reduced class size. For example, Weissberg reported that students at the 50th percentile in standardized achievement tests who receive SEL instruction improve an average 11 percentage points—to the 61st percentile—while their peers who do not receive such SEL instruction remain at the 50th percentile.
 - Additional gains due to SEL programming include significant improvements in:
 - Social-emotional skills
 - Attitudes about self and others
 - Positive social behavior
 - Conduct problems
 - Emotional distress
 - The positive impact of SEL programming is strongest when school-based programs are taught by regular classroom teachers, as opposed to outside consultants and researchers.
 - The quality of SEL program implementation, e.g., fidelity to the original program design and consistency of program delivery, is an important factor in whether a program's positive impacts are realized.

Weissberg observed that to achieve the positive impacts identified by the meta-analysis, school-based SEL programming needs strong support in a variety of forms, ranging from state and local policies, to professional development, to the support of administrators, especially the school principal.

In sum, **SEL works**, achieving multiple positive outcomes including academic achievement; **it is doable**, in that good results can be obtained from programs run by existing school staff; **and it needs support** in the form of effective program implementation and federal and state policies, leadership, and professional development. Weissberg's slides and a brief summary of his presentation are available at <http://casel.org/news.php#forum>. A video interview with him at the Forum is at <http://www.edutopia.org/roger-weissberg-casel-video>.

The Neuroscience of Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning

The other morning keynoter was Richard Davidson, one of the world's leading experts on neuroscience, Professor of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin, and Director of both the Waisman Center Brain Imaging Laboratory and the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience.

Davidson began his presentation by saying, “If there’s one take-home message that I’d like you to leave with, it’s that SEL changes the brain. The brain is really the target of these SEL interventions.” Key points from his presentation included:

- The **neuroplasticity of the brain** across the life span allows changes in the brain to occur in response to experience.
- The **prefrontal cortex** is a key zone in the brain that regulates emotions. Davidson and his colleagues have been able to show through MRI scans and brain imaging of the prefrontal cortex and other parts of the brain exactly how different emotions, particularly strong negative emotions, can affect the brain’s functioning. “The brains of our children are constantly being shaped, literally molded by experience, both of a negative and positive sort, wittingly or unwittingly,” Davidson said. “We must take the reins and promote positive brain changes by cultivating healthy social-emotional habits.”
- **Affective chronometry** is the process of measuring the brain’s response to emotional stimuli. Subject A, for example, might recover more quickly from a negative emotion than Subject B. “Our goal in SEL,” Davidson said, “is to foster a more adaptive pattern so that children are better able to regulate their emotions through adaptive responses.” Using skills taught in SEL programs, “We see that children can actually change their brain.”
- People who are good emotion regulators show more adaptive levels of the chemical **cortisol**— “Strategies of stress regulation are good not just for your brain but for your body. When cortisol doesn’t go down at night, it’s bad for you. People who show strong activation in the prefrontal cortex have lower levels of cortisol at night.”
- Memory is impaired by experimental induction of anxiety. “If you’re learning skills to calm yourself,” Davidson said, “your prefrontal cortex will be less jangled. You’ll show improved emotional control and improved cognition. You’ll do better on tests of working memory, which underlies a lot of academic performance.”

Much of Davidson’s presentation consisted of **photographic images of brain functioning** developed by his colleagues and students. Viewing these images, the Forum participants were able to see physical changes in the brain based on positive and negative stimuli and experiences. As Davidson explained, the images clearly illustrated that “from childhood to adulthood, larger and larger areas of the prefrontal cortex get bigger and bigger. The prefrontal cortex plays an increasingly critical role in the regulation of emotion.”

In summary, Davidson said, qualities such as patience, calmness, cooperation, and kindness are all skills that can be taught. “Everything we now know indicates that training in SEL skills can change the brain,” Davidson said. “Education literally shapes the child’s brain and produces alterations that lay the foundation for all future learning, emotion regulation, and social functioning.” An edited video of Davidson’s presentation can be viewed at <http://www.edutopia.org/richard-davidson-sel-brain-video>.

Panel Presentation and Discussion of SEL Policy and Practice in Action

The morning concluded with a panel discussion designed as a bridge between the morning’s scientific presentations and the afternoon’s action agenda. The panel addressed the question of whether SEL is feasible outside the lab and in the world of educational practice and policy. Mary Utne O’Brien, CASEL’s Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and a Research Professor of Psychology and Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, hosted the session. Discussants were Carol Comeau, Superintendent of the Anchorage, Alaska public schools; and Janice Jackson, Lecturer in Educational Leadership and Organizations at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

O'Brien presented a snapshot of SEL policies and practices across the world, including Singapore, Spain, the UK, Australia, Canada, and states and districts in the U.S. She also discussed the importance of **state policies related to SEL**. CASEL has worked closely with the State of Illinois in developing state SEL curriculum standards, which are now part of the Illinois education code. "Standards are an important policy vehicle for promoting SEL practice," O'Brien said. "Standards at once clarify what is important for schools to teach and students to know, even as they permit considerable discretion and instructional creativity about how to attain these goals." New York State is in the process of developing its own SEL policy guidelines, and the Anchorage, Alaska, public schools have not only developed their own SEL standards but have included them in a detailed set of guidelines that aligns them with the district-wide curriculum and assessment efforts. (The Anchorage standards and policies can be viewed at <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/SDFS/SEL/SELStandards.pdf>.)

Carol Comeau elaborated on **Anchorage's progress with SEL**. It began in the 1990s, she said, with introduction of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP). It continued with the district's commitment to principles from the Search Institute's Developmental Assets framework, which emphasizes focusing on students' positive qualities and strengths to promote positive attitudes and behavior. Soon district leaders began to see SEL as a critical aspect of adapting to the rapidly growing social and ethnic diversity of the community. Eventually this led to the development of Anchorage's SEL standards and benchmarks. "It was not an easy sell at the time," Comeau said. "We had some school board members who thought SEL was just about self-esteem. But we were able to show that by embracing this work, it would increase academic achievement. Ultimately SEL was incorporated into the district's six-year strategic plan, and it's been built in to the budget. Now it's really paying off."

Janice Jackson began her presentation with an overview of her extensive experience as a school district administrator, primarily in Boston and San Diego. Her work illustrated that SEL is not only doable, it is essential to a just urban education. "We need to begin this work before children are having fights on the playground," she said. "Schooling is about figuring out one's place in the world. I want to make sure we're educating children who understand that diplomacy is a better choice than violence, who see power not as something to fear but something to use for the common good, who have integrity and who see themselves as responsible not only for other human beings but for the earth." A key to promoting SEL programming in schools, she said, is to support teachers, principals, and others who are in the front lines of education in demanding, stressful times. "Policy making is critical," she said, "but when we make policy we need to think about implementation." For the urban school districts that have been Jackson's primary focus, money, and the lack of it, is a key consideration. But money alone is not enough, she said. Just as important is professional respect. "We need to treat teachers like intellectual beings," she said. "When we ask teachers to move toward whole school change for SEL, it can be done—but it is not easy." In Boston, Jackson has promoted such initiatives as study groups for teachers, a focus on cultural competence and understanding, and helping students to be global citizens. For SEL to take hold, these kinds of positive changes, she said, need to happen at many different levels, stressing a change from an atmosphere of competition and hierarchy to one of mutual respect and collaboration.

LUNCHEON AND PRESENTATION OF SEL AWARDS

The highlight of the luncheon was CASEL's first annual presentation of the Joseph E. Zins Awards for Early Career Contributions to SEL Research and Practice. These awards, one for research and one for field-based practice, honor the late Joseph E. Zins, for many years a key member of the CASEL team and lead author of numerous CASEL publications.

The award winners for 2007 were Sara Rimm-Kaufman, Professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia, who has specialized in studies of the Responsive Classroom approach to SEL, and Victoria Blakeney, Social and Emotional Curriculum Coordinator for the Anchorage, Alaska, school district.

A complete description of the awards and the 2007 winners and finalists and their work is available on the CASEL website (<http://casel.org/news.php#zins>).

AFTERNOON SESSIONS—FROM KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION

The afternoon sessions sought ways to translate the progress with SEL described in the morning's presentations into a new agenda to strengthen the SEL movement. This began with a panel presentation on four key themes CASEL has identified as central to the successful advancement of the SEL field: (1) advancing the science; (2) informing educational practice; (3) expanding public policy; (4) communicating strategically about SEL. The panel presentation set the stage for all participants to engage in small work groups focusing on these themes, and on an additional theme, (5) building capacity for the SEL movement.

The "Knowledge to Action" panel took the form of a series of informal interviews with the panelists conducted by CASEL co-founder Daniel Goleman.

Mark Greenberg addressed the issue of **advancing scientific research on SEL**. In recent years the field has made significant progress; for example, SEL intervention studies using tasks that assess neuro-cognitive development have demonstrated that children involved in SEL programming for just one year improve substantially on such tasks. "They're able to control their cognitive and emotional responses," Greenberg said. "As a result, they also become less aggressive and more socially and emotionally competent." Greenberg also praised the progress made through neuroscientific research related to SEL.

The field still faces numerous basic scientific questions, he said. There is a need for more outcome data related specifically to SEL programming—for example, impact data reflecting school-based SEL programming across the K-12 grades. The field also needs more innovation to identify new programs that will further improve outcomes for children. There is a need for continued meta-analysis and communication pieces to broadly disseminate the scientific information to SEL policy makers and educators. Greenberg also noted the importance of SEL program implementation quality and the field's need for more study of ways to improve implementation and sustainability.

Finally, Greenberg noted the need to put in place systems that can support improved school efforts and the need to study the effects of such systems. This includes focusing on developing new measures of assessment and accountability for SEL.

Next to speak was **Maurice J. Elias**, a long-time CASEL leader and collaborator, Professor of Psychology at Rutgers University, and the author of numerous books and articles on SEL. Speaking on **how to inform and improve SEL practice**, he emphasized that more extensive programming for pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 is especially important. "We're talking about a set of relationships but also a set of skills people need in order to get along in life," he said. "We can't assume our children will just pick up these skills in everyday life. To make sure kids get these skills, they need to be taught in the schools." Daniel Goleman pointed out that schools and teachers are under tremendous pressure to raise students' scores on standardized tests, not to address how well they have learned SEL skills. Elias agreed but added, "There's a lot of SEL work being done in schools. We can't ask them to stop doing that. We need to begin weaving these interrelated efforts together. Ten years ago people didn't want to hear that message, but I think they're ready now. For example, the state of New Jersey is developing a safe and civil schools initiative with SEL at the core." He added that SEL helps to create a common language for interrelated efforts and initiatives. Another key to bringing SEL into the mainstream of education, Elias said, is to make it part of teacher certification.

J. Lawrence Aber, an internationally recognized expert in child development and social policy and Professor of Applied Psychology and Public Policy at New York University, spoke about **expanding public policy related to SEL**. He began by saying that addressing public policy is a gigantic task. "One of the things we've heard today is that policy exists at multiple levels," he said. "We need to create an echo chamber—top down, bottom up, and middle out. The issue of alignment is critical." Policy making is inevitably political, Aber continued. Examining SEL policies raises a number of social and political questions, and different participants in the discussion will view SEL from different perspectives. "Red'

America uses the term ‘social and character development,’” Aber said. “Is SEL based on religion, morals, and values? Or is it based on science and rational evidence? We have to address both of these.” That, in turn, involves careful consideration of the terminology used in talking about SEL and the basic messages of the discussion.

Aber created an excellent context for the fourth panelist, filmmaker and master communicator **George Lucas**, whose topic was **strategic communication about SEL**. Goleman began by asking, “What would it take to get the message of SEL to the broadest public—not just the video we saw this morning, which will be a powerful tool—but from what you’ve heard today, what strikes you as the ‘hot take-home’?” Lucas replied that the evidence, statistics, and neuroscience highlighted in the morning’s keynote presentations are critically important. “People need to be able to say, ‘We can prove this,’” he said. Another key aspect of successful communication about SEL is to avoid jargon. “This is one of the first conferences I’ve been to without jargon,” he said. Goleman then asked what Lucas would recommend as a key message about SEL to parents. “The fact that it helps kids do better on their tests,” he replied. “That’s the biggest point to get parents behind it. Also the science of it, showing that kids can be taught ‘good manners’ and the kind of leadership skills needed in today’s workplace. Parents will support these ideas.” Lucas concluded by saying that although education is “not the sexiest of all subjects,” communicating about education can be more effective when it involves telling good stories about success. That kind of storytelling, he said, is a basic component of the George Lucas Educational Foundation and its varied communications.

Small Work Groups and Whole Group Discussion

The final major activity of the day was small-group discussions focused on the five key themes described previously, followed by report-outs to the whole group about the “big ideas” that emerged from each discussion. The afternoon concluded with summary questions and answers. Key points that emerged from this final session included:

Advancing the Science (Presenter: J. David Hawkins)

- We need more research on the link between SEL and academic achievement, the integration of SEL content and basic academic subject matter, and longitudinal studies of SEL programs in K-12.
- We also need to assess the core components or critical ingredients of effective SEL. That requires identifying the three or five things that will make a difference.
- Increasingly we need to have placebo controls, comparing SEL programming with an effort to do something other than SEL.
- Research is needed on increasing the SEL competencies and skills of those who will be teaching SEL. This might involve testing different methods of training and technical assistance in a randomized control trial.
- We need standardized consensus measures of SEL outcomes—a measurement package useful across studies and different SEL interventions.
- We need more cost-benefit analyses of these kinds of programs.

Informing and Expanding Educational Practice (Presenter: Linda Darling-Hammond)

- This group discussed how to get traction on SEL programs and how to get SEL to scale. Small wins are important. Practitioners are overwhelmed. We need tools. We also need a big picture well beyond small tools and small programs, which means seeing this work and overall instruction more holistically.
- If the basic science of both education and SEL is child development, schools and teachers need to be organized around and aware of that. Most in the U.S. are not.

- Some argue that SEL instruction between and among teachers and students may have better effects in classrooms that are doing cooperative learning and project learning. That isn't fully articulated yet in the discourse about SEL—how SEL connects to a range of pedagogical approaches.
- There is enormous pressure on schools to streamline the curriculum—we have schools that are eliminating play, recess, and so on. We need to acknowledge that this is the context in which SEL takes place, and provide teacher supports to address SEL in this context.
- As we create professional development opportunities and school designs that are supportive of SEL, we need to have ways to make those visible and accessible to others who want to learn about them.
- We need to develop a policy framework for SEL that encompasses accreditation, licensure, and so on.
- We need to sponsor SEL activities for the members of Congress.

Expanding Public Policy (Presenter: Edward Zigler)

- This group focused on how to get SEL supported at the policy level and how to build policies to encourage broad SEL implementation. One theme from the group was that you have to start by knowing who your enemies and opponents are going to be, as well as your friends and allies.
- SEL is going against the current tide right now. Anything that is seen as interfering with the literacy and numeracy tests is likely to be seen by some as a threat. One way of not raising more ire than you have to is to relate SEL accomplishments in terms of academic achievement. CASEL's new meta-analysis will help with that.
- We must continue to expand the evidentiary base demonstrating the value of SEL. The brain development work has a particular resonance. Assessment is another important area to pursue.
- We must utilize the great momentum we have in this country today for preschool intervention by doing much more work on the preschool period. We know from the brain development work that there is great plasticity in that period of life.
- Parents are absolutely critical. The most important determinant in children's growth and development are parents and families. The SEL field has to figure out a parent component to incorporate into programs. This will yield a very important constituency, parents themselves. They'll see that the programming is maintained in schools.
- SEL needs a media campaign. The role media play in moving this nation is immense. You need a strategy for that.
- A lot of the public policy today that's innovative is happening at the state level. SEL needs the kind of group that presents CASEL's goals to each state in the country. The Pew Charitable Trust provides a good model of this in its Preschool Now initiative.
- Team up with natural allies—for example, organizations like Reach Out to Fight Crime and Invest in Children. If we could demonstrate the benefits of SEL to police chiefs, sheriffs, and attorney generals all over the country, they could become advocates for this kind of learning. (If we just make kids smarter, we'll end up with smarter crooks down the line.)
- James Heckman, a Nobel laureate in economics, would support this, and he is another potentially powerful ally. Heckman is promoting social and emotional abilities by using economic data.

Communicating Strategically About SEL (Presenter: Dan Goleman)

- We also recommend developing a media campaign.
- The media have ADD. A good communications strategy must seize opportunities as they naturally arise day to day. Be proactive to make things happen.
- We need something like an Emotional Genius award to garner media attention. Make media happen; don't wait for it to happen.

- Think more deeply about how to frame the message. Translate from academese to everyday normal speak.
- Storytelling is a powerful approach. GLEF gave us a huge gift in the video. Build on this idea.
- Create the demand. Communications is *selling*. We have to accompany that with information about accessibility and action. What can you do to get this into your school?
- The right messages need to reach the right audiences. For parents it might be “SEL provides your child with skills to get a job.” For the business community it might be “This is what you’re looking for—21st century workplace skills.” It’s important to be very aware of the language we use with various audiences. We have to watch for land mines. Some words will work with some groups but not with others.
- The business community is potentially an important ally. Businesses are saying that the qualities that are enhanced by SEL are the ones they’re looking for in the people they want to hire (21st Century workplace skills).

Building Capacity for an SEL Movement (Presenter: Karen Pittman)

- CASEL is in a unique position right now. CASEL has had a strong and loyal base of funders and collaborators for 13 years. The time is ripe for major impact.
- CASEL should forge links with other groups and “camps” with similar goals to advance children’s healthy development, even if they don’t use the SEL language. There are slight differences in language, but there is huge overlap.
- Such new linkages could also extend the reach of the SEL field’s findings, and even its practices, to new settings such as after-school programming, juvenile justice, and home settings.
- Reaching families is essential.
- The question and the challenge on the table is how do you take that SEL expertise and think together about a bigger box.

“Other Great Ideas”—Comments from Participants

Milton Chen (George Lucas Educational Foundation): What an exciting day! What you want is for people to make a commitment. I’d love to know what commitments the others are going to make. We [GLEF] are committed to serving as your translator of this work. It’s very important that the commitments be made public.

Tish Jennings (Garrison Institute): We recently co-sponsored a meeting on SEL assessment with CASEL and the Fetzer Institute. Out of that came a strong interest in the needs of teachers. The Garrison Institute is making a commitment to start developing a teacher research network. I invite you all to be involved in that.

Larry Leverett (Panasonic Foundation; former superintendent of schools): Community linkages are very important, enabling community leaders to become the agents for SEL in their communities without any one institution or school having to bear the full burden of responsibility.

Lord Richard Layard (London School of Economics): This meeting has been incredibly important. What we have in England is a national curriculum in SEL, but it’s a series of words. It does not have full content. What we’re looking for is content. There’s a lot I’ve learned about today. The atmosphere is extraordinarily receptive in Britain.

David Osher (American Institutes for Research): Before I learned anything about SEL, I was a historical sociologist. Today we’ve learned that we have an accumulation of knowledge and that this information is important. We also know we’re at a point in our country where the things we’re doing, if they’re not addressed, continue to put increasing numbers of kids at risk—of dropping out, of not being

able to be fully successful students. We need to make sure we have a sustained, targeted course toward SEL so we don't lose another generation of kids, particularly poor kids of color. It should be a focused, actionable, strategic commitment.

George Miller (U.S. Congress): From a policy point of view, our commitment is to use CASEL as a resource as we dive into the second round on NCLB (the renewal of the No Child Left Behind Act). As one of the major cosponsors of NCLB, I think there's a hunger for this [SEL] in our communities among a lot of organizations that support systems for young people beyond our schools. We know what we're doing now isn't working. There are too many barriers to learning. This agenda is really about helping students deal with that. Also there's a confluence—when we look at the stars of the high-tech industry and other industries, they're talking about a set of skills that are way beyond the skills measured by NCLB. They're talking about skills of a very diverse clientele and terrain. There's a way to sharpen the debate. We've tried hard power and soft power; let's try smart power. I think this is all very timely. There are some real opportunities to expand this to other organizations that would love to know about the research.

POST-FORUM OUTCOMES AND PLANS

The Forum resulted in several specific outcomes that we believe are just the beginning of a longer-term movement to strengthen and expand the SEL field.

1. Debra Viadero wrote a front-page story in *Education Week* about the Forum, SEL, and CASEL's meta-analysis findings. The article appeared in the December 17, 2007 issue. It can be accessed online at <http://www.casel.org/downloads/edweek12.17.07FINAL.pdf>.
2. We have completed a report of CASEL's meta-analysis findings highlighting links between SEL programming and improved student behavior, including academic performance. The meta-analysis has been submitted for publication in a peer-review scientific journal. Upon acceptance, we will broadly and strategically disseminate information about the study findings and their implications for educational policy and practice.
3. Congressman George Miller's office has been in touch to request more information about SEL as the House Education and Labor Committee, which he chairs, moves forward with the No Child Left Behind Act review, revision, and reauthorization process. The Committee has invited CASEL to come to Washington, DC to discuss implications of our research and practice for federal education policy.
4. Several foundations have indicated interest in supporting CASEL's Working Group of national leaders on SEL assessment. In response, we have submitted proposals asking if they are interested in joining the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Kirlin Foundation, the Rauner Family Foundation, and the University of Illinois at Chicago as co-sponsors of our multi-year initiative.
5. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (which published our first book, *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators*, in 1997) met with CASEL staff to discuss ways to collaborate with CASEL. They plan to disseminate information to promote efforts to educate the whole child, with a focus on social, emotional, and academic growth. Their March 2008 newsletter, *Education Update*, reported findings from the CASEL meta-analysis.
6. The George Lucas Educational Foundation (GLEF) prepared a compelling 12-minute DVD especially for the Forum that succeeded in "bringing SEL to life" for meeting participants. GLEF has also posted video interviews from the Forum event featuring some of the presenters:
 - [Emotion in Education: An Interview with Maurice Elias](#)
 - [Selling SEL: An Interview with Dan Goleman](#)
 - [EQ Meets IQ: An Interview with Roger Weissberg](#)

We have also initiated conversations with GLEF about partnering to create distance learning opportunities for educators. For more information and online videos, go to the GLEF website (www.edutopia.org –click on “Social and Emotional Learning”).

7. The many excellent suggestions raised during the Forum’s small-group sessions are shaping CASEL’s plans to work with several states and countries to create SEL-supportive policies and implement evidence-based schoolwide SEL programming on a broad scale. CASEL’s board and staff are reaching out to a number of Forum participants who indicated their willingness to serve as advisers and collaborators for future work in these areas.

We at CASEL were excited and energized by the Forum, and we are planning ways to take our work to the next level organizationally. We are maintaining our base at the University of Illinois at Chicago for CASEL’s research activity, and at the same time we have created a second entity by incorporating as a nonprofit to expand our training, technical assistance, and other professional services to states and countries, our communications efforts, and our fund-raising—tasks vital to building the field of SEL. The staff of the new nonprofit component will work closely with our research staff at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to ensure CASEL’s commitment to integrating the best science, policy, and practice to foster children’s social, emotional, and academic success. We have also launched a national search for an Executive Director for CASEL (see the job announcement on our home page at www.CASEL.org).

We are optimistic about the impact we can have on improving education, and on promoting the social, emotional, and academic success of children worldwide. As we develop strategic next steps and priorities for action, we will keep our sponsors and collaborators closely involved and informed.