

PRESS RELEASE
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**New Study Shows Principals' Support for SEL Instruction is High;
Help Needed with Training, Resources**

WASHINGTON, DC. School principals across the United States believe social and emotional learning is essential, but they want more guidance, training, and support to teach these skills effectively, according to a national [survey](#) of nearly 900 principals of elementary, middle, and high schools.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which people acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

School principals believe there are strong benefits associated with teaching SEL in schools, according to the report by Civic Enterprises and Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). The survey found virtually *all* principals believe a stepped-up focus on SEL would positively impact school climate, build citizenship, improve relationships between students and teachers, and decrease bullying.

“Leaders on the front lines of education understand the critical nature of developing students’ social and emotional competencies and are aware of the enormous benefits a greater focus on SEL can have on our schools and classrooms,” said Jennifer DePaoli, senior research and policy advisor at Civic Enterprises and lead author of the report. “But they need support and resources to make it happen.”

In schools that are implementing SEL at high levels, principals report greater success in improving student outcomes. Implementation varies widely, however. A little more than one-third (35 percent) of principals report having a plan for teaching SEL and are systematically implementing it schoolwide. Those schools tend to be far more likely than others to have strong support for SEL from their district leadership.

Across the board, principals say they want more training for teachers and greater access to research-based strategies for successfully developing SEL in students. Sixty percent of principals point to a lack of teacher training to support students’ social and emotional development as a big challenge.

“These results closely mirror what we are hearing from our work in the field. Principals, superintendents, and teachers alike are asking for practical, evidence-based resources and guidance,” said Roger Weissberg, chief knowledge officer at CASEL, which has been working closely with [10 urban districts](#) that are systemically implementing SEL into instruction, school climate, family engagement, and related activities.

On assessment, 71 percent of principals agree that SEL skills can be measured and assessed. However, principals want better tools for getting the job done. Only a little more than one-third (38 percent) of those using assessments of students’ social-emotional competence in their schools say they’re useful.

Nearly three-quarters of principals say the development of SEL skills should be spelled out in state education standards. However, only about half (49 percent) think states should hold teachers accountable for developing SEL skills in children, and just 13 percent of those principals are fully in favor.

The report follows a 2013 [survey](#) that looked at teachers' views of social and emotional learning. Like the principals, the teachers surveyed for that report overwhelmingly expressed support for SEL instruction in schools but wanted more support to do it effectively.

Download the executive summary of the new report at http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ReadyToLead_ES_FINAL.pdf.

The complete report is available at http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ReadyToLead_FINAL.pdf.

[CASEL](#) is the nation's leading organization advancing and promoting integrated Pre-K to 12 academic, social, and emotional learning for all students.

[Civic Enterprises](#) a social enterprise firm that works with corporations, nonprofits, foundations, universities and governments to develop innovative initiatives and public policies in education and other fields.

[Hart Research Associates](#) is one of the leading research firms in the United States.