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Implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL): An Evaluation of Illinois Teachers' Capacity to Provide Sel Instruction and Use the Illinois SEL Standards

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IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL): AN EVALUATION OF ILLINOIS TEACHERS' CAPACITY TO PROVIDE SEL INSTRUCTION AND USE THE ILLINOIS SEL STANDARDS

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ABSTRACT

In 2003, the state of Illinois passed the Children's Mental Health Act, becoming the first state to develop standards focused specifically on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) while mandating the use of SEL instruction in schools. Over a decade and a half later, it is unclear to what degree, if any, Illinois teachers are aware of the standards as a means to guide SEL instruction, or if they possess sufficient awareness of SEL as a framework to systematically support social-emotional development in the first place. In recent years, SEL has received much attention in the field of education. A body of literature has emerged linking SEL to a variety of positive student outcomes including academic achievement (Durlak, Weisberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Zins, Bloodworth, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). During this time, SEL has been referred to as a "global phenomenon" (Humphrey, 2013) and the "missing link" (Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, J., Bruce, M., & Hariharan, 2013) in a successful, modern education system. Certainly, there is much to be excited about SEL. However, a persistent gap exists between what has been demonstrated through research as effective practice and what schools actually do on a day to day basis. If SEL initiatives are to achieve desired outcomes, greater attention must be given to the process of implementation. This attention should include the capacity of teachers to effectively put these programs in place (Durlak & Dupre, 2008). This study surveyed a non-random, purposive sample of 129, K-12 teachers in Illinois to evaluate their capacity to provide SEL instruction as well as their awareness and use of the Illinois SEL Standards. Quantitative and qualitative analyses indicated that although teachers perceive SEL instruction as valuable

and important, they lack the self-efficacy and experience to confidently provide SEL instruction. In general, high school teachers reported lower levels of capacity to provide SEL instruction relative to teachers at younger school levels. Finally, teachers at all levels reported very limited familiarity with and use of the Illinois SEL Standards.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

School improvement and systems change are necessary to address the evolving demands of modern schools. Schools today must continually plan for improvement and adapt to the dynamic needs of students and communities. Systems change can be defined as the intentional process through which an organization attempts to alter its existing practices to improve current functioning and positively impact desired outcomes. Changes in systems often entail efforts in at least two broad domains: the identification and adoption of an innovation (a new program, intervention, or way of thinking), and the process of implementing the innovation in a sustainable manner (Adelman & Taylor, 2008). During the past several decades, the field of education has seen great effort put into the first domain through rigorous evaluation of instructional practices and programming. During this time, researchers, educators, and policymakers have made a strong push toward the use of evidence-based interventions (EBIs) in order to better understand the practices most likely to achieve desired student outcomes. To a far lesser though increasing degree, the field of education has also made a push regarding the second domain, which aims to better understand the processes of implementation and how to actually put those practices into place.

Whether a school embraces new initiatives/reform or resists them, systems change is never simple. All too often it is a slow process requiring commitment and effort from many

stakeholders. Despite the progress toward a foundation of evidence-based practice, a gap between research and practice persists that undermines meaningful change. This gap between what is known through theory and science and what is put into practice through policy and actual classroom experiences is well known, and is often termed the *research to practice gap* (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). If school-wide systems change is to succeed in bringing about meaningful change in schools, attention must not only be focused on how well any given EBI works in a controlled situation, but how schools can actually make them work within the unique setting of their environment.

Implementation Science

Implementation science is a multi-disciplinary field that attempts to understand how to translate research into practice. Put another way, implementation science acts as the *to* in *research to practice* by attempting to understand the link between what is known to work and what is actually done in practice (Forman, et al., 2013). A primary area of focus in implementation science attempts to better understand and identify the barriers that hinder implementation and the elements that lead to success.

The importance of implementation cannot be overstated. No matter the amount of empirical evidence regarding an EBI, desired outcomes will only ever be achieved if the intervention is implemented in a way that stays faithful to its design while thoughtfully adjusting to the particular circumstances of the school (Forman, 2015; Kress & Elias, 2006). As expressed by Durlak and Dupre (2008), *implementation matters*. These authors found that the level of implementation has a significant impact on the degree to which a program achieves positive, sustained outcomes. However, despite the wide-scale adoption of EBIs to address a variety of

promotion and prevention initiatives, Gottfredson and Gottfredson (2001) have reported evidence indicating that schools are not necessarily achieving desired results because they are failing to put sufficient effort into implementing initiatives in a systematic or cohesive fashion.

In an environment in which schools are being held accountable for student success with a high level of public scrutiny, a variety of school-wide reforms have emerged to promote meaningful change to inefficient systems. Examples include multi-tiered systems of support such as Response to Intervention (Burns, Riley-Tillman, & VanDerHayden, 2012) and School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010). As a result of efficacy research, strong evidence has emerged supporting the value of such initiatives in relation to a variety of student academic, behavior, and mental health outcomes. Despite substantial progress in promoting these types of initiatives, greater understanding is needed regarding how to implement and sustain them in individual school settings (Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Forman et al. 2013). In particular, greater attention is needed to understand the factors that promote or hinder successful implementation at a school-wide level.

Social Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an example of an important school reform/initiative receiving much attention in recent years. Broadly defined, SEL is a process for promoting fundamental skills for individuals to succeed in school and in life by teaching them to become aware of and better regulate emotions in self, recognize feelings in others, develop and maintain meaningful relationships, and make responsible and ethical decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2015; Elias et al, 1997). SEL instruction can take on many forms. It can be provided universally or targeted to the needs of specific students.

Additionally, it can be emphasized through curriculum, school-wide environment, school-community interactions, or a combination of all three (Humphrey, 2013). The value of SEL can be found in the growing body of research demonstrating a strong association to positive student outcomes in behavior, mental/psychological health, social development, and academic achievement (Durlak, Weisberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Zins, Bloodworth, Wang, & Walberg, 2004).

Attention to SEL in education has exploded in recent decades, leading one prominent SEL researcher, to term it a "global phenomenon" (Humphrey, 2013; p. 145), so successful that it is becoming the "dominant orthodoxy in education systems around the world" (p.136). Likewise, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has termed SEL the *Missing Link* (Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, J., Bruce, M., & Hariharan, 2013), by which they mean SEL provides a vital component needed to achieve the broad, positive outcomes that are desired of a strong education system yet continue to elude current educational reform efforts. In less grandiose terms, educators are becoming more and more aware of the need to balance academic needs with the social, emotional, physical, and psychological needs of students (Christenson & Havsy, 2004).

Public policy has begun to reflect the attention given to SEL. Recently the US House of Representatives considered legislation focused on SEL in schools (Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2011). Likewise, some states have passed laws requiring schools to address SEL. In 2003, Illinois passed the Children's Mental Health Act, becoming the first state to establish stand-alone SEL standards in K-12 education.

Despite some legislative examples of shifting attention toward SEL, U.S. educational policy continues to overwhelmingly emphasize accountability strictly through measures of academic progress. Such policies hinder the use of SEL because they create an environment in which schools are less likely to devote time to subjects that are perceived as non-academic (Durlak, Weisberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, 2011; Zins, Bloodworth, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Generally speaking, educational policy tends to promote a narrow focus on academic achievement. This contrasts with the underlying theory of SEL, which promotes the idea that essential learning occurs through the interaction between social, emotional, and intellectual functioning of the learner. Poor growth in any of these domains exposes individuals to the risk of negative outcomes in school and in life (Elbertson, Brackett, & Weisberg, 2008). In other words, the theoretical basis of SEL focuses on the education of the whole-child.

Even in an atmosphere so narrowly focused on student academic needs, schools are being held accountable by the public regarding non-academic outcomes such as teen substance abuse, violence and bullying, school completion, and juvenile delinquency. On the one hand, educators are pressured to focus on academics and "teach to the test". On the other hand, they are given the message that they must address various non-academic issues as well. Some have noted that this expectation to address broad student needs has led to frustration and even disenfranchisement amongst educators who find it very difficult to meet such a broad range of needs given policy demands that focus so narrowly on the single domain of academics (Humphrey, 2013). Perhaps for this reason, SEL has struck a chord with many because it presents a means by which to address student needs more broadly while potentially improving academic outcomes as well.

In addition to the limiting influence of educational policy, the promotion of SEL is further hindered by the degree to which educators are exposed to SEL as a formal construct. Despite limited attention given to SEL theory and related concepts at the pre- and in-service levels, effective teachers generally recognize the importance and salience of the ideas that underlie SEL (Fleming & Bay, 2004). Although these teachers may lack formal understanding of SEL as a construct relevant to important student outcomes, they possess an intuitive awareness that meaningful learning results from the many inter-connected domains of human functioning. However, the minimal training that teachers receive regarding SEL, in addition to the pressure to focus primarily on academic achievement, means that many teachers, even if they possess an intuitive understanding of SEL's value, lack the formal knowledge that could potentially inform stronger, more effective instruction and result in improved student outcomes.

Professional Capacity

If SEL-based initiatives and programming are to lead to meaningful change, there is a crucial need to better understand the process of implementing them. It is at this point where SEL intersects with implementation science. The field of implementation science has produced a number of models/frameworks identifying the important elements of successful implementation (see Forman et al., 2013; Forman, 2015 for discussion of some of these models). Although elements related to process, such as fidelity, duration, and quality receive much of the attention in implementation, the degree to which key stakeholders possess sufficient attitudes and understanding regarding the construct(s) emphasized through the change initiative is equally important though easily overlooked. If teachers are expected to successfully integrate SEL into practice, they must possess the ability to actually accomplish this task. Adelman and Taylor

(2007) refer to this ability when they discuss the *readiness* of a school to implement systems change, which they stress as the primary focus in the early stages of systems change. Another way to refer to this ability to implement change is *professional capacity* for that change. Durlak and Dupre (2008) describe 4 factors related to the individual implementing an innovation: attitudes related to need of the innovation, attitudes related to benefits of the innovation, sense of self-efficacy, and level of proficiency with the innovation.

The success of school-based promotion and prevention programs such as SEL initiatives are directly linked to the actions and attitudes of those tasked with actually carrying out the intervention with students (Adelman and Taylor, 2007; Domitrovich, et al., 2008; Durlak & Dupre, 2008). Thus, the capacity of those individuals, generally teachers, must be keenly addressed or else a gap will persist between what is known to work and what is actually done in practice. Kress and Elias (2006) describe this disconnect in professional capacity as "One of the deep, structural issues maintaining the gap between knowledge and practice" (p. 597). They continue to explain the importance of supporting teacher capacity by stating, "This issue is of equal if not greater importance than generating new and more accurate curricula; the level of practice would be enhanced greatly if current knowledge was implemented to a greater degree" (p. 597).

Rationale

This study aims to investigate the professional capacity of teachers in Illinois regarding SEL instruction and the Illinois SEL standards in order to address the issue identified by Kress and Elias in the paragraph above. Illinois provides a leading example of state-wide initiative to promote SEL in schools. The 2003 Children's Mental Health Act resulted in the nation's first

stand-alone SEL standards for grades K-12, which has been called "the single most influential piece of legislation and public policy that has been developed thus far in promoting the aims of SEL on a wide scale" (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010, p. 18). Certainly, those who support SEL in Illinois have much to applaud, but if learning standards are a set of guidelines meant to inform instruction, does simply developing SEL standards mean that teachers use them to guide practice? Can teachers even begin to meaningfully apply these standards if they lack a sufficient, formal understanding of SEL?

Nearly a decade and a half since Illinois established SEL standards and mandated schools to promote SEL, it is unclear to what extent teachers have developed a formal understanding and awareness of these standards or of SEL in general. A small handful of studies (Bracket, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2012; Buchanan, Gueldner, Tran, and Merrell, 2009; Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013) have attempted to survey teacher perceptions related to SEL, generally finding that teachers and other personnel have positive perceptions of SEL and positive perceptions of the connection between SEL and important student outcomes. However, teachers seem to lack the training to comfortably implement formal SEL programs. Few, if any, studies have focused on teachers' professional capacity regarding SEL standards. This raises the question, to what degree do they possess the ability to actually apply these standards to practice in a meaningful way. Additionally, few studies have investigated professional capacity according to school level (elementary, middle, and high school). Generally, studies have focused on SEL practices in the earlier grades leaving only a limited understanding as to how SEL is viewed and understood at the middle and high school levels.

Purpose

SEL provides an exciting possibility of promoting school success. For this reason, it is exciting to see states such as Illinois promote state-wide SEL initiatives in schools. Despite this progress, it is unclear the level at which teachers possess the professional capacity around SEL to help facilitate successful implementation of school-wide SEL initiatives. Further, it is unclear to what degree such professional capacity exists across school levels. This study intended to investigate the degree to which teachers possess the professional capacity to successfully implement SEL practices informed by the Illinois SEL standards. This study contributes to the understanding of how teacher capacity of SEL influences the implementation of school-wide SEL initiatives while addressing gaps in the literature.

Specifically, the current study addressed the capacity of K-12 teachers in Illinois regarding SEL as defined by the following domains: (a) familiarity with SEL; (b) perceptions of SEL benefit; (c) perceptions of SEL need; (d) sense of self-efficacy to provide SEL instruction; and (e) proficiency to provide SEL instruction. Additionally, the current study addressed the capacity of K-12 teachers in Illinois regarding their familiarity with and use of the Illinois SEL Standards to inform instruction and assessment.

Theoretical Lens and Conceptual Framework

Adopting the theoretical lens of implementation science/systems change, the aim of this study has been to better understand how to successfully translate evidenced-based research into practice. Of course, there are far too many inter-related factors impacting successful implementation of school-based innovation to sufficient explore in a single study. Leadership, school culture, and finances are a just a few examples. Using the conceptual framework of

professional capacity as articulated by Durlak and Dupre (2008), this study has focused on the capacity of teachers to put school-based innovations into everyday practice, recognizing that such capacity plays an integral role in the overall implementation process.

Research Questions

The current study addressed multiple questions regarding the capacity of K-12 teachers in Illinois towards SEL and the Illinois SEL Standards (Figure 1). The following questions can be organized into two primary sections. The first set of questions focuses broadly on teachers' capacity toward SEL. The second set of questions focuses specifically on teacher' familiarity with and use of the Illinois SEL Standards. Durlak and Dupre's (2008) framework of provider capacity is used to evaluate the construct of teacher capacity. Thus, these questions could be organized by how they address the four domains in that framework: perception of need, perception of benefit, sense of self-efficacy, and skill proficiency.

Figure 1. Research Questions

1) *What is Illinois teachers' capacity to provide SEL instruction?*
   - 1A) Across grade levels, to what degree are K-12, Illinois teachers familiar with the concept of SEL?
   - 1B) Across grade levels, what are teachers' perceptions regarding the benefit of SEL?
   - 1C) Across grade levels, what are teachers' perceptions regarding the need of SEL?
   - 1D) Across grade levels, what are teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding their ability to provide SEL?
   - 1E) Across grade levels, what training experiences have teachers received regarding SEL?
   - 1F) Across grade levels, what degree do teachers experience a culture of support regarding SEL within their school?
   - 1G) Across grade levels, what experiences have teachers had providing SEL instruction?

2) *What is Illinois teachers' familiarity with and use of the Illinois SEL Standards*
   - 2A) Across grade levels, to what degree are teachers' familiar with the Illinois SEL Standards?
   - 2B) Across grade levels, to what degree and how often do the Illinois SEL Standards play a role in the lesson planning?
   - 2C) Across grade levels, to what degree and how often do the Illinois SEL Standards play a role in assessment practices?

Significance of the Study and Hypothesis

There is a lack of understanding regarding teachers' capacity to provide SEL instruction across K-12 grade levels. Further, there is a lack of understanding regarding teachers' awareness of the Illinois SEL standards. Greater understanding will provide insight into how to best support teachers in their role of promoting SEL in their practice, as well as to support schools as they implement SEL-related initiatives. Further, by providing a sample that represents teachers across the grades of kindergarten through high school, there are implications to supporting all teachers expected to provide SEL instruction in Illinois. Lastly, teacher capacity is an important component of the implementation process. By understanding teacher's capacity regarding SEL and the Illinois SEL Standards, schools can better target their needs to promote the implementation of SEL-related initiatives.

Based on review of the literature, it is hypothesized that teachers will generally demonstrate positive perceptions of SEL. However, these positive perceptions are likely to be higher for teachers who teach younger grades. It is hypothesized that teachers at all levels will express relatively low levels of confidence, knowledge, or skills to provide explicit SEL instruction.

The literature does not provide a basis to hypothesize the degree to which teachers are familiar with the Illinois SEL standards or the degree to which they integrate these standards into practice. It is predicted that overall teachers will not demonstrate a high level of familiarity or high level of use regarding the Illinois SEL Standards. Further, it is predicted that these levels will decrease as the grade level increases.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Social Emotional Learning

Introduction

To understand SEL in the context of this study's research question, it is important to delineate a clear definition of the term and what it may look like in practice. Additionally, it is important to understand the context from which this definition has developed (philosophical and educational foundations) and the context in which it currently exists (social and political changes in society). The current and historical context in which SEL has developed impacts educators' understanding of their role in the broad development of their students. It also influences their capacity to successfully implement and integrate SEL programs throughout their practice. In other words, this context provides insight into how teachers view their role in the classroom and how they approach the task of balancing the social-emotional development with the academic/intellectual development of their students. These are important considerations in a study focused on understanding the capacity of teachers regarding SEL instruction. This section will begin by establishing a clear definition of SEL. It will then describe the historical context from which the term has developed and in which it exists in today's educational milieu.

Defining SEL

Need for clarity. Over the past few decades, the term SEL has experienced significant increase in popularity within the field of education. For some, SEL provides the missing piece to

realizing many of the educational outcomes of a strong public school system that have, thus far, proven difficult to achieve (Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013; Elias et al., 1997). To others, it may be little more than the most recent buzz word and a passing fad. Thus, in reviewing the literature on SEL, it is important to begin by gaining a clear understanding of what is meant by the term. The need for a clear definition regarding SEL can be seen in a tension described by Humphrey (2013). On the one hand, Humphrey describes SEL as the "prominent orthodoxy" (p. 4) in many education systems around the world. On the other hand, he cautions that it has, in the minds of many, "become a synonym for any positive or desirable aspect of education outside the basic curriculum" (p. 24). Without clarity, the term is threatened by becoming diluted to the point to which it encompasses too much and loses meaning.

CASEL definition. In order for educators to incorporate SEL into practice effectively, a clear understanding of what SEL is and what it looks like is needed. Although multiple definitions exist, CASEL has established a leading definition of SEL:

> Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL.org, 2015)

From this definition, one can begin to develop a picture as to what is meant by the term SEL. First, SEL is *universal*—it is important for children and adults—and *prevention-oriented*—meant to support individuals in the development of skills needed to be successful in school and in life before problems become an issue.

Second SEL is *competency-based*. It promotes the development of knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to be socially and emotionally competent. Social emotional competency

refers to "the ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks" (Elias et al, 1997; p2). Over the past two decades, researchers have identified five distinct components of social-emotional competency (Shanker, 2014; Zins et al., 2004): self-awareness (ability to identify one's own emotions and the emotions of others); self-management (ability to monitor and regulate one's emotions and learning); social awareness (ability to recognize and react to the emotions of others and empathize with their perspective); interpersonal relationships (ability to build and maintain healthy relationships while resolving conflict peaceably when they occur); and responsible decision making (ability to recognize problems in any domain of life and develop strategies to resolve those problems in ways that are morally and ethically appropriate). These competencies are important across all developmental levels, changing over time in complexity and nature of situation in which they are applied (Kress & Elias, 2006).

Lastly, SEL is a *process*. CASEL's definition describes SEL as a process through which social-emotional competence is developed in children and adults (Elias et al., 1997). Through this process, individuals develop the ability to integrate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors into a framework that allows them to achieve success in school and in life (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010; Zins et al., 2004).

The strengths of the CASEL definition identify the importance of SEL as a process to build competency in children and adults to succeed in school and life, but it is not without weakness. For instance, although social-emotional competence may be universally important, the experience of emotion and how it is expressed is influenced by culture. The prevailing definition from CASEL has been developed within a specific view of social-emotional competence and

fails to account for multicultural expression or experience of emotion as it may differ across cultures (Humphrey, 2014).

SEL in practice. Having an idea as to what SEL looks like in practice is another way to bring clarity to the term. In practice, SEL can take many forms, but it is founded upon two inter-related components that act as dual cornerstones of the construct. The first component is based on the explicit instruction and pedagogy necessary to support the development of social-emotional competence. The second component is based on the development of learning structures that foster a safe and caring school environment (CASEL, 2015; Durlak, Weisberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

Although SEL can be developed through as simple of means as positive adult-child interactions, direct instruction is emphasized as the first cornerstone of SEL practice. The approach to SEL instruction can take on many forms. It can be provided through formal or informal curricula that occur during an SEL-specific period or integrated throughout the day, while incorporating family engagement to varying degrees (Zins et al., 2004). To help organize SEL programs, Humphrey (2013) describes a 3-dimensional taxonomy that differentiates programs by its reach, component structure, and prescriptiveness.

The approach and structure of SEL instruction may vary based on program or school preference, but researchers have identified key qualities of effective SEL instruction. Kress and Elias (2006) describe several key aspects of quality SEL instruction. First, it is complex and longitudinal in nature. Positive effects of SEL instruction develop over time, building off previous instruction in the same way that learning occurs in other academic subjects. Second, student learning best occurs through effective instructional strategies that promote engagement

and collaboration amongst student, teacher, parents, and community. Third, effective instruction must be direct and explicit while allowing for opportunities to practice skills in a variety of situations. In effect, SEL must be addressed through direct instruction provided in formal and informal ways that are infused throughout the school experience.

Although direct, explicit instruction in SEL is vital, it is insufficient to develop social-emotional competence if the school environment does not support and cultivate student learning. Thus, the second cornerstone of SEL practice is the development of a safe, school environment in which students feel a part of a caring community. Rather than short-term interventions focused on discrete issues such as bullying or drug use, quality SEL programs are long-term, multi-component, and multilevel programs that influence all aspects of the school experience (Kress & Elias, 2006). Quality SEL programs attempt to establish a positive school climate, a term that refers to sense of safety, relationships, teaching and learning, institutional environment, and school improvement process (Thapa, Cohen, and Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). A positive school climate can be established through the creation of practices at the class or school level, and is influenced by the attitudes of staff, students, and community members (Kress & Elias, 2006).

Such variability in what SEL instruction can look like in practice may add to the challenge of clearly defining what is meant by the term, and what it means for teachers responsible for putting SEL programs into action. If nothing else, effective SEL instruction should be student-centered, ecological in nature, and systematic in scope and sequence while developing a strong school climate through the cultivation of positive attitudes, perceptions, and

behaviors of all within the school (Zins et al., 2004). The exact make-up of the SEL practices within a given setting will depend on the unique needs of that school.

Historical Development

The consideration of social and emotional development in education is nothing new, having roots in educational philosophy dating as far back as the Ancient Greeks and continuing through the modern educational context. Nor is it new in the minds of educators, many of whom have seen aspects of SEL incorporated into various educational movements over the past 150 years. However, the term *social and emotional learning* is relatively young, and the research base and popularity surrounding the term is still in the early stages of development, having increased dramatically in recent decades. A history of SEL can be traced through the writings of philosophical thinkers as well as through a variety of educational movements of the 19th and 20th centuries, leading to the coining of the term SEL in 1994. This historical development will be the focus of the next section as it provides a background as to how the modern conceptualization of SEL has played a role in education over the years.

Philosophical foundations. The foundations underlying SEL have appeared to varying degrees throughout western philosophy. Though not necessarily referred to as social or emotional development, these foundations can be identified under terms such as moral or character development (Dixen, 2012). For instance, Plato viewed education as a means of instilling moral sense of good. In *The Republic* (Plato, 1991), he called for education of the whole-student by balancing training in intellectual, physical, and moral development. Plato envisioned an education that focused on the whole-child. Similarly, Aristotle (Aristotle, 2002)

viewed the role of education as shaping good and happy people, both through the promotion of reason and habits of behavior.

Similar sentiments can be seen later in history. European thinkers continued to consider the role of education in the development of the whole-person. Locke wrote that education must instill more than intellectual mastery. It must develop character and self-discipline (Baldwin, 1913). Rather than view students as impersonal receptacles of information, Rousseau wrote about how children must be valued and their motivation to learn cultivated through experiential learning (Rousseau, 1979).

In the 19th century, as the social role of modern public education was first emerging, the question of whether or not to educate the emotions was an important debate amongst philosophers and early pedagogues. Dixon (2012) describes how the role of emotion was endorsed by important thinkers and educators such as John Stuart Mills, who, unlike many before him, saw a need to directly connect the moral/character development with the intellectual development of children.

This brief review fails to do justice to the ideas of thinkers and educators throughout history—and beyond European traditions for that matter—who contributed to the foundations of what is currently referred to as SEL. A deeper review of educational philosophy, however, is beyond the scope of this literature review. Despite the presence of ideas regarding the role of social-emotional development in education throughout history, it should be noted that a heavy emphasis on the development of intellect at the expense of moral or character development has typically prevailed regarding the formal process of education (Dixon, 2012). Additionally, emotion has often been viewed negatively in relation to reason. Plato's tripartite conception of

the soul gave precedence to the rational component over that of the emotional and appetitive components. Kant viewed emotions as disruptive to the organization of the mind. For much of the cognitive revolution of the 20th century, emotion was essentially ignored (Hergenhan, 2009). Nonetheless, even in this brief review, one can see that the underlying foundation of SEL has had a long history in education.

Educational movements. Just as the philosophical ideas underlying the term SEL have a long history, the actual practice of teachers in relation to SEL is by no means new. This can be seen through the reform work of various innovative educators. This can also be seen through broader social movements that have had a direct impact on the realm of education.

Reform movements and alternative educational models developed by key reformers over the past century and a half illustrate the history of educators in the development of the term SEL. Many examples exist of educators who have promoted the development of social-emotional competency through innovative instructional approaches. A primary example can be seen in what is now generally referred to as the progressive education movement. Around the turn of the 20th century, some educators pushed against traditional educational practices that were seen as harsh, boring, and ineffective. Progressive educators, such as John Dewey, sought to establish pedagogy that was child-centered and more conducive to how children learn. They promoted a variety of ideas that are related to current view of SEL: active rather than passive learning; positive and loving interactions rather than harsh and negative ones; natural and engaging experiences rather than rote memorization (Reese, 2001, Reese 2013).

Reformers termed by history as “progressives” were not the only educators to recognize that simply pouring information into the child was inadequate, and that the emotional and social

context in which learning takes place must be accounted for. Maria Montessori is one example. Through her work with poor and impaired students in Italy, Montessori developed an educational philosophy that emphasized physical activity and student autonomy (Thayer-Bacon, 2012). Additionally, she advocated for the explicit teaching of grace and courtesy to develop conflict resolution and interpersonal relationships (Soholt, 2015). For students to function autonomously while interacting effectively with peers, one can see the importance of fostering social emotional competencies such as self- and social-awareness and self-management.

In addition to those who developed innovative instruction that promoted social and emotional development, one can find examples of educators who recognized the importance of environment in student achievement. An illustrative example is found in the work of Yale child psychiatrist James P. Comer who in the 1960's began working with chronically poor performing schools in urban New Haven, Connecticut. The School Development Program that resulted from this work focused on creating a positive environment that built supportive bonds between students and adults throughout the school and community (Lunenbburg, 2011). The drastic turn-around seen in these schools illuminated the role that environment and student sense of well-being plays in overall achievement.

Certainly, there exist many educational reformers who have played some role in promoting social and emotional competence in education. Although it is unclear to what degree these ideas have influenced mainstream educational practices, a commonality amongst many of the educational approaches established by the likes of Dewey, Montessori, Comer, and others is a greater emphasis on promoting the needs of the whole-child; the cultivation of intellectual

development is one piece that fits with the physical, social, emotional, and psychological development of the child (Miller, 1999).

In addition to educational reformers who have integrated SEL into practice in a variety of ways, the past century has seen changes in how society views the role of the school in addressing various challenges facing students and society. As social ills such as school drop-out, delinquency, and mental health became more and more prevalent, social movements have emerged to address them through the educational system.

Humphrey (2013) describes two such movements that have formed around social concerns related to social-emotional development. Popularized in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, the "self-esteem movement" reflected a concern for the well-being of children through their sense of self and accomplishment. Although the claims made by advocates of self-esteem proved illusory and largely misplaced, it has provided insight into the development of SEL which can be seen as encompassing a broader conceptualization of individuals' social and emotional experience. Humphrey also describes a social discourse that has viewed the youth of recent generations as facing a constant threat of crisis. He terms this discourse as *youth in crisis*, which, in the US, has focused around social issues such as bullying/school violence, substance abuse, and juvenile delinquency.

A result of these social movements has been greater focus on promoting resiliency in students and developing prevention-oriented programs in schools. A number of prevention-oriented programs grew from attention given to these social concerns. This resulted in various "wars" declared on social ills such as drug use, teen pregnancy, violence, bullying, etc. These efforts were not always successful or effective (Goleman, 1995). Generally, programs were

presented in isolated, uncoordinated fashion leading to diminished outcomes and negative impressions (Elias, 1997).

Origin of the term SEL. The term *social emotional learning* was first introduced at a conference hosted by the Fetzer Institute in 1994 to describe a framework for promoting the development of social-emotional competence across the lifespan (Elbertson, Brackett, & Weisberg, 2008). The introduction of this term helped to establish a unifying framework to promote social-emotional competence and reduce problem behavior while coordinating a variety of prevention initiatives that had thus far been promoted in fragmented and isolated fashion (Elias et al., 1997). Underlying this effort was the belief that prevention efforts need not address individual, categorical problems such as bullying or substance abuse, but rather address the broader issues of social-emotional development believed to be at the root of many of these issues and a likely factor in academic difficulties (Kress & Elias, 2006). CASEL was formed out of the momentum of this conference to promote and disseminate research regarding the role of SEL in K-12 education.

This historical summary shows that the promotion of social-emotional competence in education is only in its most recent iteration. However, something in the attention given to SEL today has allowed it to gain a level of prominence not seen in the past. There seems to be a difference in how social-emotional development is viewed today. No longer merely the realm of moral and character development—and consequently the primary responsibility of the family—SEL is increasingly viewed as falling within the responsibility of the school. Further, there is a greater awareness of the interplay between social-emotional development and intellectual

development (Humphrey, 2013); both must be promoted to achieve modern educational outcomes.

Components of SEL can be seen in a variety of current educational trends that have captured the attention of educators and the broader public alike. One such example is *mindfulness*, a concept referring to the practice of purposefully and non-judgmentally paying attention to the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Adopted from Buddhist traditions, mindfulness has gained great popularity in recent decades across a variety of sectors including education (Hyland, 2015). It's promotion in schools focuses on aspects of self-awareness and self-management and has been associated with positive academic outcomes (Burke & Hawkins, 2012). Another example is *grit*, a concept referring to a mindset that views achievement as a result of passion and resilience rather than talent (Duckworth, 2016). Within the field of education, grit has been increasingly promoted through educational policy as a way for students to cultivate interpersonal strength and to persevere through hardship and inequity (Stokas, 2015).

The popularity of these SEL-related concepts has seemingly tapped into the desire of educators and the broader public to promote social-emotional development. As a result, such trends impact how educators conceptualize SEL instruction. However, the promotion of mindfulness skills and grit mentality do not, by themselves, represent a systematic approach to SEL instruction. Further, it is unclear if proponents of these trends inform their efforts through the broader context of SEL instruction. These trends reveal a potential gap between attention-grabbing, SEL-related concepts and the broader research of SEL that provides a systematic means of promoting social-emotional development. By focusing too heavily on trends such as grit and mindfulness absent of broader SEL literature, proponents run the risk of establishing the

same type of isolated and, ultimately, ineffective initiatives that led to the development of the term SEL in the first place.

Summary. As has been seen through this historical review, the development of the term SEL provides context for how it influences teachers today. As teachers are expected, more and more, to address students' social-emotional needs, their understanding of what it means to provide SEL instruction is influenced by a rich tradition that incorporates the ideas and practices of many educators over the centuries.

Modern Context

Since the coining of the term SEL in 1994, various factors have influenced the development and promotion of SEL in schools. In order to better understand how the role of SEL in schools has grown in recent years, it is important to evaluate the various contexts which have influenced that growth. Over the past several decades, political/educational policies have taken a narrowed approach towards education that have been, in many ways, contradictory to SEL. Meanwhile, social/demographic changes have been challenging the ability to effectively educate students within this narrow perspective. At the same time, through research and promotion, the SEL movement has progressed along its own trajectory in spite of the narrowed interests of the accountability movement, recently attempting to bridge the gap by emphasizing the connection between SEL and academic success.

In the following section, three contexts influencing SEL development and promotion will be presented as a means to situate it into current practice of teachers and schools. The three contexts are: the political context, the social/demographic context, and the SEL context.

Context 1: Political/educational context. Since as early as the first half of the 1980s, the level of attention given to public education as a national issue has increased, resulting in several important educational policies over the past three decades that have significantly impacted schools and how educators view their role in the classroom.

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education presented a report titled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (ANAR; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) which brought widespread attention to perceived inadequacies in the American educational system and called for reforms to curriculum, expectations, time devoted to instruction, and the recruitment, training, and support of teachers. Although some have questioned the accuracy of the claims made in the report (Guthrie & Springer, 2004), ANAR has had an important impact on educational policy during the three decades since its release. The report sparked a national discussion about the public school system while establishing educational reform as a mainstay in the political agenda at the federal level (Good, 2010; Guthrie & Springer, 2004).

The most significant impact of ANAR may have been its role in promoting standards-based education (Liebtag, 2013; Mehta, 2013). Nearly 20 years after ANAR, the federal government passed what would represent its largest effort to address the perceived failings that were presented in that report. In 2001, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, retitling it the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Passing with broad, bi-partisan support, this act set out to increase achievement by ensuring access to high quality schools through an accountability system tied to standardized tests and measures of average yearly progress (Liebtag, 2013; Mehta, 2013). In order to receive federal funding, school districts

would have to demonstrate that its students meet state-established proficiency standards in English Language Arts and Math. The act set the goal that all students would meet proficiency within 12 years (by the end of the 2013-2014 school year). Despite its noble intentions, NCLB failed to live up to its ambitions in many ways. The pressure placed on educators to improve test scores and avoid funding penalties was controversial. Additionally, a lack of a universal benchmarks meant that each state established its own set of standards. Consequently, progress in student outcomes meant very different things depending on the state in which the child lived. As the expectations of average yearly progress increased, states found it increasingly difficult to avoid punishment. Consequently, in 2011, the Obama administration began to offer states the ability to waive-out of some of the requirements in order to allow more flexibility within the law (Posey, 2014). In the fall of 2015, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, rebranding it the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This version of the law lessoned the consequences of failing to meet yearly progress and returned some decision-making power to the states.

In 2010, a different approach to standards-based education emerged from the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Governors Council. This initiative, called the Common Core State Standards, set out to ameliorate one of the deficiencies of NCLB: inconsistent standards from state to state. Unlike the mandated nature of NCLB, the CCSS established voluntary standards focused on establishing concise expectations to prepare students to become college and career ready (National Governors Association Center Best Practices, Council of Chief States School Officers, 2010). Although still too soon to evaluate this national initiative as a success or failure, some concerns have arisen over implementation and teacher

support. It has been unpopular with some segments of teachers and parents who see it as a top-heavy attempt from policy makers to intrude in the decision-making of teachers and schools (VanTassel-Baska, 2015).

In each case, these policies have influenced education in the US by promoting policies to address concerns regarding student achievement. Beginning as early as the release of ANAR, politicians have taken a role in determining educational policy at a national level to a degree not seen in earlier generations. Policies have prioritized standards-based education and standardized testing to hold schools accountable for student achievement. The influence of educational policy such as NCLB has been substantial, having, for good and for bad, helped to reshape "the landscape on which every public school in the nation operates every day" (Guthrie & Springer, 2004, p.32).

The focus of these reforms as a means to improve student achievement has taken a narrowed approach towards educational practice, one that has generally worked against the promotion of SEL by prioritizing academic achievement at the expense of other student needs that may contribute to school success (Humphrey, 2013). Although these examples do not represent the entirety of educational policy in the US over the past 30 years, they have had a significant influence on what goes on in classrooms and how educators view their role in promoting success in students. Within this accountability-driven, standards-based environment, the development of students' social-emotional competency has generally been overshadowed by the push for improvements in academic outcomes. As a result, teachers have been less likely to receive training or support regarding how to integrate SEL into practice. Even if teachers happen to have received exposure to SEL and related frameworks, they are faced with the challenge of

finding the time to implement it while not taking away from academic instruction and preparation for standardized tests.

Context 2: Demographic changes. While educational policy has placed a priority on the academic development of students through standards and an atmosphere of accountability, changes in student demographics as well as rising student needs, or at least a rising awareness of needs, have made it harder and harder for educators to meet the needs of all students within the narrow frame typically emphasized through policy.

Demographic shifts. As the demographics of the nation's population shifts, schools are faced with the challenges of adjusting to meet the needs of a diversifying student population. Because of rising poverty levels and the increase in students with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, American schools are as diverse as ever (Turner, 2015). As of the 2010 census, Hispanics represent the largest minority population in the country, having outpaced African-Americans in recent decades (Frey, 2011). The number of immigrant youth—children under 18 who are foreign born or born to immigrant parents—represent a quarter of the nation's child population with projections to increase to a third by 2050 (Passel, 2011). While minority groups continue to represent over half of the population in many cities, growing diversity in suburbs are turning them into the "melting pots" previously conceived only of urban centers (Frey, 2011). For the 2013 school year, the National Center for Educational Statistics (United States Department of Education, 2015) reported public school attendance of Hispanic students at 24%, and the attendance of students categorized as English Language Learners at 9%.

Concurrent with these changes in the ethnic and racial makeup of the nation's youth, increases in poverty and changes in family structure have greatly impacted the resources and

support available to students and their families. In 2013, one in five school-age children was living in poverty, an increase from one in seven in 2000 (United States Department of Education, 2015). This is a concerning trend for schools because students living in poverty are at risk for a number of negative academic and behavior outcomes (Rouse, Fantuzzo, & LeBoeuf, 2011). Increases in poverty levels are not the only change facing school-aged children. Family structure has changed much in the past half century, dramatically influencing the experience of students outside of school as well as the availability of resources and supports. Teachman, Tedrow, and Crowder (2000) reported a decline in total households consisting of a married couple and at least 1 child, dropping from 40% of all households in 1970 to only 26% in 1998. These authors suggested that a decrease in early marriage, an increase in divorce rates, and an increase in rates of couples who never marry as possible factors. An implication for schools is that the support network and the experiences of children outside of school are far less homogenous than in past generations, presenting unique challenges as educators attempt to address the varying needs of students, and in some cases filling gaps in the roles that were once provided by families.

Mental health needs. In addition to increasing heterogeneity of the student population in public schools, the specific needs of many students have increased and intensified. Of particular importance are the mental health needs of students. A common estimate holds that 20 percent of students present with mental health needs (Burns, Costello, Angold, Tweed, et al., 1995; Hass, 2013). This rate has increased over time as a result of greater awareness and ability to diagnose issues, but also as a result of increased risk amongst students. Problematically, only a percentage of these students receive services to address their mental health needs (Burns et al., 1995; Merikangas, He, Brody, Fisher, Bourdon, & Koretz, 2010).

Psychosocial problems are strongly associated with poor school achievement, limited future employment, dropout, as well as a plethora of other negative educational, health, and social outcomes (National Advisory Mental Health Council Workgroup on Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Intervention and Deployment, 2001). If for no other reason, mental health needs present a significant challenge for schools as it prevents students from fully participating in instruction and can often contribute to behavioral challenges. Since a large proportion of the nation's population participates in the school system on a daily basis for much of the year, schools provide an ideal setting for prevention and early intervention services. To some, schools act as the de facto provider of mental health services to students and adults (Burns, Costello, Angold, Tweed, et al., 1995). Mental health advocates have called for schools to develop population-based mental health services that provide a comprehensive system of supports to address the direct mental health needs of students (Doll & Cummings, 2008). Such services cultivate positive mental health and ameliorate risk factors of all students. This can be compared to traditional service delivery that focused on referral of students after displaying symptoms, an approach that has been criticized as fragmented, underfunded, and inaccessible (Elias, et al., 1997; Hess, 2013; Merrell & Gueldner, 2010).

Consequences of school failure. Failure to adequately address the needs of all students leads to significant issues for individuals and society. Two prevalent issues have been termed the *achievement gap* and the *school-to-prison pipeline*. These issues have received wide attention, as the public and policymakers increasingly hold schools accountable for helping to address the underlying needs of students.

The achievement gap refers to the disparity in academic outcomes between affluent, white student populations and poor, mostly minority student populations, a gap that has persisted despite extensive efforts by educators, researchers, and policymakers to eliminate it (Williams, 2011). First and foremost, this gap presents an issue of equality. This gap persists in part due to the increased risk factors facing students in disadvantage schools and impoverished neighborhoods since factors related to family and community characteristics (i.e. poverty, violence) increases a student's risk of mental health need and school failure (Doll & Cummings, 2008).

Students with behavior problems that may or may not be related to underlying mental health needs fall on a trajectory of expulsion or dropout, which often leads to entrance into the juvenile justice system. This link has been termed the school to prison pipeline (Wald & Losen, 2003), a phenomenon that disproportionately affects students of color. For the 2013 school year, the National Center for Educational Statistics reported a 7% dropout rate (NCSE, 2015). Evidence suggests that dropout rates, and consequently the risk of entering the juvenile justice system, can be reduced by developing more inclusive school climates (Wilson, 2014), which can be supported through the integrated use of SEL instruction. Eliminating this pipeline requires schools to effectively deal with the constantly changing and expanding needs faced by students and the communities in which they live.

Evolving demographics and changes in social institutions bring both positives and negatives to society. Family structure and ethnic/racial makeup of society have never been static, and thus, the challenge of adequately addressing issues that accompany such change has always been prevalent in the field of education.

Today, schools are presented with opportunities and challenges in meeting the diverse needs of an increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-racial society. With this increasing diversity comes a wider spectrum of student needs, and, in some cases, a deepening in intensity of needs. Educators are faced with the challenge of adapting to the evolving role that schools play in addressing these needs while also identifying effective programs to fill that role. Schools share the mission of meeting the diverse needs of students with important social support systems such as the family, the church, and other community resources. Despite a cultural atmosphere in which schools are held accountable for student academic outcomes, many educators recognize that they play an expanding role in supporting student needs more holistically (Christenson & Havsy, 2004; McCombs, 2004).

Context 3: Social and Emotional Learning. The third context impacting the development and promotion of SEL has been the growth of the SEL field itself. Advances in understanding of the brain and the role of emotion in brain functioning along with the emergence and popularization of the theory of multiple intelligence have led to a proliferation of evidence-based interventions promoting SEL at all school levels. Along with the growing recognition that SEL instruction positively impacts a number of student outcomes, efforts have been made to help bridge the gap between what is known about SEL and what is actually done in classrooms.

Brain research: Cognitive and educational. Growing understanding of the human brain has highlighted how emotional and social factors interact dynamically to influence learning in many ways (Izard, 2009). Research in neurocognitive psychology has described a link between emotional systems in sub-cortical section controlling emotions and the prefrontal cortex systems controlling social and cognitive reasoning (LeDoux, 1998). Likewise, developmental

psychologists have demonstrated clear linkage between social and emotional development in the well-being and success of students in school and throughout life (Goleman, 1995; Shanker, 2014). For instance, emotion plays an essential role in cognitive learning skills traditionally emphasized in schools. More specifically emotions impact perception, motivation, critical thinking, behavior, attention, and memory (Elbertson, Brackett, & Weisberg, 2008; Elias et al. 1997). Social factors, too, seem to have a significant influence on components of learning and even the neuroplasticity of the brain (Davidson & McEwen, 2012). For instance, the relationship between teacher and child can impact attention (Kusche & Greenberg, 2006). Likewise, positive student perceptions of the social environment promote motivation and engagement (Ryan & Patrick, 2001). Given this understanding of emotions and reasoning from neurocognitive and developmental points of view, it is difficult to separate the "heart" and the "mind" as isolated functions of consciousness.

Multiple intelligence theory and emotional intelligence. The emergence of multiple intelligence theory and the popularization of emotional intelligence brought a newfound, mainstream awareness of the role that social and emotional factors play in human development and success in school and in life. Howard Gardner (2011) articulated a theory of multiple intelligences that challenged the typical view of intelligence as a single, general factor. Instead, he conceptualized intelligence as comprised of at least seven distinct types: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, intra-personal, and inter-personal. Gardner's theory has had a large impact on education by promoting the importance of activating multiple aspects of intelligence through well-designed instruction.

Salovey and Mayer's (1990) framework of emotional intelligence (EI) established that the ability to process affective information differs from other cognitive abilities and differs across individuals. They define EI as the "ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). They further describe EI as a set of interrelated processes that include the recognition and expression of emotion in self and others, the regulation of emotion in self and others, and the adaptive application of emotion to effectively solve problems. EI fits with Gardner's theory as it falls within the broader categorization of personal intelligences (inter- and intra-personal intelligence).

While researchers (e.g. Bar -On, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) have developed a research base regarding emotional intelligence, the concept garnered mainstream, popular attention in the mid 1990's after the publication of Daniel Goleman's (1995) internationally successful book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*, in which he reported on the important role that EI plays as a mediator for life success. This popularization of EI has extended well beyond education and psychology into the domains of business and elsewhere throughout the world (Kress & Elias, 2006).

Development of evidence-based SEL programs. In response to developments in the understanding of the inter-relation of social, emotional, and intellectual factors in cognition, there has been a proliferation of programs designed to promote SEL instruction. CASEL, as one of its founding goals, has sought to support consumers in the selection of appropriate programs. In response to the proliferation of SEL-based programs, CASEL has worked to establish criteria that evaluate the evidence-base of interventions (Elias et al., 1997). Elias et al. (1997) provide a

list of 39 guidelines for the selection of appropriate SEL programs. Inherent in these guidelines is a recognition that effectiveness of programs must be carefully evaluated, but is insufficient in the absence of attention to the process of implementation (Kress & Elias, 2006).

Outcomes associated with SEL. A growing body of evidence has established a strong association between SEL and a number of positive student outcomes. In addition to developing social-emotion competence, this body of evidence has linked SEL to the development of mental health, moral judgment, citizenship, and academic motivation and achievement (Elbertson, Brackett, & Weisberg, 2008; Zins et al., 2004). Generally speaking, children who engage in positive social interactions and participate cooperatively in the learning process are more successful in and out of school and demonstrate greater levels of well-being; whereas, student disengagement and school failure can result when students lack a sense of autonomy, belonging, and competence (Christenson & Havsy, 2004). Strong social-emotional competence along with high emotional intelligence has a wide-ranging impact on positive student outcomes due to a strong interaction between emotion and cognition. Goleman (1995) illustrates this point when he refers to EI as the "master aptitude" for its influence on regulation and motivation of functioning through emotional components like impulse control and optimism.

Merrell & Gueldner (2010) categorize school related outcomes as school attitudes, school behaviors, and school performance, each of which are impacted by SEL. Several large scale meta-analyses have evaluated the effect of SEL interventions, providing a more extensive look at the connection between SEL and positive outcomes across each of these school-based domains. In the largest, most comprehensive of these studies, Durlak, et al. (2011) evaluated the effect sizes of 213 studies involving a total of 270,034 students. The result of this meta-analysis

indicated that SEL interventions had a significant impact on social-emotional skills, attitude, behavior, and academic outcomes when compared to control groups. Similarly, in a meta-analysis of school-based, prevention programs designed to address aggressive and disruptive behavior, Wilson and Lipsey (2007) found significant impact of these programs on many of the same student outcomes.

Recently, much attention has been focused on the association between SEL and academic achievement. The meta-analysis conducted by Durlak et al (2011) found that SEL programs accounted for an 11 percentile increase in academic achievement tests when compared to control groups. The strength of this growing evidence has led some researchers to advocate the use of the term social, emotional and academic learning (SEAL; Zins, Bloodworth, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). This association is important in a broader educational environment in which policy places priority on the academic achievement of students. The connection between SEL and academic growth can play an important role in bridging the gap for educators who are unsure of or unable to promote SEL instruction.

Conclusion to modern context. The promotion of SEL as an important component in the education and development of the whole-student is impacted greatly by the historical context affecting education more broadly. In this section, I have described three contexts that have influenced the degree to which SEL is recognized as important aspect of education. Since at least the publication of ANAR, the political context of educational policy has influenced the field of SEL by limiting its exposure and impact due to a focus on academic achievement and accountability. As the needs of students and the depth of our understanding of these needs continue to change along with demographics, educators are looking for more effective ways to

educate beyond the focus of academic growth. The growing body of literature devoted to SEL has demonstrated that SEL can influence a wide range of positive student outcomes. The strong link between social-emotional competence and academic achievement is an especially salient means by which educators are promoting the role of SEL.

The increasing understanding of how the social, emotional, and cognitive domains of functioning interact provides a means to begin bridging the gap between knowing that SEL is important in education and actually implementing SEL into practice. However, a gap still exists. One approach to eliminating this gap is to apply the reasoning of standards-based education movement in order to develop SEL-based standards to encourage SEL programs and guide practice. The following section will provide more detail about these efforts.

SEL Standards

Introduction

Although educational policy has, generally, had a limiting effect on the development and promotion of SEL, growing acknowledgment of the role that SEL plays in achieving a variety of important student outcomes has led to an increasing number of legislative efforts in support of SEL. For example, the U.S. Congress passed the Garret Lee Smith Memorial Act in 2003, which promoted the development of mental health related prevention and intervention services, such as SEL programs, in community agencies and on college campuses (Buchanan, 2009). In 2011, the Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act (H.R. 2437; 112th) was proposed in Congress as a major bill to support the promotion of SEL in schools (Humphrey, 2013). Although the bill failed, it provides an indication of the growing attention that SEL has received through legislation.

The development and promotion of SEL has had some success in influencing educational policy through the establishment of SEL standards designed to complement academic standards. In 2004, the state of Illinois became the first in the country to establish stand-alone standards focused on the SEL needs of students in K-12 (Dusenbury, Weissberg, Goren, & Domitrovich, 2014). The significance of this achievement led Merrell and Gueldner (2010) to describe the policies enacted in Illinois as the "single-most influential piece of legislation and public policy that has been developed thus far in promoting the aims of SEL on a wide scale" (p. 18). The promotion of SEL standards helps to situate the SEL movement within the broader standards-based education movement that has, in large part, driven educational policy over the past several decades in the U.S.

Standards-Based Education

Standards provide a set of expectations regarding a student's learning at a given point in their schooling (Conley, 2014). They provide guidelines that inform instruction, but do not prescribe instructional approach. In this way, standards emphasize the "outputs" of education while leaving the actual "inputs" up to educators (Simon, Foley, & Passantino, 1998).

States began to develop and adopt standards addressing academic subjects since the 1990s (Conley, 2014). Recently, the standards-based movement in education resulted in the CCSS. Prior to this initiative, each state created its own set of standards for various academic areas such as English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts and Physical Education. In addition to state and national standards, various organizations have worked to establish content specific standards such as the National Council of Teachers in Mathematics (NCTM; http://www.nctm.org/standards/), the Next Generation Science Standards

(NGSS; http://www.nextgenscience.org/), and the Future of Sex Education (FoSE; http://www.futureofsexed.org/fosestandards.html). Standards hold appeal for a number of reasons. Perhaps the popularity of the standards-based movement can be attributed to what Simon, Foley, and Passantino (1998) describe as its dual role of providing equity and accountability. Standards influence instruction equitably by establishing high expectations for all students no matter their school or background. By establishing clear outcomes, standards allow for a means to evaluate effectiveness of an educational program and hold it accountable for meeting expectations. These aspects of equality and accountability carry appeal that crosses various dynamics of society, but perhaps most important to the momentum of standards-based education as a movement, it carries appeal to the interests of business and politics.

Given the development of SEL programs that account for students' social-emotional growth, expectations regarding students' social-emotional development can be built into curricula. For reasons that standards appeal to other areas of schooling, organizations such as CASEL have advocated for the development of SEL standards.

The Illinois SEL Standards

Dusenbury, Weissberg, Goren, and Domitrovich (2014) described characteristics of high-quality SEL standards. In addition to providing guidance to support effective SEL instruction and establish positive learning environments in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner, high-quality SEL standards stand apart from standards addressing other academic subjects. These authors argue that this is the most effective way to ensure that SEL expectations are focused, systematic, and comprehensive in nature. As part of a CASEL initiative, these authors scanned standards of each state. They found that although the clear majority of states (49) have free-

standing pre-school SEL standards, very few (3) have free-standing SEL standards for K-12 (Dusenbury, Weissberg, Goren, & Domitrovich, 2014).

The first of these states was Illinois. In 2002, the Illinois Children's Mental Health Task Force was convened to evaluate the status and condition of children's mental health services and supports in the state of Illinois. The resulting report found services to be inadequate, fragmented, and lacking in short- and long-term goals to address existing issues (Illinois Mental Health Task Force, 2003). As a result of this report, the Illinois State Legislature passed the Children's Mental Health Act of 2003 (accessible at http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=2481& ChapterID=34), designed to "provide comprehensive, coordinated mental health prevention, early intervention, and treatment services for children from birth through age 18" (Children's Mental Health Act of 2003 [Public Act 93-0495], 405ILCW 49/5 (a)).

Amongst the key findings of the mental health task force was an acknowledgment of the role that children's' social-emotional development plays in mental health and academic success. As such, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) was required to develop and implement SEL standards for grades K-12 as a part of this legislation. Additionally, every school district was required to develop a policy to teach and assess social and emotional learning within their educational program [Public Act 93-0495 section 15(a)].

The Illinois SEL standards were approved in December 2004. The standards were organized under 3 goals and across five benchmark levels that describe the SEL outcome of students in early elementary (K-3) late elementary (4-5) middle school (6-8), early high school (9-10) and late high school (11-12) (accessible at http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/social_emotional /standards. htm). Figure 2 provides a description of these standards.

With the exception of a few surveys posted by ISBE, little evaluation exists regarding the implementation of these standards (Tanyu, 2007). Gordan, Mulhall, Shaw, & Weissberg (2011) reported the findings of implementation efforts of schools that participated in a three-year study piloting the implementation of the Illinois SEL Standards. This report found that many of the 75 schools made great strides in implementing SEL programs and promoting the positive perception of SEL instruction amongst teachers, students, and community members. Unfortunately, this study provides limited information regarding the participating schools, so it is unclear the degree to which the positive findings represent the over 4,000 schools throughout the state.

Figure 2. Illinois SEL Standards

Illinois SEL Standards

Goal 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success

- Identify and manage one's emotions and behavior
- Recognize personal qualities and external supports
- Demonstrate skills related to achieving personal and academic goals

Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships

- Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others
- Recognize individual and group similarities and differences
- Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others
- Demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflict in constructive ways

Goal 3: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts

- Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions
- Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations
- Contribute to the well-being of one's school and community

Implementation Science and Teacher Capacity

As described thus far, a growing understanding regarding the benefits of SEL have led to the development of quality, school-based interventions to promote social-emotional growth. Additionally, some states have adopted SEL standards to promote the use of these practices. For many schools, the adoption and implementation of systematic and comprehensive SEL practices represents a significant change from a focus primarily based on academic growth.

The underlying desire of the present research is to better understand how changes in school systems and teacher practice take hold and thrive. The development of a strong research base and effective interventions are necessary in the effort to bring about positive changes in educational outcomes, but they are insufficient without attention to the process of putting these practices in place. If advocates are serious about promoting SEL in schools, then implementation must be as important as developing EBIs. Implementation science is a growing, interdisciplinary field that focuses on how to translate research to practice by evaluating the necessary components for successful implementation of changes within an organizational system such as a school (Forman, et al., 2013). An important component in the implementation process is the capacity of teachers regarding the perceptions, attitudes, and skills necessary to incorporate an innovation into practice.

This section will provide a brief background regarding implementation science as well as review the role that implementation plays in the promotion and development of SEL. Next, discussion will focus specifically on research regarding teacher capacity related to SEL and the Illinois SEL standards.

What Is Implementation Science?

Implementation refers to the process through which an innovation (a new program or intervention) is adopted, established, and maintained within an organization (Forman, 2015). The scientific study of the implementation process and the systematic uptake of implementation research into professional practice is referred to as implementation science (from here forward abbreviated as IS; Eccles & Mittman, 2006).

The study of implementation is focused on understanding the processes and factors that influence the impact of EBIs in unique settings. This definition differentiates it from the study of interventions, which is focused on the likelihood that an intervention will provide benefit to a specific population within controlled conditions (Forman, 2015).

School-related research in IS attempts to answer questions that fall into several areas. One area focuses on the components of the process involved in putting EBIs into practice, such as fidelity, dosage, and reach. Another area of research focuses on the degree of flexibility and adaptation that can be allowed to effectively adopt an EBI in a unique setting. A third area of research focuses on factors that support or hinder implementation (Forman et al., 2013; Forman, 2015; Humphrey, 2013; Merrell & Gueldner, 2010).

Background: Historical, theoretical, and conceptual. The historical and theoretical background of IS can help provide a deeper understanding of implementation and how it influences innovation in schools. IS has historical roots in the study of the diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 2003). Such research began with agricultural studies and has expanded to a wide variety of disciplines including but not limited to medicine, public health, communications, psychology and education (Greenhalgh, Robert, Macfarlane, & Kyriakidou, 2004). The

theoretical basis of IS is grounded in systems theory, social learning theory, and behaviorism (Forman et al., 2013; Forman 2015). These three orientations inform how innovations are adopted and put into practice. That is, implementation is influenced by the social systems within the particular setting, the observed behavior of stakeholders in relation to the innovation, and the perceived consequences related to the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors regarding an innovation.

Building from this theoretical foundation, several frameworks have been proposed to describe the implementation process (Fixsen, Blasé, Duda, Naoom, & Van Dyke, 2010; Han & Weiss, 2005; Klein & Sorra, 1996; Rogers, 2003; Wandersman et al. 2008). Identifying a useful model is made difficult by the many models that exist. For instance, Meyers, Durlak, and Wandersmen (2012) developed the Quality of Implementation Framework (QIF), which synthesizes 25 implementation models. In this model, implementation is broken down into 14 steps across 4 phases. Consistent in all of these models is the idea that implementation is a complex process influenced by organizational systems and other environmental factors as well as the knowledge, behavior, and attitudes of key stakeholders/implementers (Forman, 2015).

Implementation can be further conceptualized by key elements and stages within the process, which have been described by multiple researchers (Fixsen et al., 2005; Rogers, 2003). Importantly, implementation consists of an innovation, a communication process, a social system, a change agent, and primary and secondary implementers (Forman et al. 2013; Forman, 2015). In addition to key elements, implementation can be conceptualized by stages. The stages of implementation are commonly described as dissemination, adoption, implementation, and sustainability (Durlak and Dupre, 2008), though other conceptualizations exist that focus on activities/events (Fixsen et al, 2005), the decision processes at the implementer and organization

levels (Rogers, 2003), or the concern level and experience of the implementers (Hall and Hord, 2002).

Implementation: Relation to schools and the role of teachers. Implementation is important to study because although a great amount of effort has been put into developing the evidence base of quality interventions used in schools, these efforts are often wasted because schools are 1) not using them, 2) using programs that lack evidence or 3) are using EBIs incompletely or inaccurately (Forman, 2015). The study of implementation, then, is as important an endeavor as the study of intervention efficacy. However, whereas the development and promotion of EBIs within a public health model of service delivery has received great attention in research, attention to the quality of implementation has been much more limited (Domitrovich, et al., 2008). Within the field of SEL, researchers and program developers have begun to recognize the need to focus on quality of implementation when evaluating the outcomes of a program, but more attention is needed to ensure that high-quality SEL programs are implemented effectively (Kress & Elias, 2006).

In addition to finding strong effect sizes in the large meta-analysis of SEL efficacy studies, Durlak et al. (2011) described several key findings. First, they found that implementation problems adversely influence program effectiveness. Second, they found that programs that incorporated sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE) procedures and techniques were more likely to lead to academic success. Third, they found that SEL programs are most successful when provided through whole-class instruction led by the classroom teacher. Lastly, they found that SEL programs were effective at all levels and types of school. These findings indicate that both the structure of an intervention as well as the process through which that

intervention is implemented is important in achieving desired outcomes; Implementation in conjunction with intervention design are both essential in achieving desired outcomes. Additionally, these findings reflect another important element, the role in the implementer. With school-based, prevention-oriented interventions, the teacher is very often the one charged with implementing the program. However, teachers vary greatly in their awareness, knowledge, and understanding of SEL, which in turn influences their attitudes and perceptions toward the intervention and their overall capacity to successfully implement the program (Domitrovich et al., 2008; Humphrey, 2013).

Teachers play an important role in the successful implementation of SEL programs. Thus, the adoption and implementation of EBIs is insufficient to achieve desired outcomes unless teacher capacity is developed and supported (Shanker, 2014). Implementation, then, must consider how to build teacher attitudes, confidence, understanding, and skills related to the intervention as well as their own level of social-emotional competence in order to sustain a successful program (Elbertson, Brackett, & Weissberg, 2008).

Teacher Capacity

The process of implementation is influenced by environmental and social factors. Additionally, it is influenced by factors related to the individuals implementing the intervention (Domitrovich, et al., 2008; Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Forman, 2015). The ability of an organization or of individuals to effectively put an intervention into place and sustain it to achieve desired outcomes can be termed implementation capacity. Durlak and Dupre (2008) described capacity as the "entire process of diffusion and can be defined as the necessary motivation and ability to identify, select, plan, implement, evaluate, and sustain effective interventions" (p. 335).

Capacity can be differentiated between that of individual stakeholders and that of the organization as a whole (Wandersman et al., 2008). In order to put an innovation into place, implementers and other key stakeholders must develop a sufficient level of understanding and acceptance. Likewise, the support systems within an organization must be structured to facilitate the implementation and use of the intervention by stakeholders.

Research specifically focused on the connection between capacity building and implementation outcomes generally supports a connection between the two constructs (Durlak & Dupree, 2008). The relevance of capacity to the study of implementation is further highlighted by Wandersman et al. (2008) who stated, "Understanding capacity is central to addressing the gap between research and practice" (p. 173). However, within the literature, the term capacity is often used in a broad, vague manner. For example, in the report titled *The Missing Piece*, (Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan. 2013) the authors suggest that in order to improve the use of SEL programs in schools, efforts must be made to improve teacher capacity. However, this suggestion is made without a clear definition as to what teacher capacity means beyond being one outcome of training and technical assistance.

Several implementation models recognize the role of capacity as a mediating factor in successful implementation of school-based innovations, helping to operationalize teacher capacity. Most notably, Durlak and Dupre (2008) proposed a multi-level ecological framework of implementation that identifies 23 inter-related variables influencing implementation. According to this model, effective implementation is driven by organizational capacity (termed the prevention delivery system) and the effective provision of training and technical support (termed the prevention support system). These systems are influenced within an ecological

context spread across 3 levels: the community, the provider, and the innovation. According to Durlak and Dupre, the interaction of factors across these categories contributes to the capacity within an organization and amongst individuals to successfully implement an innovation. Of primary interest to the capacity of teachers (and consequently of primary interest to this study) are the variables described as provider characteristics. Durlak and Dupre identify four factors that influence the capacity of the provider: perception of intervention need, perception of intervention benefit, self-efficacy, and skill proficiency relevant to effective implementation and delivery of the intervention.

Other models support the influence of these implementer characteristics within a multi-level, ecological framework. For example, Domitrovich et al. (2008) described a model of implementation quality in which implementation is influenced by implementer factors related to professional characteristics (such as education/training, skill, and experience), psychological characteristics (such as personality traits, psychological function, and self-efficacy), and perceptions and attitudes regarding the intervention (such as acceptance of the intervention, perception of the value, and perception of the effectiveness).

Likewise, the Interactive Systems Framework of dissemination and implementation (ISF; Wandersman et al., 2008) provides a community-centered model of implementation influenced by the relationship amongst four factors: key stakeholders, organizational structure, implementation content/structure, and social/ecological context. In this model, capacity is influenced by the underlying skills and motivation of the key stakeholders.

Other researchers have described capacity through a lens of adult behavior change theory. For example, Fishbein and Azjin (2010) developed the Reasoned Action approach, which

describes how the acceptance of others in addition to one's own attitudes and beliefs affects the likelihood that an adult will adopt a new behavior. Sanetti, Krotochwall, and Long (2013) explain that change in adult behavior is motivated through self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and perceptions of the innovation.

In summary, these models each describe characteristics related to the capacity of implementers as important mediating factors affecting the implementation of school-based innovations. They further demonstrate how implementation is a complex process influenced by multiple variables across ecological levels. Durlak and Dupre (2008) provide an operationalization of teacher's professional capacity that recognizes the role of positive perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs toward the innovation as well as the confidence and skills to successfully put the innovation into place.

Teacher capacity and SEL. A number of studies (Bracket, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2012; Buchanan, Gueldner, Tran, and Merrell, 2009; Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013) have attempted to better understand aspects of teachers' capacity regarding SEL. Through the use of surveys, these efforts have focused primarily on measuring aspects of teacher capacity such as perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs. The following section will review the literature on teacher capacity as it relates to SEL. It will conclude with a brief discussion of gaps within this literature.

One approach to reviewing literature on teacher capacity as it relates to SEL is to review research on the development and use of tools to measure aspects of teacher capacity. Although, there are some examples of measurement tools designed to evaluate teacher characteristics related to SEL, Brackett, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, and Salovey (2011) concluded that the

number of suitable tools is quite limited. To improve this situation, these authors developed an instrument to measure teachers' SEL beliefs by surveying 935 K-8 grade teachers in a private, parochial district. Through factor analysis, they identified three factors that influence teachers' beliefs regarding SEL programs that moderate the degree to which SEL programs are implemented with fidelity: comfort teaching SEL, commitment to developing SEL skills, and culture of support within the school.

In addition to measures specifically focused on the implementation of SEL in schools, formal instruments have been developed to measure stakeholder support toward new EBIs in any context. One example is the Evidence-Based Practice Attitude Scale (Aaron, 2004). This instrument measures four domains: appeal of EBI, attitude toward organizational requirements to provide EBI, general openness to innovation, and perceived match between new and old practice. Another example geared more specifically for schools is the Usage Rating Profile—Intervention (Briesch, Chafouleas, Neugebaur, & Riley-Tilman, 2013) which identifies the domains of acceptability, understanding, feasibility, family-school collaboration, system climate, and support system as important factors influencing teacher capacity.

Such measures provide a means to understand the characteristics that impact the implementation of SEL programs. They also provide tools for schools to evaluate the needs of its staff and increase the likelihood of successful implementation.

Another area of research has focused on evaluating teacher perceptions and attitudes related to SEL as a means to better understanding how these factors influence the implementation of SEL programs. As part of a report sponsored by CASEL, Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan (2013) evaluated the perceptions and attitudes of teachers

toward SEL through a large-scale, nationally representative sample of pre-K-12 grade teachers (N = 605). The findings of this report reflected three important characteristics of respondents' perceptions of the role and value of SEL in public education. First, teachers understand SEL and endorse its value to meet the physical, mental, and academic needs of students. Second, teachers believe that SEL promotes positive trajectories in school, work, and life. Third, teachers can identify important factors in effective implementation of SEL. This report certainly provides positive support to the capacity of teachers regarding SEL, but the nature of the report as a means to promote CASEL's broader political agenda should present some caution to its findings and elicit a desire for further research.

Buchanan, Gueldner, Tran, and Merrell (2009) provide another evaluation of teacher perceptions that attempts to capture the social validity of SEL in order to gain insight into the degree to which SEL practices are accepted and used in classrooms. In a survey of 263 K-8th grade teachers from Oregon and Illinois, these authors found that respondents generally believe in the value of SEL, feel its best implemented by the classroom teacher, and are willing to receive support to improve their use of SEL practices. These authors found strong social validity related to SEL if barriers such as time, resources, and curriculum demands could be mitigated. Further, they found that over half of respondents were implementing an SEL program of some kind, with many reporting the use of a specific SEL curriculum.

Although positive perceptions and attitudes toward SEL may not universally be shared by all, these findings indicate that, in general, the value and importance of SEL is recognized. This research has also identified a need for training opportunities. The provision of training and technical support such as coaching with corrective feedback has been found to play an integral

role in the implementation process of EBIs in general (Forman, 2015). Although findings, such as those discussed in the preceding paragraphs, indicate general positive perceptions toward SEL, the need for more training to promote greater use of SEL practices recurs throughout the literature (Buchannan, et al., 2009; Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013; Humphries, 2013; Merrell & Gueldner, 2010). However, training focused on SEL is limited at both the pre-service and in-service levels (Douglass, 2011). At the in-service level, teachers report a need for continued support regarding their role in promoting SEL and how to integrate SEL into behavior management practices (Lewis, 2014). At the pre-service level, teacher candidates tend to find limited course offerings focused specifically on SEL (Fleming & Bay, 2004). This need for further training is not limited only to teachers. Support staff who play an important role in SEL implementation, such as school psychologists, report similar demands for more and better training regarding SEL programs (McKevitt, 2012).

Still another area of research related to teacher capacity regarding SEL has focused on the correlation between aspects of teacher capacity and effective implementation. Studies have found several such associations including: teacher perceptions in relation to successful implementation (Ambike, 2008), teacher comfort with and commitment to SEL in relation to academic and behavioral outcomes (Wagner, 2013), teacher levels of stress, sense of self-efficacy, and perception of school support in relation to implementation quality (Ransford, 2007), and other teacher characteristics including educational experience, teaching level, and teaching experience related to acceptance and implementation (Gillespie, 2008). Although a variety of factors influence successful implementation at the individual, school, and community levels, it seems evident that aspects related to teacher capacity provide an important influence.

Gaps in the literature. The literature reviewed in this section indicates that teacher characteristics have an impact on the perception and use of SEL in schools. However, there are some gaps that limit the usefulness of this literature. For instance, the literature primarily evaluates various teacher characteristics such as perceptions and attitudes without situating these needs within a broader framework that defines the components of capacity such as that proposed by Durlak and Dupre (2008). Such a framework can help organize research on these teacher characteristics so that it better fits with the broader need to better understand how to best translate research to practice through effective implementation.

Next, the literature presents limited understanding of teacher capacity at higher grade levels. In their nationally representative survey of teacher perceptions regarding SEL, Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan (2013) found lower positive attitudes regarding SEL as grade level increased. With the exception of this example, the majority of studies evaluating teacher perceptions or other aspects of teacher capacity have focused primarily on the elementary level, with some studies giving attention to the middle school level, and few focused on the high school level. Out of the 213 studies on SEL programs in the meta-analysis conducted by Durlak et al. (2011), 56% focused on elementary grades, 31% focused on middle school grades, and only 13% focused on high school grades. This unequal attention according to school level does not only appear in SEL research. Prevention research in general has tended to focus too narrowly on younger grades at the expense of older grades (Domitrovich, 2009).

Another gap in the literature relates to degree to which teachers use SEL standards to inform/guide instruction. At present no studies were found evaluating any aspect of teacher capacity regarding SEL standards such as those established in Illinois. As educational policy

begins to place greater expectations on schools to address social-emotional development of students through standards, it is important to understand the capacity of teachers regarding these standards.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Recruitment

Approval for this study was received from the institutional review board at Loyola University Chicago prior to administering the survey to participants. All attempts were made to protect the rights of participants and meet guidelines for ethical research as set forth by the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2010).

The target population of this study consists of current Illinois teachers at the kindergarten through high school levels. The purpose is to survey their attitudes, perceptions, and experiences regarding their capacity to provide SEL instruction and their familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards. There are approximately 125,000 K-12 teachers currently teaching in Illinois (ISBE, 2013). Due to the size of this population, it was necessary to target a sample in order to efficiently address the research questions of the present study. Additionally, given the bureaucratic nature of a state education system that is divided into 858 school districts and 5363 public and private schools (ISBE, 2015), it is difficult to access a database of all teachers.

Probability sampling, or some variation of it, is often the ideal standard for survey research since it relies primarily on random selection to determine participants (Babbie, 1990; Andres, 2012). However, this is not always feasible or preferable given the scope and nature of a given study. Non-probability sampling, on the other hand, provides an alternative approach to

sampling that relies on decisions made by the researcher to select participants. By employing purposive sampling techniques that intentionally identify potential participants while carefully documenting the process, non-probability sampling can be an effective sampling approach that can result in meaningful findings (Andres, 2012).

Given the challenges of randomly sampling from the total population of K-12 teachers in Illinois, a non-probabilistic approach was taken. A purposive sample of teachers was identified by contacting a sample of Illinois schools based on school level (elementary, middle, high school) and school locale (urban, suburban, rural). ISBE provides a directory of all schools in Illinois (Directory of Educational entities—Current) as well as a directory of locale codes of all Local Educational Agencies in the state (Rural/Urban School Key—LEA Locale Codes). Both directories were accessed at http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/htmls/directories.htm. School community was determined using the urban-centric locale codes established by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Under this coding system, urban districts are defined as those that are inside a principal city of an urbanized zone, and can be classified as large, medium, or small based on population of the city. Suburban districts are defined as those that fall outside a principal city but within an urbanized zone, and can be classified as small, medium, or large based on the population of the city. Rural districts are defined as those that fall outside an urbanized zone in rural territory or semi-rural territory, and are classified as fringe, distant, or remote based on distance from urbanized area.

A list of 93 urban, suburban, and rural districts was developed using the ISBE directory of LEA locale codes (27 Urban, 29 Suburban, 38 Rural). This list was not generated randomly, but efforts were made to draw from throughout the state. The districts on this list were located in

45 counties throughout the state. This list also represented a variety of district types that exist in IL: elementary districts (PK-8), high school districts (9-12), and unit districts (PK-12). Once a list of LEAs was developed, a sample of schools from each district was selected using ISBE's Directory of Educational Entities. The final list included 360 schools. These schools were roughly distributed by locale: 131 urban, 113 suburban, and 116 rural. They were also distributed by school level: 147 Elementary (K-5), 94 Middle (6-8), 86 High School (9-12), 27 Elementary/Middle (K-8), and 6 Middle/High School (6-12).

Recruitment occurred through electronic communication. Due to the challenge of attaining email lists of all teachers at the selected schools, an administrator or other point person at each school was contacted via publicly accessible email. Each administrator was sent two emails: an initial explanatory letter meant for the administrator, and an accompanying invitation meant for teachers. The initial email (Appendix B) described the study and the potential implications for their school, as well as explained the request to invite teachers at their school to participate in the study. This email informed recipients that they should expect follow-up letters from the researcher and that they should feel welcome to contact the researcher with any questions, comments, or concerns. The accompanying email for teachers described the purpose and voluntary nature of the study to potential participants. Importantly, this email included a hyperlink through which the potential participant could access the survey. Additionally, the email provided information regarding a drawing for a gift certificate available to those who completed the survey. The purpose of sending two separate emails was to make it as easy as possible for administrators to forward the invitation to teachers without any need to adjust the contents of the message to a new audience.

Three follow-up letters were sent at two week intervals to administrators in order to elicit responses from potential participants who did not respond after the first invitation. These letters thanked administrators for any attention and time they provided after the first recruitment letter. It briefly reminded them of the purpose and nature of the study followed by a request to again invite teachers who had not yet done so already to participate in the survey. Similar to the first recruitment letter, a second message meant for teachers was sent that could be easily forwarded to teaching staff. Because the researcher had no way to track those who had completed the survey, this follow-up message to teachers began with a thank you for those who had already completed the survey and an indication to disregard the rest of the message. The remaining message included a reminder regarding the information found in the initial invitation: a brief description of the purpose of the survey, the nature of their participation, a hyperlink to access the survey, and a brief description of a drawing available to those who complete the survey. The second and third recruitment letter (Appendix C) looked the same. The final recruitment letter (Appendix D) differed in the inclusion of a final call for participation, which explained that the survey would close within 48 hours. In total, this recruitment process lasted seven weeks.

Recruitment was initially targeted at 194 schools following the 7-week procedure described above. This netted 96 completed surveys. To increase the sample size, a second recruitment wave was initiated, targeting an additional 166 schools. This netted an additional 33 completed responses. This second wave followed the same procedure as before, only it involved one follow-up email between the initial and final recruitment email for total of 3 contacts over 5 weeks.

Sampling

Population

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the capacity of K-12 teachers in Illinois regarding SEL and the Illinois SEL Standards. Thus, a sample of participants was drawn from K-12, Illinois teachers. The inclusion criteria to participate in this survey included (1) being a current practicing teacher, (2) working in Illinois, and (3) teaching at the Kindergarten through grade 12 level.

Sample

In total, administrators at 360 schools were contacted and invited to share the survey with teachers. A total of 218 participants logged on to complete the survey. Of these participants, 37 did not meet the inclusion criteria of being current Illinois teachers teaching in grades K-12. These individuals progressed to the end of the survey through skip logic. Another 52 participants discontinued the survey before completing it. This left a total of 129 participants who completed the survey.

Of the 129 participants who completed the survey, 11.6% (N = 15) were male, 87.6% (N = 113) were female, and 0.8% (N = 1) chose not to respond. The majority of participants identified their race/ethnicity as White/Caucasian (N = 113; 87.6%). A smaller number of participants identified as African-Americans (N = 8; 6.2%), Latino/Hispanic (N = 4; 6.2%), and Asian-American (N = 2; 1.6%). Two participants (1.6%) preferred not to identify their race/ethnicity. The average age of participants was just under 41 years (M = 40.98; SD = 11.03). Participants, on average, indicated having over 14 years of experience as teachers (M = 14.23, SD = 9.16). Regarding current school level, 29% (N = 38) taught at the elementary level (K-5),

36% (N = 47) taught at the middle school level (grades 6-8), and 34% (N = 44) taught at the high school level (grades 9-12).

Regarding the type of school, 92% (N = 119) taught at public schools, 5% (N = 7) taught at private schools, and 2% (N = 3) taught at charter schools. The average enrollment of participants' schools was 940.68 (SD = 861.95) with responses ranging from 55 students to 3300.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Characteristics of Participants	M	SD	N	% of Sample
Gender				
Male	---	---	15	11.6%
Female	---	---	113	87.6%
Prefer not to respond	---	---	1	0.8%
Age	40.98	11.03	---	---
Race/Ethnicity				
White/Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	---	---	113	87.6%
Black/African American	---	---	8	6.2%
Latino/Hispanic	---	---	4	3.1%
Native American	---	---	0	0.0%
Asian American	---	---	2	1.6%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	---	---	0	0.0%
Multiple Ethnicity	---	---	0	0.0%
Prefer not to respond	---	---	2	1.6%
Years Teaching	14.23	9.16	---	---
Current Grade Levels Taught				
Elementary School	---	---	38	29.5%
Middle School	---	---	47	36.4%
High School	---	---	44	34.1%
Characteristics of Participants' work setting	M	SD	N	% of Sample
School Type				
Public	---	---	119	92.2%
Private	---	---	7	5.4%

Charter	---	---	3	2.3%
Community Type				
Urban	---	---	35	27.1%
Suburban	---	---	57	44.2%
Rural	---	---	37	28.7%
School Size	940.68	861.95	---	---

Comparison of Sample to Population

ISBE provides a range of school data through the website Illinoisreportcard.com as a means of informing various stakeholders regarding the education system at the state, district, and individual school levels (ISBE, 2016). During the 2015-2016 school year, ISBE reported a total of 127,152 licensed teachers, 76.7% of which were female while the remaining 23.3% were male. Race/ethnicity data was reported as follows: white (83.4%); Black (6.0%); Hispanic (5.7%); Asian (1.4%); American Indian (0.2%); two or more (0.8%); Pacific Islander (0.1%); not reported (2.5%).

Data regarding the number of teachers at each school level was not reported at Illinoisreportcard.com. However, ISBE publishes annual statistics on a variety of aspects of elementary and secondary schools in Illinois, including statistics regarding school staff, through multiple means. The most recent report (ISBE, 2013) documents statistics from the 2012-2013 school year, which reported that 3.0% of teachers taught at the kindergarten level, 65.0% taught grades 1-8, and 31.0% taught grades 9-12.

These statistics provide a means to compare the sample surveyed in this study to the overall teacher population in Illinois. The sample from the present study is similar to the statistics published by ISBE based on school level and race/ethnicity. The percentage of high school teachers in the sample (34.1%) was comparable to that reported by ISBE for the 2015/2016 school year (32%). Similarly, the percentage of K-8 teachers in the sample (65.9%)

mirrors the percentage of K-8 teachers identified by ISBE during the 2012/2013 school year (68%). Regarding race/ethnicity, the sample was relatively similar to the overall population with no category differing by more than four percentage points. The sample from the present study differed in the ratio of female to male teachers. The sample consisted of a higher percentage of females (87.6%) than is identified in the population (76.7%). Table 2 illustrates these comparisons based on available data.

Although ISBE's demographic data provides a means to compare the survey sample of the present study to the population of Illinois teachers, several caveats limit the degree to which a precise comparison can be made and the degree to which findings of the present study are generalizable to the overall population. First, ISBE does not provide data specifically for middle school. Instead, grades 1-8 are combined while kindergarten is separated into its own category. Additionally, ISBE does not directly report staff statistics regarding community type. Lastly, due to the lag in reporting, ISBE data does not represent the most current school year. A recent report regarding the supply/demand of teachers in Illinois (ISBE, 2014) found a 92.7% retention rate amongst teachers in the state with a projection of 2% growth through at least 2018. Consequently, despite the lag in reporting, there is evidence to suggest relative stability in teacher supply.

Table 2. Teacher Statistics in Illinois

Demographic	Population Demographics	Sample Demographics
Gender (SY 2015-2016)		
Male	23.3%	11.6%
Female	76.7%	87.6%
Prefer not to respond	Not reported	0.8%
Race/Ethnicity (SY 2015-2016)		
White/Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	83.6%	87.6%
Black/African American	6.0%	6.2%
Latino/Hispanic	5.7%	3.1%
Native American	0.2%	0.0%
Asian American	1.4%	1.6%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%
Multiple Ethnicity	0.8%	0.0%
Prefer not to respond/Not Reported	2.5%	1.6%
Current Grade Levels Taught (SY 2012-2013)		
Kindergarten-8th Grade	68.0%	65.9%
9th-12th Grade	32.0%	34.1%

Instrumentation: Survey of Teacher Capacity for SEL (T-CapSEL)

Variables

The T-CapSEL was designed to measure teachers' capacity for SEL and their familiarity with and use of the Illinois SEL Standards. As a survey, the T-CapSEL can evaluate teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences regarding these overarching constructs. Variables were developed based on the framework of provider capacity established by Durlak and Dupre (2008). This definition includes four domains: perception of benefit, perception of need, self-efficacy, and skill proficiency. Figure 3 describes the variables in this study as they align with the research questions as well as Durlak and Dupre's domains of provider capacity. The first three domains (perception of benefit, perception of need, and self-efficacy) are represented by individual variables—variables 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The domain of skill proficiency was too complex to

capture in a single variable. Regarding capacity for SEL, skill proficiency was addressed by the variables 1, 5, 6, and 7. These variables addressed components of capacity that aligned with the domain of skill proficiency: teachers' familiarity with the term SEL, training regarding SEL, experience providing SEL instruction, and school culture as it relates to supporting SEL instruction. Regarding the Illinois SEL Standards, skill proficiency represented variables 8, 9, and 10, which evaluated familiarity with the standards, use of the standards to inform planning, and use of the standards to inform assessment.

Figure 3. Variables of the T-CapSEL

Capacity to Provide SEL Instruction

Variable 1: Familiarity with the term SEL (skill proficiency)
Research Question 1: Across grade levels, to what degree are K-12, Illinois teachers familiar with the concept of SEL?

Variable 2: Perception of the benefit of SEL (perception of benefit)
Research Question 2: Across grade levels, what are teachers' perceptions regarding the benefit of SEL?

Variable 3: Perception of the need for SEL (perception of need)
Research question 3: Across grade levels, what are teachers' perceptions regarding the need of SEL?

Variable 4: Self efficacy (self-efficacy)
Research Question 4: Across grade levels, what are teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding their ability to provide SEL?

Variable 5: Training experience (skill proficiency)
Research Question 5: Across grade levels, what training experiences have teachers received regarding SEL?

Variable 6: School culture (skill proficiency)
Research Question 7: Across grade levels, what degree do teachers' experience a culture of support regarding SEL within their school?

Variable 7: Experience providing SEL instruction (skill proficiency)
Research Question 6: Across grade levels, what experiences have teachers had providing SEL instruction?

Familiarity with and Use of the Illinois SEL Standards

Variable 8: Familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards (skill proficiency)
Research Question 8: Across grade levels, to what degree are teachers' familiar with the Illinois SEL Standards?

Variable 9: Use of the Illinois SEL Standards to inform planning (skill proficiency)

Research Question 9: Across grade levels, to what degree and how often do the Illinois SEL Standards play a role in the lesson planning?

Variable 10: Use of the Illinois SEL Standards to inform assessment (skill proficiency)

Research Question 10: Across grade levels, to what degree and how often do the Illinois SEL Standards play a role in assessment practices?

Development

Data were collected using a self-report online survey developed according to the purpose of this study. Surveys are valuable as a research tool due to the ability to elicit attitudes and traits of a particular group of people that can be generalized from a sample of that group to the larger population of which that sample represents (Babbie, 1990; Andres, 2012). Survey methodology is an ideal method for this study because the purpose of this study is to measure the perceptions and attitudes of a sample of teachers that can be generalized to a broader population of K-12 teachers in Illinois. Specifically, survey methodology was used for this study to elicit teachers' perceptions and attitudes regarding SEL, their sense of self efficacy to provide SEL instruction to their students, and their training and classroom experiences providing SEL instruction. Additionally, this survey elicited information regarding teachers' familiarity with and use of the Illinois SEL Standards. Due to the flexible nature of survey design, information was generated through various response formats including yes/no, multiple choice, and Likert-like scales. Although most items were quantitative in nature, multiple items allowed for extended response meant for qualitative analysis. Andres (2012) explains that survey research can be complemented by a mixed method approach that incorporates qualitative data to clarify responses or relationship amongst variables. The qualitative items in this survey were designed to allow respondents to provide further clarification regarding their understanding of and experience with SEL and the Illinois SEL Standards.

The present survey instrument was developed to address the specific research questions of the current study. Development of this survey was informed by several existing surveys measuring teacher attitudes toward SEL found through a review of the literature (Buchanan, Gueldner, Tran, and Merrell, 2009; Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013; Bracket, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2012). The lead authors of these studies were contacted with a request to share their surveys with the researcher of the present study. Each provided a copy of their survey. These surveys helped inform the present survey by providing examples of ways to elicit teachers' attitudes and experiences regarding SEL. Some items on the present survey closely resembled certain items from these surveys. For example, items asking about familiarity with the term SEL, the culture of support experienced within a school setting, and the level of importance of providing SEL at various grade levels were each modeled after items found in these previously developed surveys.

Survey: T-CapSEL

The final survey consisted of an online, self-report, self-administered survey designed to assess participant's capacity regarding SEL as well as their awareness and use of the Illinois SEL Standards. A final version of the survey can be found in Appendix A. The survey was administered using the software program Survey Monkey and made accessible to potential participants through a hyperlink. There was a total of 49 items. However, not all participants viewed all items because of skip logic. It took an estimated 15-20 minutes to complete.

The T-CapSEL consisted of 5 broad sections: informed consent, screener, SEL capacity, awareness and use of Illinois SEL Standards, and demographics.

Informed consent. This portion consisted of a page describing the study and the effects of participating. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the survey and their rights to discontinue the survey at any time. Participants were informed that clicking the *next* button constituted consent to participate.

Screener. The initial item of the survey served as a screener to ensure that participants belonged to the target sample of K-12 teachers currently teaching in the state of Illinois. Participants were asked if they currently teach in Illinois at any level from kindergarten to grade 12. Those who met this criterion progressed to the primary sections of the survey. Those who did not meet this criterion were discontinued from the survey and thanked for their participation.

SEL capacity. The first primary portion of the survey consisted of items measuring capacity toward SEL. Items addressed the following 7 subsections: familiarity with the term SEL; perceptions regarding the benefit of SEL; perceptions regarding the need for SEL; perceptions of self-efficacy to provide SEL instruction; training experiences regarding SEL; actual experience providing SEL; and degree to which teachers experience a culture of support within their school. These sections are tied to the research questions, which are theoretically connected to a framework of capacity developed Durlak and Dupre (2008).

Familiarity with the term SEL. The first subsection in this portion of the survey asked participants to rate their familiarity with the term SEL. This item was followed by an optional extended response item allowing participants to briefly describe what they know about SEL. Following this first subsection, participants were given the following definition of SEL:

> Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process of promoting social-emotional skills through instruction that teaches students to become aware of feelings, to regulate emotions, to recognize feelings in others, to interact successfully with others, and to make responsible decisions.

The purpose of establishing a formal definition of SEL was to establish a consistent definition of SEL for participants.

Perceptions regarding benefit. The second subsection asked participants to rate their perceptions regarding potential benefits of providing SEL in schools. This was addressed through a matrix in which participants were asked to rate the level of agreement or disagreement of various statements regarding student outcomes and their connection to SEL.

Perceptions regarding need. The third subsection addressed perceptions regarding the need for SEL. This was addressed through multiple items or item matrices, the first of which asked participants to rate the importance of providing SEL through specific instructional approaches. Next, participants were asked to rate the appropriate frequency of SEL instruction. Participants were then asked to rate the importance of who provides SEL instruction. Lastly, participants were asked to rate how important it is to provide SEL at various grade levels.

Perceptions of self-efficacy. The fourth subsection of the SEL portion of the survey addressed teachers' sense of self-efficacy regarding their perceived ability to provide SEL instruction to their students. This was addressed through a matrix that asked participants to rate their confidence and motivation in providing SEL instruction.

Training experiences. The fifth subsection included several items regarding training experiences at the pre-service and in-service level. If teachers responded that they received training at either level, they were given follow-up items asking about what that training looked like as well as the attitudes regarding the adequacy of that training.

Experience with SEL instruction. The sixth subsection addressed teachers' actual experience providing SEL instruction to their students through formal programs and informal

strategies. First, participants were asked if they currently provide SEL instruction through formal SEL programs. A definition of formal SEL programs was provided to clarify what was meant by this term. Included in this definition were examples of five commonly used SEL programs. If participants indicated that they currently use any formal program, they were provided follow-up questions asking the name of that program and to describe who provides it. Lastly, participants were asked if they provide SEL instruction through informal practices, and if so, they were provided the option to describe those strategies.

Culture of support. The seventh and final subsection in the SEL portion of the survey asked about the culture of support surrounding SEL at their respective schools through an item matrix.

IL SEL Standards. The next portion of the survey consisted of items measuring teachers' familiarity with and use of the Illinois SEL Standards. This portion of the survey asked for familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards, training experiences, degree to which the standards inform their lesson planning, and degree to which the standards inform their assessment practices. An additional item provided the opportunity for participant's to briefly describe their experience using the Illinois SEL Standards. The total number of items seen by participants in this section of the test was influenced by their level of familiarity endorsed on the first item. Participants who indicated any level of familiarity progressed to the following items. Those who responded with no familiarity were instead provided a brief description of the standards and asked if they wanted to learn more about the standards before moving on to the demographic portion of the survey.

Demographics. The final portion of the survey asked for demographics. These items were split into two series of questions. The first series asked about personal information. These items included the following: gender, race/ethnicity, age, years as a teacher, current grade level(s) taught, previous grade level(s) taught. The final series of questions focused on demographics of the school at which the participant works: type of school (public, private, charter), type of community (urban, suburban, rural), school enrollment, grade levels offered at the school.

Qualitative items. Although most items in the T-CapSEL elicited objective ratings regarding perceptions, attitudes, and opinions of participants meant for quantitative analysis, three items allowed for extended, qualitative response. Following the item of the survey in which participants were asked to rate their level of familiarity with the term SEL, participants were offered the option to briefly describe what they currently know about SEL. A second example occurred in the subsection addressing teachers' actual experience providing SEL instruction. Participants were given the option of describing any additional informal SEL techniques that they may use but are not otherwise part of a formal program. Lastly, following items regarding the degree to which participants use the Illinois SEL Standards, participants were given the option of briefly describing their experience using the standards. The purpose of these qualitative items was to elicit a fuller understanding of the participants' familiarity with the term SEL as well as a fuller understanding of the participants' experience with SEL and the Illinois SEL Standards that complement the quantitative information elicited elsewhere throughout the survey.

These items were made optional because the researcher did not want to overly-tax the participants with items requiring an extended response and risk losing participants who did not want to be burdened by such a process. By giving the option, participants could choose to take on that burden. Additionally, due to the quantitative nature of these items, analysis could still be conducted even with a limited response rate. Since these responses were meant to complement the quantitative analysis, it was not necessary for every participant to respond to these items. In this way, the researcher attempted to elicit as much information while maximizing the retention rate of participants.

Procedures

Potential participants recruited for the study were provided a hyperlink to the survey after being invited to participate through an electronic recruitment letter. Upon accessing the survey through this hyperlink, participants were first directed to a page that included an informed consent form. This form described the nature of the study as well as their rights as participants. This form also informed them of the potential risks and benefits of their participation. They were informed that clicking the *next* button constituted their consent.

The opening question acted as a screener to determine if the participant fit the desired sample of K-12 grade teachers currently working in Illinois. Participants who did not meet this criterion proceeded to the end of the survey through skip logic and thanked for their participation. Those who did meet this criterion proceeded through each section of the survey.

The remainder of the survey consisted of three primary sections. The first focused on teachers' capacity regarding SEL. The second focused on their familiarity with and use of the

Illinois SEL standards. The third focused on demographics of participants and the school setting in which they currently work.

An underlying purpose of this study was to gain insight into how to best support teachers in their implementation of SEL initiatives. The penultimate page of this survey provided a link to a weblog designed to offer further information regarding SEL and the Illinois SEL Standards

As an incentive to participate in the study, those who completed the survey were given the opportunity to take part in a drawing for one of four, $25 gift cards. On the final page of the survey, participants were provided directions to take part in this drawing by sending basic contact information to a private email created for the sole purpose of this drawing. Specifically, participants were invited to send their name, email, and phone number to selteachersurvey.philippe@gmail.com.

These directions explained that their contact information would be accessible only by the researcher, and only for the purpose of this drawing. After the drawing, the email address would be permanently deactivated. Although participants would have to provide contact information in order to participate in this drawing, there was no way to connect a participant's contact information with their specific responses, thus protecting the anonymity of the survey.

After the closure of the survey, the researcher will review the list to ensure that no email address appeared more than once. Then, each email will be assigned a number, four of which will be selected randomly as winners of the drawing. Although the researcher will be exposed to the email addresses of participants who entered the drawing, this procedure eliminates the need to open any emails except the winners of the drawing, minimizing the researchers' exposure to the specific contact information of the participant.

Analysis

Use of both quantitative and qualitative methods was employed in the analysis of this study following a concurrent triangulation approach (Creswell, 2014) that collected both forms of data at the same time. The use of qualitative data helped to clarify responses regarding participants' familiarity with SEL and experience using the Illinois SEL Standards by allowing for more extended description of these variables. Only data collected from the _ participants who completed the survey were analyzed. Data analysis was aided by the SPSS statistical software program.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis of data consisted of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics allow for the reduction of data into manageable form through the summarization of individual variables and the measurement of association between variables (Babbie, 1990). In this study, descriptive statistics will include measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode), measures of spread (range, standard deviation), and frequency distributions of variables. Inferential statistics allow for the generalization of results gathered from a sample to the broader population of interest from which the sample is drawn (Babbie, 1990). In this study, inferential analysis will aim to generalize the findings of the sample to the population of K-12 teachers in Illinois. Tests will be run to determine if a significant difference exists between groups of participants based on the school level at which they teach (elementary, middle, or high school). A power analysis will be conducted to determine the appropriate test given the sample size. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) will likely be the primary test of significance depending on the number of respondents in each school level category.

Most items measured continuous variables using a Likert-style scale. For the purpose of coding, each anchor was assigned a numerical value ranging from 1 to as much as 7. Lower values reflected lower endorsement of the item, whereas higher values reflected a higher endorsement of the item. For example, for an item asking a participant to rank his/her level of agreement with a statement, a value of 1 corresponded to a response of *strongly disagree (low endorsement)*. A value of 7 corresponds to a response of *strongly agree (high endorsement)*.

Figure 1 (page 10) describes each of the research questions addressed in this study. Each question will be answered by looking at descriptive statistics across the sample as a whole as well as within each grade-level subgroup (elementary, middle, high school). Inferential statistics will then be run to evaluate if statistically significant difference exists between each grade-level group. For example, research question 1 is addressed by an item asking participants to rate their level of familiarity with SEL on a five-point scale (one representing not at all familiar; five representing extremely familiar). Descriptive statistics will describe the frequency of each response across the entire sample as well as within each grade-level subgroup. Once coded by numerical value, a mean, median, and mode can be attained. Inferential statistics will help determine if the difference between grade-level subgroups was statistically significant. Figure 4 summarizes the ten variables that correspond with the ten research questions described in Figure 1 along with a description of the type of data generated and the descriptive and inferential statistics used in analysis.

Excel was used to analyze all descriptive data. This data was verified through SPSS. Inferential data was only analyzed using SPSS software.

Figure 4. Variables and Analysis

Variable (based on research questions)	**Type of Response**	**Descriptive Statistics**	**Inferential Statistics**
Familiarity with the term SEL	Level of familiarity (5-point scale) *Qualitative follow-up	Frequency, Mean, Median, Mode	ANOVA
Perceptions regarding benefits of SEL	Level of agreement/disagreement (7-point scale)	Frequency, Mean, Median, Mode	ANOVA
Perceptions regarding need of SEL	Level of importance (5-point scale) Frequency (5-point scale)	Frequency, Mean, Median, Mode	ANOVA
Perceptions of Self-Efficacy	Level of agreement/disagreement (7-point scale)	Frequency, Mean, Median, Mode	ANOVA
Training experiences	Yes/no (screener) Multiple choice (select all that apply) Level of adequacy/inadequacy (7-point scale)	Frequency, Mean, Median, Mode	ANOVA
Culture of Support	Level of agreement/disagreement (7-point scale)	Frequency, Mean, Median, Mode	ANOVA
Experience providing SEL	Yes/no (screener) Multiple choice Level of satisfaction (5-point scale) *Qualitative follow-up	Frequency, Mean, Median, Mode	ANOVA
Familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards	Level of familiarity (5-point scale) *Qualitative follow-up	Frequency, Mean, Median, Mode	ANOVA
Role of Illinois SEL Standards in lesson/unit planning	Yes/no (screener) Level of importance (7-point scale) Frequency (5-point scale)	Frequency, Mean, Median, Mode	Not Applicable

Role of Illinois SEL Standards in assessment	Yes/no (screener) Level of importance (7-point scale) Frequency (5-point scale)	Frequency, Mean, Median, Mode	Not Applicable

Qualitative Analysis

The purpose of qualitative items in this instrument was to triangulate data through deeper exploration of teachers' familiarity with the term SEL, their use of informal SEL practices, and their experience with the SEL Standards.

Item 3 provided participants the option to briefly explain their familiarity with the term SEL. This allowed for analysis of the breadth and depth of participants' familiarity with SEL as a formal construct. It also allowed for the analysis of accuracy of this understanding by comparing responses with the definition of SEL established in the literature.

Item 27 provided participants the opportunity to describe any type of informal SEL practices that they implement in their classrooms. Since informal practices can be conceptualized in many ways (i.e. group/individual activities, classroom structures or routines, or teachable moments), responses to this item were analyzed in order to determine the types of informal SEL practices that teachers report applying in their classrooms. This allows teachers to share practices that may not be part of a larger, formal program. It also provides insight into what teachers consider to be SEL-related practices.

Item 39 provided teachers the opportunity to describe their experiences providing the Illinois SEL Standards. This item allowed for analysis of the participants' experience with these standards in more depth, further clarifying previous responses as well as potentially shedding light into participants' attitudes and perceptions regarding these standards. This item also

allowed for analysis of potential ways in which current teachers effectively use the standards in their practice, allowing for insight into ways to support teachers who may want to implement the standards in their own practice.

Qualitative responses were analyzed using an open coding process. Open coding entails the formulation of themes derived from responses as they emerge in the data, as opposed to how they fit into preconceived themes established by the researcher (Merriam, 2009). The development of a codebook for each item followed steps described by Merriam (2009). This process began with the construction of categories, at which time broad categories or themes that emerged from responses were identified. The next step of the process will include the sorting, naming, and re-sorting of categories into a codebook. Finally, responses will be coded by the primary researcher and an assistant for final analysis using the codebook developed through this process.

To help verify the accuracy of this process, the primary researcher will evaluate inter-rater reliability. Using an Excel spreadsheet, the primary researcher will chart the codes of each rater and determine inter-rater reliability by determining the number of consistent codes and dividing by the total number of codes. A cut-off of 85% will be used as a measure of sufficient reliability. In cases where inter-rater reliability is less than 85%, the raters will come together to discuss differences and form consensus in their coding.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

General Procedure

The following sections provide results gathered from the T-CapSEL. Findings have been organized according to the 2 primary research questions and subsequent sub-questions around which the instrument was designed.

Most items produced quantitative data, which were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis focused first on responses from the sample as a whole (N = 129), followed by analysis of data broken down by specified sub-groups. Participants were categorized into three sub-groups based on school level: elementary school (N = 38), middle school (N = 47), and high school (N = 44). In addition to descriptive analysis, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for certain items to evaluate the likelihood that differences in means between groups were statistically significant. When applicable, effect size was reported using partial eta squared (η^2) and interpreted using standards suggested by Cohen (1988): 0.01= low effect size; 0.06= medium effect size; 0.14 = large effect size.

Three items produced qualitative data. These items were analyzed using open coding procedures described in previous sections.

Question 1: What is Illinois Teachers' Capacity to Provide SEL Instruction?

This first question focused on gaining insight into Illinois teachers' capacity to provide SEL instruction. It was addressed through 7 sub-questions, each of which aligned to one of the four components of provider capacity.

Sub-question 1A: To What Degree Are K-12, Illinois Teachers Familiar with the Concept of SEL?

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze participants' familiarity with SEL. Participants were first asked to rate their level of familiarity with the term SEL (Item 2). They were then given the option of briefly describing their understanding of this term through open response (Item 3).

Item 2: Familiarity with SEL

Participants were asked to rate their level of familiarity with the term SEL on a 5-point scale with zero indicating *not at all familiar* and four indicating *extremely familiar*. Intermediate ratings indicated increasing degrees of familiarity (1-*slightly familiar; 2-somewhat familiar; 3-moderately familiar*). Tables 3-4 depict descriptive results of this item.

Although a majority of respondents indicated that they were *somewhat* familiar (N = 23), *moderately* familiar (N= 45), or *extremely* familiar (N=32), 11 respondents indicated they were only *slightly* familiar, and 18 respondents indicated that they were *not at all* familiar. On average across the entire sample (N = 129), participants reported a degree of familiarity between *somewhat familiar* and *moderately familiar* (m = 2.48, SD = 1.33). When broken down by school level, differences emerged. Elementary school teachers rated their familiarity highest (m = 3.00,

SD = 1.09) followed by middle school teachers (m = 2.55, SD = 1.18), and finally high school teachers (m = 1.95, SD = 1.49).

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore participants' familiarity with the term SEL based on school level. The Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicated that responses for all three groups were *not* statistically normal ($p < .05$), which can often be the case with attitudinal scales such as those used as part of the T-CapSEL. Using Levene's test, variance within each group was found to be heterogenous (.004). Thus, Welch's F test was used to analyze group differences. The one-way ANOVA of teachers' familiarity with the term SEL revealed a statistically significant main effect (Welch's $(2, 82.520) = 6.635$, $p = .002$), indicating that, across school levels, teachers did not report the same level of familiarity with the term SEL. The effect size was analyzed using partial eta squared ($\eta^2 = .10$), indicating a medium effect in the actual difference between groups. Post-hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test indicated that the mean response for elementary school teachers was statistically different than the mean response of high school teachers ($M_{differnce} = 1.05$, CI [.36, 1.73], $p = .001$). There was no other statistically significant difference in mean responses.

Table 3. Familiarity with SEL—Descriptive Data

2. How familiar or not are you with the term Social Emotional Learning (SEL)?	M	SD	0: *Not at all familiar (% of group)*	1: *Slightly familiar (% of group)*	2: *Somewhat familiar (% of group)*	3: *Moderately familiar (% of group)*	4: *Extremely familiar (% of group)*
General findings (N = 129)	2.48	1.33	18 (13.9%)	11 (8.5%)	23 (17.8%)	45 (34.9%)	32 (24.8%)
ES (N = 38)	3.00	1.09	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	4 (11%)	16 (42%)	14 (37%)
MS (N = 47)	2.55	1.18	4 (9%)	4 (9%)	11 (25%)	18 (41%)	10 (23%)
HS (N = 44)	1.96	1.49	12 (27%)	5 (11%)	8 (18%)	11 (25%)	8 (18%)

Table 4. Familiarity with SEL—ANOVA

How familiar or not are you with the term Social Emotional Learning (SEL)?	Df	F	P	η^2
Between	2	6.635	<.05 (.002)	.10
Within	126			

Item 3: Familiarity with SEL (Qualitative Response)

To provide greater context regarding participants' level of familiarity with SEL, participants were asked to briefly describe what they know about providing SEL instruction. Responding to this statement was optional and a total of 108 participants responded. Of these responses, 38 were from elementary school teachers (95% of all elementary school teachers in the sample), 41 were from middle school teachers (87% of all middle school teachers in the sample), and 31 were from high school teachers (70% of all high school teachers in the sample). Qualitative analysis was conducted as described in the Chapter 3 in which themes were identified and statements categorized by these themes. Table 5 summarizes the results of this categorization. Five primary themes emerged from this process: statements defining aspects of SEL instruction, statements regarding the provision of SEL instruction, statements regarding

who is responsible to provide SEL instruction, statements regarding the impact/benefit of SEL instruction, and statements regarding the familiarity/experience with SEL instruction.

Table 5. Coded Themes of familiarity with SEL

Category	Sub-category	Definition
Definition		Any statement describing the nature/purpose of SEL instruction and/or the components that make up SEL instruction
	Broad Definition and Approach	A statement defining SEL as a general or philosophical approach to instruction
	Specific Skills/Competencies	A statement defining SEL by specific skills/competencies
	Environment	A statement defining SEL as a part of the school environment
Provision of Instruction		Any statement referencing *how* SEL instruction is provided to students
	Direct: SEL-Specific	Statements indicating that social-emotional skills/competencies are specifically taught to students in the classroom through formal SEL curricula or informal SEL practices
	Direct: Integrated/Generalized	Statements indicating that promotion of social-emotional skills/competencies are integrated/generalized throughout the school day
	Indirect	Statements describing ways that educators promote social-emotional skills/competencies that does not involve direct instruction. For example: seeking professional development to improve one's ability to support social-emotional needs; accommodating student social-emotional needs without providing explicit instruction; addressing social-emotional needs through non-SEL specific programs such as PBIS
Responsibility of Providing Instruction		Any statement referencing *who* provides SEL instruction
	Teacher Self	Statements indicating the direct or indirect role of teachers to provide SEL instruction. These statements may refer to the respondent him/herself or to fellow teachers
	System	Statements indicating the role of school-systems to provide SEL instruction

	Other	Statements indicating that SEL instruction is the role of entities other than teachers, such as specific departments or school-based clinical staff
SEL impact/benefit		Any statement referencing a connection between SEL instruction and non-SEL related student outcomes
Familiarity/experience		Any statement that broadly describes the respondent's knowledge or familiarity with SEL instruction or of the Illinois SEL Standards

Definition. The first primary theme that emerged included statements describing the nature/purpose of SEL instruction or the components that make up SEL instruction. Over a third of respondents (N = 56), provided statements that fit this category. These statements fell into three sub-categories: broad statements defining SEL instruction as a general or philosophical approach, statements defining SEL by specific skills/competencies, and statements defining SEL instruction as an environmental component of the school experience.

Broad definition and approach. Nearly a quarter of participants who responded to this item (N = 25) provided statements defining SEL instruction broadly as a general or philosophical approach to educating students. Some of these responses included relatively brief statements defining SEL broadly. For instance, one respondent defined SEL as the "social aspects of learning," while another response described SEL as "helping self and others." Several responses related SEL to generalized skills such as the display of "appropriate behaviors and emotions" or the ability to "interact with and react to social situations." Another response related SEL to "respect, kindness, and connectedness." Finally, some responses defined SEL by broad outcomes that could potentially result from SEL instruction, such as "behaviors and attitudes to accomplish everyday tasks" or skills that "prepare students for adult living."

Another set of responses provided a more philosophical conceptualization of SEL. For example, several respondents described SEL as a "holistic" approach to education focused on

supporting the "whole-child." Responses provided a varied picture of respondents' understanding of SEL. While one teacher described SEL as a "subject area with K-12 standards" another respondent described SEL as "a learning disorder."

Specific competency. Over a quarter of respondents (N = 31) provided statements defining SEL instruction as specific competencies/skills. Although a range of terminology was used, responses could be classified according to the five core SEL competencies established by CASEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Responses describing competencies/skills ranged in the number of competencies/skills identified. A majority of these 31 respondents (N = 20) identified one or two competencies. Of the remaining, only 1 respondent identified all five competencies. This respondent was one of the few to use the CASEL terminology.

Self-awareness. Twelve responses were coded as fitting within the category of self-awareness. CASEL defines self-awareness as "The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior" (CASEL, 2017). Responses that fit this classification included statements such as "emotional identification," "perception of self and circumstances," "emotional awareness," and "self-esteem."

Self-management. A total of 23 responses were coded as referencing self-management skills. CASEL defines self-management as "The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself…to set and work toward personal and academic goals" (CASEL, 2017). Many of the responses fitting this classification defined social-emotional competency as the "management" and "regulation" of emotions/feelings in students. Other

responses referred to the proper "expression" of feelings/emotions. These responses commonly described self-management skills simply as skills related to "coping with," "managing," or "handling" feelings/emotions.

When respondents provided further details, they commonly emphasized the need to cope with "negative/difficult" emotions in appropriate ways, while relatively little emphasis was given to the importance of also managing "positive" emotions. This can be seen in the following statement in which an elementary school teacher addresses the competencies of self-awareness and self-management:

> We are responsible for teaching students about their emotions, how to express them positively and how to deal with difficult emotions in positive and productive manner.

Social Awareness. Twelve responses were coded as referencing social awareness. CASEL defines social awareness as "The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures" and to "understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports" (CASEL, 2017). Responses fitting this classification emphasized the importance of recognizing emotions in others. Multiple responses specifically mentioned "empathy" as a specific target outcome, such as the following response from a high school teacher:

> Many times I ask them empathize with others and take their opinions into account, especially with differing views.

A fewer number of responses recognized the importance of understanding social norms to guide appropriate behavior. For example, the following statement was made by a middle school teacher: "SEL instruction includes…how we consider feelings and what reactions are appropriate."

Relationship Skills. A total of 15 responses were coded as referencing relationship skills. CASEL defines relationship skills as "The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups." Additionally, the definition of relationship skills includes "The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed" (CASEL, 2017).

Several responses referred to social interaction skills, such as properly "socializing," or as one elementary school teacher put it, "cooperating and living positively with one another." A number of responses focused instead on "relationship" and/or "friendship" skills that allow one to build positive, healthy, and meaningful relationships. Lastly, some responses described "communication skills" needed to develop healthy relationships with peers and adults.

Responsible decision-making. A total of eight responses were coded as referencing responsible decision making. CASEL defines responsible decision making as "The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms." Additionally, this definition includes "The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others" (CASEL, 2017). Responses that were coded using this definition used terms such as "problem-solving," "decision making," and "planning" within social situations.

Environmental aspects. A small number of respondents (N = 3) provided statements recognizing the role of the school environment in supporting SEL. One such respondent, a middle school teacher, stated that "students must be provided with a learning environment that

allows students to learn." A high school teacher addressed the importance of environment by stating that SEL "provides a safe space for all learners."

Provision of SEL instruction. The second primary theme that emerged focused on *how* SEL instruction is provided to students. A total of 67 respondents provided statements that fit this category. These statements fell into three sub-themes: statements indicating that social-emotional skills/competencies are explicitly taught to students using formal or informal SEL practices; statements indicating that social-emotional skills/competencies are integrated or generalized throughout the school experience; statements describing ways that educators promote social-emotional skills/competencies that do not involve direct instruction.

Direct: SEL-specific. This first sub-theme identified statements that referenced ways that social-emotional learning is explicitly taught through formal or informal interventions. A number of respondents referenced formal interventions/programs designed to provide explicit SEL instruction (e.g. 2nd Step, Zones of Regulation). Other respondents referenced examples of formal programs that address SEL as part of a broader initiative, such as discipline/behavior management programs (e.g. Conscious Discipline, Class Dojo). Some statements described qualities of SEL-specific interventions without referencing a specific example. For instance, one respondent noted the importance of using SEL curricula that are age-appropriate. Another set of responses included statements that focused on informal practices that do not necessarily rely on a packaged curriculum/program. Several respondents in this group indicated that they teach social-emotional skills through individual lessons. Many of these responses described a variety of strategies used in such lessons, such as group discussion, hands-on activities, and role-play. Multiple middle school and high school teachers referenced restorative justice practices such as

peace circles. A small handful of responses indicated that SEL standards can be used to inform direct instruction.

In addition to specific examples indicating *how* SEL instruction is provided, some respondents emphasized *when/where* instruction is provided. For example, several respondents explained that they provide SEL instruction on a daily or weekly basis during a specific class period. These respondents tended to be elementary school teachers or teachers who indicated that they work with special education populations. However, teachers outside these two sub-groups described specific periods of the day when SEL is provided to their students. For instance, several middle school teachers explained that SEL instruction is provided during "advisory" or through "school announcements." One middle school teacher explained that she provides SEL instruction as part of his/her health curriculum.

While most of these responses focused on when/where SEL instruction is provided to their students, a few respondents focused on when/where such instruction is provided to students at different school levels. For example, one elementary school teacher explained that SEL instruction is provided by middle school teachers during advisory. A high school teacher, while not acknowledging any provision of SEL instruction at his/her own school level, stated that SEL instruction is provided during specific times of the day at the elementary school level.

Whether respondents described a specific program or time of day during which SEL instruction is provided, most respondents used language indicating that SEL is provided directly to students. For example, respondents commonly used action words such as "teaching," "helping," or "providing" that indicated SEL instruction as instruction that is directly provided to

students. Other respondents were more direct. For example, "Teachers must connect, model, and instruct students so they have the skills to cope with emotions."

Direct: Integrated/generalized. As opposed to providing SEL instruction through SEL-specific interventions, the next sub-category of responses focused on the integration/generalization of instruction throughout the school experience. Multiple respondents described the importance of integrating SEL instruction throughout the curriculum. For example, one elementary school teacher described how SEL standards had been integrated into the districts' K-2 ELA standards. Another respondent described incorporating *Second Step* lessons throughout the day to generalize learning. Several others described embedding lessons into daily instruction without any reference to standards of formal curricula. Another set of responses described integration of SEL instruction through school-wide initiatives such as MTSS (e.g. RTI and PBS), while others described anti-bullying and other behavior management programs used by the entire school as the means through which SEL instruction is provided to students. Although several respondents specifically referenced SEL standards, none made mention of these standards as being specific to Illinois. A group of respondents described themselves as special education teachers. Several of these respondents indicated that they integrate SEL lessons throughout the day, such as one teacher who stated, "I use SEL instruction in my life skills special education to drive social skills units."

Indirect. The third sub-theme of responses included statements describing indirect ways that educators promote social-emotional growth. These responses fit into three areas: student-teacher interactions, non-instructional work, and acknowledging/accommodating student social-emotional needs.

Student-teacher interactions. Responses describing teacher-student interactions as a means of indirect SEL instruction emphasized relationship building and student engagement while modeling expected behaviors. Several respondents described SEL instruction broadly as a means of "connecting with students." Others offered more details, such as the following high school teacher who provides positive interactions in various ways:

> I acknowledge their self-awareness to ensure they are successful…I remind them of the importance of building positive relationships…I ask them to empathize with others and take their opinions into account…I remind them they are not just a student to me…

Whereas the above example emphasized the value of relationship building, other respondents focused on the relationship between student engagement to social-emotional development. One of these respondents explained that he/she "makes sure objectives/expectations are clear and attainable…provide instruction and assignments that are relevant." Yet other respondents emphasized the importance of supporting the individual person, as described by the following middle school teacher:

> Adults at school connect regularly with students with students, and model respect, kindness, and connectedness. For example, greeting students by name as they arrive at school.

Providing a similar sentiment, another respondent explained more simply "You need to validate students."

Non-instructional work. Another way that social-emotional needs are met are through non-instructional work such as professional development and curriculum planning. Some examples include pursuing personal research of relevant content information and engaging in professional development related to SEL. For instance, one respondent described how his/her school has focused staff training on better understanding the link between trauma and social-

emotional development/academic growth. Other respondents described how SEL can be addressed through curriculum development. One respondent described how SEL was integrated throughout his/her district's curriculum. Another respondent described how he/she has spent time researching appropriate curricula to teach SEL.

Acknowledging and accommodating social-emotional needs. As a final, indirect means of providing SEL instruction, respondents described ways that the social-emotional needs of students can be acknowledged and accommodated. Several responses described SEL instruction as an "awareness" of student needs and their individual backgrounds when developing and providing instruction generally. For example, one middle school teacher described SEL instruction as "Taking into consideration student's emotional background during instruction." Similarly, another middle school teacher described SEL in the following manner:

> It has to do with understanding a students' social circumstances, emotional disposition and how it might affect how the student might be receptive to learning and education.

Although these responses fail to acknowledge SEL instruction as valuable instruction in its own right, it emphasizes a recognition that it is important for teachers to consider a range of characteristics when meeting the needs of all students.

Other respondents emphasized the need to provide modifications and/or accommodations to support social-emotional needs. A few respondents included statements regarding adjustments they make to support student needs, such as allowing for short breaks. Others described supports provided at a school-wide level. For example, one high school teacher described SEL instruction as something provided to students after being referred to school support resources such as counseling. A handful of respondents indicated that their experience with SEL instruction

involves addressing the goals of students with IEPs. These responses included statements related to monitoring student's progress towards social-emotional goals/objectives.

Responsibility. The third primary theme that emerged focused on *who* provides SEL instruction. A total of 66 respondents provided statements that fit this category. These statements fell into three sub-themes: responsibility of teachers/self, responsibility of the system, and responsibility of non-teaching entities.

Responsibility of teacher/self. The first sub-theme involved statements indicating the role of respondents themselves, or of teachers more generally, to provide SEL instruction. Many expressed this role clearly by using direct pronouns such as *I* or *we.* Others implied this role through less specific language, such as the following examples:

> Teaching students about emotions and social skills.
> Making sure to address students in a variety of ways and address multiple competencies.

Although these statements do not directly identify who is responsible for SEL instruction, they imply that somebody is *teaching* social-emotional skills or *making sure* instruction is provided. Respondents that used more direct language were clearer in identifying the responsibility of providing SEL instruction as that of teachers. For example, one elementary school teacher stated, "I teach daily SEL class to grades 2-5." Similarly, a middle school teacher stated, "We teach social emotional skills like our anti-bullying program and use BIST to find the root cause of problems instead of just handing out discipline."

Responsibility of broader systems. The next sub-theme involved statements that identified the role of school-systems to provide SEL instruction to students. One respondent expressed the role of schools by acknowledging the obligation of schools "to meet certain requirements in the arena of social and emotional development." Most other respondents

described ways that school systems support student social-emotional needs through tiered support systems (e.g. MTSS—PBIS and RTI, problem solving teams) or school wide initiatives to address behavior/discipline. A high school teacher stated SEL more generally as follows, "This is when schools have support programs in place to help students deal with emotional problems."

Responsibility of other entities. A final sub-group of responses specifically placed responsibility of providing SEL with entities other than the respondents themselves. A majority of these responses indicated that SEL was something related to the realm of special education. For example, one high school teacher was direct in this assertion: "I associate it with special ed kids." Another high school teacher formed a similar association, stating, "I know nothing about instruction, only heard the phrase at Special Ed. meetings about student IEPs." One middle school teacher simply named the special education co-operative as his/her entire response to this item.

The following response from an elementary school teacher captures the sentiment that, whether or not SEL is something that should be addressed by all teachers to some degree, in practice SEL instruction is primarily seen as a concern of other staff:

> There are state SEL standards usually used for students in special education. General education teachers typically don't included SEL instruction in their lesson planning unless they are used school-wide (e.g. zones of regulation). Special Education teachers, social workers, school psychs, etc are staff who provide this instruction. In addition, general education teachers who have students with IEP's are able to provide supports as well.

While recognizing the attention given to SEL instruction in special education, a few respondents acknowledged that not enough attention is given in general education. For example, the following middle school teacher noted that SEL instruction "is important and often ignored

completely in traditional school. Was a large part of curriculum when I taught at an alternate school." Some respondents recognized the role of school support staff such as school social workers and school psychologists. A few of these responses indicated a collaborative relationship, such as one elementary school teacher who stated, "I work closely with the school social work and psychologists."

SEL impact/benefit. The fourth primary theme that emerged involved statements linking SEL instruction to non-SEL related outcomes. A total of 26 respondents provided statements that fit this category. A majority of these responses included statements acknowledging a link between SEL and academics. Several recognized that it is difficult for students to learn if their social-emotional needs are not met (e.g. "Before learning occurs, social and emotional needs must be met."; "Children cannot learn if they are distracted by heath or emotional issues"). Others recognized that SEL instruction plays a more direct role in supporting academic achievement (e.g. "I am familiar about the correlation of success for students that utilize these SEL with academics."; "[SEL] engages students and improves achievement").

Several respondents recognized the general importance of social-emotional competency for success in school and life. This sentiment is captured by a middle school teacher who stated, "I know its [important] for students to learn about SEL because it can help them be more successful in all aspects of their life now and in the future." One elementary school teacher acknowledged the benefit of SEL instruction for students who have experienced trauma.

Level of familiarity. The fifth and final primary theme that emerged involved statements regarding the respondent's general level of familiarity with SEL. A total of 26 respondents

provided statements that fit this category. Many these responses expressed minimal or no familiarity with SEL instruction. The following statements illustrate this type of responses:

Since I'm not a member of the Spec. Ed dept., it's hard to put what little I do know about it into words.

It has been mentioned in our staff meeting as a standard.
Just the literal sense of the words.
It is available to all students.

Some respondents provided statements about their limited experience related to SEL instruction:

I am taking SPED classes and have learned about this Learning Disorder.
I had a required SEL course at EIU for my degree.
I have not worked in that area.

Whereas as the preceding responses reflected limited familiarity or experience with SEL instruction, several respondents indicated familiarity with SEL standards. Although some merely provided a mere recognition of these standards, several recognized that these standards can inform SEL instruction.

Sub-Question 1B: What are K-12, Illinois Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Benefit of SEL?

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement toward nine statements regarding the benefit of SEL instruction (item 4a-i). For each sub-item, agreement was measured across a 7-point scale in which zero indicated that the participant *strongly disagreed*, six indicated that the participant *strongly agreed*, and three indicated that the participant *neither agreed or disagreed*. Descriptive and inferential statistics for each sub-item are depicted in Table 6-7. These tables depict results across all participants (general) and between each grade level group (ES, MS, HS).

Item 4: Perceived Benefits of Teaching SEL

Across the entire sample, participants indicated moderate agreement to each sub-item, falling between a rating of four (*somewhat agree)* and five (*agree)*. General findings were consistent across all nine sub-items. The lowest average response was sub-item 4f: *Teaching SEL in schools will decrease behavioral/conduct problems* (M = 4.49, SD = 1.29) and the highest average was sub-item 4c: *Teaching SEL in schools will improve relationships between students and teachers* (M = 4.93, SD = 1.16).

When broken down by school level, some differences emerged. In 6 of 9 sub-items (4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 4e, 4g) the average response of elementary school teachers was highest of the three groups. Similarly, the average response of high school teachers was highest in two statements (4h, 4i). The average response of elementary school teachers and high school teachers were equal for one statement (4f). In all but one sub-item (4c), high school teachers' average response was higher than the average responses of middle school teachers.

An ANOVA was conducted for each of the nine sub-items under item 4 to evaluate the potential impact of school level on teachers' perceptions of the benefit of providing SEL instruction. The Shapiro-Wilks test was used to evaluate the distribution of responses within each group. Across all nine analyses, responses from each group failed to meet the assumption of normality. Using Levene's test, variances across groups in each analysis met the assumption of homogeneity of variances. Across all nine sub-items, differences between groups were not found to be significant. Overall, these data indicate that teachers in this sample perceive a benefit to providing SEL instruction to their students. This perception was relatively consistent across all grade levels for each statement addressed in this survey.

Table 6. Perceived Benefits of Teaching SEL—Descriptive Data

Item 4. Teaching SEL in schools will:	M	SD
Item 4a: *Teaching SEL in schools will improve students' ability to identify and regulate emotions*		
General	4.83	1.18
ES	5.00	1.23
MS	4.70	1.18
HS	4.82	1.15
Item 4b: *Teaching SEL in schools will improve students' ability to show empathy by taking the perspective of others*		
General	4.88	1.08
ES	4.95	1.09
MS	4.81	1.06
HS	4.89	1.10
Item 4c: *Teaching SEL in schools will improve relationships between students and teachers*		
General	4.93	1.16
ES	5.00	1.27
MS	4.94	1.13
HS	4.86	1.11
Item 4d: *Teaching SEL in schools will improve relationships between students and peers*		
General	4.91	1.13
ES	5.08	1.12
MS	4.79	1.16
HS	4.89	1.10
Item 4e: *Teaching SEL in schools will decrease bullying*		
General	4.54	1.28
ES	4.71	1.29
MS	4.43	1.43
HS	4.52	1.11
Item 4f: *Teaching SEL in schools will decrease behavioral/conduct problems*		
General	4.49	1.29
ES	4.55	1.39
MS	4.38	1.41
HS	4.55	1.09
Item 4g: *Teaching SEL in schools will improve students' ability to make constructive and respectful choices about behavior and social interactions*		
General	4.78	1.17
ES	4.89	1.13
MS	4.64	1.29
HS	4.82	1.06
Item 4h: *Teaching SEL in schools will reduce students' emotional distress*		
General	4.60	1.21

ES	4.55	1.31
MS	4.49	1.25
HS	4.77	1.10
Item 4i: *Teaching SEL in schools will have a positive impact on students' academic achievement*		
General	4.70	1.25
ES	4.76	1.24
MS	4.57	1.28
HS	4.77	1.10

Table 7. Perceived Benefits of Teaching SEL—ANOVA

Item 4. Teaching SEL in schools will:	Df	F	P	η^2
4a: *Teaching SEL in schools will improve students' ability to identify and regulate emotions* Between Within	 2 126	.514	>.05	.01
Item 4b: *Teaching SEL in schools will improve students' ability to show empathy by taking the perspective of others* Between Within	` 2 126	.839	>.05	.003
Item 4c: *Teaching SEL in schools will improve relationships between students and teachers* Between Within	 2 126	.870	>.05	.002
Item 4d: *Teaching SEL in schools will improve relationships between students and peers* Between Within	 2 126	.493	>.05	.011
Item 4e: *Teaching SEL in schools will decrease bullying* Between Within	 2 126	.593	>.05	.008
Item 4f: *Teaching SEL in schools will decrease behavioral/conduct problems* Between Within	 2 126	.785	>.05	.004

Item 4g: *Teaching SEL in schools will improve students' ability to make constructive and respectful choices about behavior and social interactions*		.579	>.05	.009
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 4h: *Teaching SEL in schools will reduce students' emotional distress*		.516	>.05	.010
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 4i: *Teaching SEL in schools will have a positive impact on students' academic achievement*		.700	>.05	.006
Between	2			
Within	126			

Sub-Question 1C: What are K-12, Illinois Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Need of SEL?

Participants responded to five items regarding their perceptions of the need for providing SEL instruction to students. Items focused on different factors that may reveal one's perception of the necessity or lack of necessity to provide SEL instruction. Item 5 consisted of six statements evaluating the importance of providing SEL instruction in school. Item 6 consisted of five statements evaluating degree of importance placed on various methods of providing SEL instruction. Items 6 and 7 consisted of five items evaluating the perceived importance of different providers of SEL instruction. Finally, Item 8 consisted of five items evaluating perceptions of the importance of providing SEL instruction at various grade levels.

Item 5: Perceived Importance of SEL Instruction

Item 5 evaluated participants' level of agreement/disagreement to six statements regarding their perception of the importance of providing SEL instruction to students. Agreement was measured across a 7-point scale in which zero indicated that the participant *strongly*

disagreed, six indicated that the participant *strongly agreed*, and three indicated that the participant *neither agreed or disagreed*. Participants could select intermediate levels of agreement/disagreement in the following order: 1-*disgree, 2-somewhat disagree, 4-somewhat agree, 5-agree*. Descriptive and inferential statistics are depicted in tables 8-9. These tables show results across all participants (general) and between each grade level group (ES, MS, HS).

Across all participants, the average response to sub-items 5a-5c was slightly higher than 5.0, which indicated that participants *agreed* with the statement (range of means = 5.02 – 5.36). These statements were worded positively. The average response for sub-items 5d-5f (reverse scored) was slightly below 5 (range = 4.63 – 4.96). These sub-items were worded negatively but were reversed scored. When broken down by school level, some differences emerged. The average response of elementary school teachers was highest amongst all three school level groups for five of six sub-items (5a, 5b, 5c, 5e, 5f). The average response of middle school teachers was highest for one sub-item (5d) though it was only minimally higher than the average response of elementary school teachers for that sub-item (MS: M = 4.98, SD = 0.99; ES: M = 4.97, SD = 1.37). The average response of middle school teachers was higher than that of high school teachers in all but one sub-item (5a). In other words, the average response of high school teachers was the lowest of all three school level groups in all but one sub-item.

An ANOVA was conducted for each of the six sub-items under item 5 to evaluate the impact, if any, of school level on teachers' perceptions of the importance of providing SEL instruction to their students. Results of these analyses can be found in Table 9. The Shapiro-Wilks test was used to evaluate the distribution of responses within each group. Similar to previous items, responses from each group failed to meet the assumption of normality. Using

Levene's test, sub-items 5a-5c met the assumption of homogeneity of variances whereas sub-items 5d-5f did not. Variances across groups in each analysis met the assumption of homogeneity of variances. Differences between groups were found to be significant for only one sub-item (5d): *As a teacher, I do not need to teach social-emotional skills because my students learn these skills through other contexts* (Welch's (2, 77.727) = 3.345, p = .040). Although statistically significantly different, the effect size (η^2 =.055) was relatively small. Post-hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test indicated that the mean response for high school teachers was statistically different than the mean response of middle school teachers ($M_{differnce}$ = 1.05, CI [.36, 1.73], p = .001). There was no other statistically significant difference in mean responses.

Overall, these data indicate that teachers in this sample perceive provision of SEL instruction to their students as important. High school teachers appeared to be the most likely to de-emphasize this importance. However, a statistically significantly difference was found for only one sub-item.

Table 8. Perceived Importance of SEL Instruction—Descriptive Data

Item 5: Rate agreement/disagreement to the following statements	M	SD
Item 5a: *Social-emotional skills are important for student success in school and in life*		
General	5.36	1.00
ES	5.63	0.54
MS	5.23	1.20
HS	5.27	1.04
Item 5b: *It is important that I support the social-emotional development of my students*		
General	5.32	0.98
ES	5.61	0.55
MS	5.21	1.12
HS	5.18	1.06
Item 5c: *It is important that SEL is provided in schools*		
General	5.02	1.13
ES	5.32	0.90

MS	4.94	1.22
HS	4.84	1.18
Item 5d: *As a teacher, I do not need to teach social-emotional skills because my students learn these skills through other contexts*		
General	4.76	1.29
ES	4.97	1.37
MS	4.98	0.99
HS	4.34	1.41
Item 5e: *I do not need to teach social-emotional skills because it is not part of my job*		
General	4.96	1.28
ES	5.24	1.08
MS	5.09	1.04
HS	4.59	1.59
Item 5f: *As a teacher, my primary focus should be on academic skills and I should not devote instructional time to SEL*		
General	4.63	1.47
ES	5.00	1.23
MS	4.68	1.34
HS	4.25	1.71

Table 9. Perceived Importance of SEL Instruction—ANOVA

Item 5: Rate agreement/ disagreement to the following statements	Df	F	P	η^2
Item 5a: *Social-emotional skills are important for student success in school and in life*		1.972	>.05	.030
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 5b: *It is important that I support the social-emotional development of my students*		2.398	>.05	.037
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 5c: *It is important that SEL is provided in schools*		2.008	>.05	.031
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 5d: *As a teacher, I do not need to teach social-emotional skills because my students learn these skills through other contexts*		3.345	<.05 (.040)	.055
Between	2			
Within	126			

Item 5e: *I do not need to teach social-emotional skills because it is not part of my job* Between Within	 2 126	2.414	>.05	.046
Item 5f: *As a teacher, my primary focus should be on academic skills and I should not devote instructional time to SEL* Between Within	 2 126	2.630	>.05	.042

Item 6: Perceived Importance of SEL Instructional Methods

Item 6 consisted of five sub-items asking participants to rate the level of importance/unimportance of various methods by which SEL instruction can be provided. Importance was measured on a 7-point scale. A rating of zero indicated that the respondent found the statement to be *not at all important.* A rating of six indicated that the respondent found the statement to be *extremely important.* Participants could select five intermediate levels of importance in the following order: 1-*low importance, 2-slightly important, 3-neutral, 4-moderately important, 5-very important*. Descriptive and inferential statistics are depicted in tables 10-11. These tables show results across all participants (general) and between each grade level group (ES, MS, HS).

Across all participants (N = 129), there was some variability in the average response to each item. The lowest average response was to sub-item 6a (M = 2.94; SD = 1.48), which asked participants to rate the level of importance of providing SEL as its own subject. Average responses were somewhat higher for sub-items 6b (M = 3.38, SD = 1.44) and 6e (M = 3.58, SD 1.52). Both sub-items asked participants to rate statements about providing SEL instruction formally during the day. For example, sub-item 6b asked about the importance of explicitly providing SEL instruction using a formal curriculum. Sub-item 6e asked about the importance of

providing SEL instruction through a developmental scope and sequence like other subjects such as math, reading, or spelling. The highest average responses were for sub-items 6c (M = 4.29, SD = 1.21) and 6d (M = 4.44, SD = 1.15). These items stressed the importance of informally integrating SEL instruction throughout daily curriculum. For example, sub-item 6c asked participants to rate the importance of providing SEL instruction through informal curriculums (routines such as mood thermometer or morning/afternoon check-ins). Sub-item 6d asked participants to rate the importance of providing SEL instruction by integrating it into other subject areas.

When broken down by school level groups, differences emerged. The average responses of elementary teachers were higher than each of the other grade level groups on all five sub-items. The average responses of middle school teachers were higher than that of high school teachers in three of five sub-items (6a, 6b, and 6e) and was the same as those of high school teachers in one sub-item (6d). The average responses of high school teachers were higher than middle school teachers on only one sub-item (6c).

An ANOVA was conducted for each of the five sub-items under item 6 to evaluate the potential impact of school level on teachers' perceptions of the importance of various methods of providing SEL instruction to their students. Results of these analyses can be found in Table 11. The Shapiro-Wilks test was used to evaluate the distribution of responses within each group. Similar to previous items, responses from each group failed to meet the assumption of normality. Levene's test indicated that all five sub-items met the assumption for homogeneity of means. Across all five sub-items, differences between groups were not found to be significant.

Table 10. Perceived Importance of SEL Instructional Methods—Descriptive Data

Item 6: How important/unimportant is it to provide SEL instruction in the following ways	M	SD
Item 6a: *As its own subject during a specific time of the day*		
General	3.38	1.44
ES	3.61	1.10
MS	3.36	1.52
HS	3.20	1.59
Item 6b: *Through the use of formal curriculum that explicitly addresses SEL*		
General	3.38	1.44
ES	3.61	1.10
MS	3.36	1.52
HS	3.20	1.59
Item 6c: *Through informal routines, such as morning/afternoon check-in, mood thermometer, etc.*		
General	4.29	1.21
ES	4.61	0.95
MS	4.11	1.31
HS	4.23	1.29
Item 6d: *Through integration into other subject areas (i.e. English Language Arts, Social Studies, etc.)*		
General	4.44	1.15
ES	4.68	0.96
MS	4.34	1.17
HS	4.34	1.26
Item 6e: *Through a developmental scope and sequence just like any other subject (i.e. Reading, Math, Spelling)*		
General	3.58	1.52
ES	2.79	1.63
MS	3.53	1.41
HS	3.45	1.56

Table 11. Perceived Importance of SEL Instructional Methods—ANOVA

Item 6: How important/unimportant is it to provide SEL instruction in the following ways	Df	F	P	η^2
Item 6a: *As its own subject during a specific time of the day*		.533	>.05	.008
Between	2			
Within	126			

Item 6b: *Through the use of formal curriculum that explicitly addresses SEL* Between Within	 2 126	.959	>.05	.012
Item 6c: *Through informal routines, such as morning/afternoon check-in, mood thermometer, etc.* Between Within	 2 126	1.902	>.05	.029
Item 6d: *Through integration into other subject areas (i.e. English Language Arts, Social Studies, etc.)* Between Within	 2 126	1.211	>.05	.019
Item 6e: *Through a developmental scope and sequence just like any other subject (i.e. Reading, Math, Spelling)* Between Within	 2 126	.527	>.05	.008

Item 7-8: Perceived Importance of Instructional Provider

Items 7 and 8 both evaluated the level of importance that participants attribute to the person that actually provides SEL instruction to *their* students. Item 7 asked how important that the participant themselves provide this instruction. Item 8, which consisted of four sub-items, asked participants how important it is for the following staff members to provide SEL instruction: other teachers, clinical staff (e.g. social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, nurses), administrators, or outside agency. Importance was measured on a 7-point scale. A rating of zero indicated that the respondent found the statement to be *not at all important.* A rating of six indicated that the respondent found the statement to be *extremely important.* Participants could select five intermediate levels of importance in the following order: 1-*low importance, 2-slightly important, 3-neutral, 4-moderately important, 5-very important*.

Descriptive and inferential statistics are depicted in tables 12-13. These tables show results across all participants (general) and between each grade level group (ES, MS, HS).

Average responses across all participants indicated differences in the level of importance regarding who provides SEL instruction to their students. In general, teachers in this sample rated clinical staff such as school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, or school nurses (item 8b; M = 5.24, SD = 0.93) the highest. This average response equated to a rating between *very important* and *extremely important*. Average responses across the entire sample rated participants themselves (item 7; M = 4.58, SD = 1.38) and other teachers (item 8a; M = 4.52, SD = 1.34) between *moderately important* and *very important* as providers of SEL instruction. Average responses across the entire sample rated administrators (item 8c; M = 4.26, SD = 1.44) as slightly less important than teachers, though still between *moderately important* and *very important.* Outside agencies (item 8d; M = 3.53, SD = 1.68) were rated as least important of the educator groups identified in this item.

Differences emerged between school level groups regarding the importance of different types of educators in providing SEL instruction. The average response of elementary teachers was higher than the other two groups on item 7 (*Self*; M = 4.97, SD = 0.94) and item 8a (*other teachers; M* = 5.03, SD = 0.91). Both items reflect the importance of teachers in providing SEL instruction to their students. The average response of high school teachers was higher than the other two groups on item 8b (*School clinical staff;* M = 5.39, SD = 0.87). This item rates the importance of school clinical staff in providing SEL instruction to their students. The average response of middle school teachers was highest amongst the school levels for item 8c (*Administrators;* M = 4.47, SD = 1.28) and 8d (*outside agencies;* M = 3.70, SD = 1.57). Both of

these items rate the importance of administrators and outside agencies in providing SEL instruction to their students.

An ANOVA was conducted for item 7 and the four sub-items under item 8 to evaluate teachers' perceptions of the importance of various instructors in providing SEL instruction to their students. Results of these analyses can be found in Table 13. The Shapiro-Wilks test was used to evaluate the distribution of responses within each group. Similar to previous items, responses from each group failed to meet the assumption of normality. Using Levene's test, sub-items 8b-8d met the assumption of homogeneity of variances whereas item 7 and sub-item 8a did not. The one-way ANOVA of teachers' responses revealed statistically significant main effect on two items: 7, and 8a.

Item 7 provided the following statement: *How important/unimportant is it that* YOU *provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students*. Using Welch's F test, a statistically significant main effect was found amongst groups ((2, 81.513) = 4.118, p = .020). The effect size (η^2 =.071), fell in the medium range. Post-hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test indicated that the mean response for elementary school teachers was statistically higher than the mean response of high school ($M_{differnce}$ = .883, CI [.15, 1.62], p = .015). There was no other statistically significant difference in mean responses.

Sub-item 8a asked participants to respond to the following statement: *How important/ unimportant is it that other teachers provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students.* Welch's test resulted in a statistically significant main effect ((2, 82.729) = 7.137, p = .001). The effect size (η^2 =.095) fell in the medium range. Post-hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test indicated that the mean response for elementary school teachers was statistically higher than the

mean response of high school ($M_{differnce}$ = 1.026, CI [.37, 1.68]), p = .001). There was no other statistically significant difference in mean responses.

Overall, these data indicate that teachers in this sample generally see teachers and clinical staff—such as social workers, nurses, or school psychologist—as more appropriate providers of SEL instruction than administrators or outside collaborators. However, statistically different views emerged between elementary school and high school teachers about who is the *most* important provider of SEL instruction. Whereas elementary school teachers saw teachers, either themselves or others, as most important, high school teachers saw clinical staff as the most important providers of SEL instruction.

Table 12. Perceived Importance of Instructional Provider—Descriptive Data

Item 7/8. How important is it for the following educators to provide SEL instruction to ***YOUR*** students	M	SD
Item 7: *How important/unimportant is it that* YOU *provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students*		
General	4.58	1.38
ES	4.97	0.94
MS	4.72	1.16
HS	4.09	1.76
Item 8a: *How important/unimportant is it that other teachers provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students*		
General	4.52	1.34
ES	5.03	0.91
MS	4.60	1.30
HS	4.00	1.52
Item 8b: *How important/unimportant is it that school clinical staff (school psychologist, school social worker, counselor, nurse) provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students*		
General	5.24	0.93
ES	4.97	1.10
MS	5.32	0.78
HS	5.39	0.87
Item 8c: *How important/unimportant is it that administrators provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students*		
General	4.26	1.44
ES	4.42	1.37
MS	4.47	1.28

HS	3.89	1.62
Item 8d: *How important/unimportant is it that an outside agency provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students*		
General	3.53	1.68
ES	3.58	1.55
MS	3.70	1.57
HS	3.32	1.89

Table 13. Perceived Importance of Instructional Provider—ANOVA

Item 7/8. How important is it for the following educators to provide SEL instruction to ***YOUR*** students	Df	F	P	η^2
Item 7: *How important/ unimportant is it that* YOU *provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students*		4.118	<.05 (.020)	.071
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 8a: *How important/ unimportant is it that other teachers provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students*		7.137	<.05 (.001)	.095
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 8b: *How important/ unimportant is it that school clinical staff (school psychologist, school social worker, counselor, nurse) provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students*		.994	>.05	.036
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 8c: *How important/ unimportant is it that administrators provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students*		2.242	>.05	.034
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 8d: *How important/unimportant is it that an outside agency provide SEL instruction to* YOUR *students*		.610	>.05	.010
Between	2			
Within	126			

Item 9: Perceived Importance of SEL Instruction at Various School Levels

Item 9 evaluated the level importance that participants place on providing SEL instruction at different grade levels. This item consisted of five sub-items asking about the following levels: Preschool, Early Elementary (K-2), Late Elementary (3-5), Middle School (6-8), and High School (9-12). Importance was measured on a 7-point scale. A rating of zero indicated that the respondent found the statement to be *not at all important.* A rating of six indicated that the respondent found the statement to be *extremely important.* Participants could select five intermediate levels of importance in the following order: *low importance, slightly important, neutral, moderately important, very important*. Descriptive and inferential statistics are depicted in tables 14-15. These tables show results across all participants (general) and between each grade level group (ES, MS, HS).

Across all participants, average responses were relatively consistent across the first four sub-items. These ratings ranged from sub-item 8c: *middle school* (M = 5.14, SD = 0.94) to sub-item 8b: *early elementary* (M = 5.25, SD = 1.02). Average response across all participants was lowest regarding the final sub-item 8e: *high school* (M = 4.74, SD = 1.31).

When broken down by grade level group, further differences emerged. Generally, the average responses of high school teachers were relatively similar to those of elementary school teachers, with middle school teachers providing slightly lower average ratings than the other two groups. Responses from high school teachers were highest of the three groups for sub-item 8a: *pre-kindergarten* (M = 5.20, SD = 1.11), 8c: *late elementary* (M = 5.34, SD = 0.68), and 8d: *middle school* (M = 5.25, SD = 0.94). Whereas average responses from elementary teachers were

highest on sub-item 8b: *early elementary* (M = 5.36, SD = 0.94) and 8e: *high school* (M = 4.84, SD = 1.24).

An ANOVA was conducted for each of the five sub-items under item 9 to evaluate teachers' perceptions of the importance of providing SEL instruction at various school levels. Results of these analyses can be found in Table 15. The Shapiro-Wilks test was used to evaluate the distribution of responses within each group. Similar to previous items, responses from each group failed to meet the assumption of normality. Levene's test indicated that all five sub-items met the assumption for homogeneity of means. Across all five sub-items, differences between groups were not found to be significant.

Overall, teachers appear to see value in providing SEL instruction at each school level, though perceived value seems to be less at the high school level than younger grades.

Table 14. Perceived Importance of SEL Instruction Across Grades—Descriptive Data

Item 9. Please rate the importance of providing SEL instruction at the following grade levels	M	SD
Item 9a: *Preschool*		
General	5.16	1.14
ES	5.18	1.16
MS	5.09	1.16
HS	5.20	1.11
Item 9b: *Early Elementary (K-2)*		
General	5.25	1.02
ES	5.37	0.91
MS	5.04	1.16
HS	5.36	0.94
Item 9c: *late Elementary (3-5)*		
General	5.20	0.83
ES	5.16	0.92
MS	5.11	0.89
HS	5.34	0.68
Item 9d: *Middle School (6-8)*		
General	5.14	0.94
ES	5.05	0.96

MS	5.11	0.94
HS	5.25	0.94
Item 9e: *High School (9-12)*		
General	4.74	1.31
ES	4.89	1.20
MS	4.51	1.44
HS	4.84	1.24

Table 15. Perceived Importance of SEL Instruction Across Grades—ANOVA

Item 9. Please rate the importance of providing SEL instruction at the following grade levels	Df	F	P	η^2
Item 9a: *Preschool*		.142	>.05	.002
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 9b: *Early Elementary (K-2)*		1.503	>.05	.023
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 9c: *late Elementary (3-5)*		.975	>.05	.015
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 9d: *Middle School (6-8)*		.490	>.05	.008
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 9e: *High School (9-12)*		1.121	>.05	.017
Between	2			
Within	126			

Sub-Question 1D: What are K-12, Illinois Teachers' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy Regarding Their Ability to Provide SEL Instruction?

Participants responded to one item (Item 10) regarding perceptions related to their confidence and comfort of providing SEL instruction.

Item 10: Perceptions Regarding Self-Efficacy

Item 10 evaluated participants' level of agreement with five statements regarding their perception of self-efficacy to provide SEL instruction. Agreement was measured across a 7-point scale in which zero indicated that the participant *strongly disagreed*, six indicated that the

participant *strongly agreed*, and three indicated that the participant *neither agreed or disagreed*. Descriptive and inferential statistics for each sub-item are depicted in Table 16-17. These tables depict results across all participants (general) and between each grade level group (ES, MS, HS).

The average responses of participants across the entire sample did not vary to a great degree (range: 3.56 – 4.34). The average responses fell near or above *somewhat agree* on three sub-items. The highest average response was sub-item 10b (M = 4.34, SD = 1.47)—This sub-item reflected participant's perception of the degree to which they believe they naturally take care of students' social-emotional needs. Next highest was sub-item 10e (M = 4.16, SD = 1.50)—This sub-item indicated the participants' perception of their motivation to provide SEL instruction. The third highest sub-item was 10d (M = 4.09, SD = 1.51)—This sub-item indicated the participants' perception of their own social-emotional skills as it relates to their ability to provide SEL instruction. On two sub-items, the average response fell below the *somewhat agree* response. The lowest average response was on sub-item 10c (M = 3.56, SD = 1.65)—This sub-item reflected participants' perception of the degree to which they know enough about SEL to provide SEL instruction. The next lowest sub-item was 10a (M = 3.79, SD = 1.68)—This item reflected participants' perception of the degree to which they feel confident in their ability to provide SEL instruction.

When broken down by school level, differences emerged, particularly between average responses provided by high school teachers and the average responses provided by the other two school level groups. The average response of elementary school teachers was highest on four of the five sub-items (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d), with the average response of middle school teachers highest on the remaining sub-item (10e).

An ANOVA was conducted for each sub-item to evaluate teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and if that perception varied based on school level. Results of these analyses can be found in Table 17. As with all previous items, responses from each group failed to meet the assumption of normality as measured by the Shapiro-Wilkes test. Using Levene's test, all five sub-items failed to meet the assumption of homogeneity of variances. Thus, Welch's test was used to evaluate p-values.

A statistically significant difference was found on two sub-items: 10a and 10c. Sub-item 10a provided the following statement: *I feel confident in my ability to provide SEL instruction*— Welch's (2, 81.482) = 4.739, p = .011. The effect-size (η^2 =.082), fell into the medium range. Post-hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test indicated that the mean response for elementary school teachers was statistically higher than the mean response of high school teachers ($M_{differnce}$ = 1.127, CI [.25, 2.00], p = .008).

Sub-item 10c asked participants to respond to the following statement: *I know enough about SEL to teach it to my students.* Welch's (2, 82.207) = 4.781, p = .011. The effect size (η^2 =.037), fell in the low range. Post-hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test indicated that the mean response for elementary school teachers was statistically higher than the mean response of high school teachers ($M_{differnce}$ = 1.121, CI [.25, 1.91], p = .008).

Overall, these findings indicate that teachers perceive a degree of self-efficacy related to SEL instruction. However, this perception is impacted by whether or not they are responding to items related to their intuitive understanding of the importance of SEL (e.g. *Taking care of students' social emotional needs comes naturally to me*) or their understanding of SEL as a formal construct (e.g. *I feel confident in my ability to provide SEL instruction*). This difference

was most notable amongst high school teacher who provided responses regarding understanding of SEL and confidence to provide SEL instruction that were significantly lower than those of elementary school teachers.

Table 16. Perception of Self-Efficacy—Descriptive Data

Item 10. Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:	M	SD
Item 10a: *I feel confident in my ability to provide SEL instruction*		
General	3.79	1.68
ES	4.26	1.08
MS	4.02	1.45
HS	3.14	2.12
Item 10b: *Taking care of my students' social and emotional needs comes naturally to me*		
General	4.34	1.47
ES	4.61	1.00
MS	4.49	1.43
HS	3.95	1.78
Item 10c: *I know enough about SEL to teach it to my students*		
General	3.56	1.65
ES	4.05	1.31
MS	3.74	1.44
HS	2.93	1.95
Item 10d: *I feel I possess sufficient social-emotional skills to teach SEL to my students*		
General	4.09	1.51
ES	4.32	1.30
MS	4.21	1.32
HS	3.75	1.81
Item 10e: *I consider myself motivated to provide SEL instruction to my students*		
General	4.16	1.50
ES	4.24	1.20
MS	4.47	1.23
HS	3.77	1.89

Table 17. Perception of Self-Efficacy—ANOVA

Item 10. Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:	Df	F	P	η^2
Item 10a: *I feel confident in my ability to provide SEL instruction*		4.739	<.05 (.011)	.082
Between	2			
Within	126			

Item 10b: *Taking care of my students' social and emotional needs comes naturally to me* Between Within	 2 126	2.166	>.05	.037
Item 10c: *I know enough about SEL to teach it to my students* Between Within	 2 126	4.781	<.05 (.011)	.037
Item 10d: *I feel I possess sufficient social-emotional skills to teach SEL to my students* Between Within	 2 126	1.431	>.05	.027
Item 10e: *I consider myself motivated to provide SEL instruction to my students* Between Within	 2 126	2.122	>.05	.039

Sub-Question 1E: What Training Experiences Have K-12, Illinois Teachers Received Regarding SEL?

Items 11 through 17 explored the training experiences that participants received during pre-service training as well as through in-service training. Some items included skip logic, meaning not all participants responded to each of these items.

Item 11-13: Pre-Service Training

Items 11-13 evaluated participants' training around SEL instruction during their pre-service experience. Since it is possible that some participants did not receive pre-service training, item 11 acted as a screener for the two follow-up items. If a participant responded "yes" to item 11, he/she viewed items 12 and 13. If a participant responded "no" to item 11, he/she progressed to item 14 through skip logic. Item 12 evaluated how teachers received SEL training. Item 13 evaluated participants' perception of how adequately their pre-service program prepared them to

provide SEL instruction to their students. Descriptive statistics of results are provided in Table 18-20. Inferential statistics were not conducted due to limited sample sizes.

Across the sample, only 31 participants (24% of all participants) indicated that SEL was addressed during their pre-service training. Of these 31 participants, 9 were elementary school teachers (24% of all elementary teachers in the sample), 13 were middle school teachers (28% of all middle school teachers in the sample), and 9 were high school teachers (20% of all high school teachers in the sample).

Participants who indicated that they received pre-service training around SEL were asked to indicate through what means they received this instruction. They could select all applicable responses amongst 8 options, with the last option allowing for space to describe some other means. A total of 5 participants (3 elementary school, 2 middle school) indicated that SEL was addressed through an entire course. A total of 17 participants (4 ES, 8 MS, 5 HS) indicated that SEL was addressed through course lectures. Similarly, 17 participants (2 ES, 8MS, 7HS) indicated that SEL was addressed through assigned readings. Another 9 participants (2 ES, 6 MS, 1HS) indicated that SEL was addressed through assignments/projects. A total of 10 participants (2 ES, 4 MS, 4 HS) indicated that SEL was addressed through student teaching/field based work. No participants indicated that SEL was addressed through research experience. Only 2 participants (ES) indicated that SEL was addressed through other means (staff meetings, discussions).

The 31 participants who reported having received pre-service training were next asked to rate their perception of how adequately or inadequately their pre-service training prepared them to provide SEL instruction to their students. Adequacy was measured on a 7-point scale. A score

of zero indicated that the participant found his/her training to be *completely inadequate*. A score of 6 indicated that the participant found his/her training to be *completely adequate*. A score of 3 indicated a *neutral* response. Across the 31 participants, the average response fell between *neutral* and *somewhat* adequate (M = 3.55, SD = 1.15).

Table 18. Pre-Service Training—Screener

Item 11: *As best as you can recall, was SEL addressed during you* PRE-SERVICE *training?*	Yes	No
Total	31	98
ES	9	29
MS	13	34
HS	9	35

Table 19. Methods of Pre-Service Training

Item 12: *How was SEL addressed during your preservice training? (Select all that apply)*								
	Entire course(s)	Course lectures	Assigned readings	Assign-ments /project	Work-shops	Student teaching/ field-based experiences	Research experience	Other
General (N=31)	5	17	17	9	10	11	0	2
ES (N=9)	3	4	2	2	2	2	0	2
MS (N=13)	2	8	8	6	4	6	0	0
HS (N=9)	0	5	7	1	4	3	0	0

Table 20. Perceived Adequacy/Inadequacy of Pre-Service Training

Item 13: *How adequately or inadequately do you feel your pre-service training prepared you to provide SEL instruction to the students you serve?*	M	SD
General (N = 31)	3.55	1.15
ES (N = 9)	3.89	1.17
MS (N = 13)	3.46	0.97
HS (N = 9)	3.33	1.41

Item 14-16: In-Service Training

Items 14-16 evaluated participants' exposure to SEL-related training during in-service training. This training refers to professional development experiences that teachers receive while actively working as classroom teachers. Similar to the previous section regarding pre-service

experiences, participants were provided a screening item to determine if they would be asked items 15 and 16 or move directly to item 17. Descriptive data is provided in tables 21-23.

Across the entire sample, 59 participants (46% of entire sample) indicated that they have received in-service training on SEL. Of these, 20 were elementary school teachers (53% of all elementary school teachers in the sample). Another 20 participants were middle school teachers (43% of all middle school teachers in the sample). Finally, 19 participants were high school teachers (43% of all high school teachers in the sample).

Participants who indicated that they have received in-service training on SEL were next asked to indicate how they have received that training. Of the six available options to choose, the majority of this subgroup indicated that SEL was addressed through school sponsored, in-service training (N= 46; 14 ES, 14 MS, 18 HS). Slightly more than half (N = 32; 12 ES, 11 MS, 9 HS) indicated that SEL was addressed through workshops/seminars/didactics. Similarly, over half (N = 36; 12 ES, 12 MS, 12 HS) indicated that SEL was addressed through collaboration with colleagues, such as through a professional learning community. About a third (N =18; 4 ES, 6 MS, 8 HS) indicated that SEL was addressed through consultation/collaboration with an external agency or university. Slightly less than half (N = 26; 7 ES, 11 MS, 8 HS) indicated that SEL was addressed through their own personal reading/research. Only four respondents (1 ES, 2 MS, 1 HS) indicated that SEL was addressed in some other way, such as, training with school social worker, PBIS training, and co-worker led training.

The 59 participants who reported having received in-service training were next asked to rate how adequately or inadequately they felt that training has prepared them to provide SEL instruction to their students. Similar to before, adequacy was measured on a 7-point scale; A

score of zero indicated that the participant found his/her training to be *completely inadequate*, a score of 6 indicated that the participant found his/her training to be *completely adequate*, and a score of 3 indicated a *neutral* response. Across the 59 participants who reported that SEL has been addressed through in-service training, the average response fell slightly below the rating *somewhat adequate* (M = 3.93, SD = 1.39).

Table 21. In-Service Training—Screener

Item 14: *As best as you can recall, have you received* IN-SERVICE *training regarding SEL?*	Yes	No
General	59	70
ES	20	109
MS	20	109
HS	19	110

Table 22. Methods of Pre-service Training

Item 15: *How has SEL been addressed through your in-service training? (Select all that apply)*	School sponsored in-service training	Workshops /Seminars/ Didactics	Collaboration with Colleagues	Consultation/ collaboration with an external agency or university	Personal reading/ research	Other
General (N=59)	46	32	36	18	26	4
ES (N = 20)	14	12	12	4	7	1
MS (N = 20)	14	11	12	6	11	2
HS (N = 19)	18	9	12	8	8	1

Table 23. Perceived Adequacy/Inadequacy of In-Service Training

Item 16: *How adequately or inadequately do you feel your pre-service training prepared you to provide SEL instruction to the students you serve?*	M	SD
General (N = 59)	3.93	1.39
ES (N = 20)	4.25	1.12
MS (N = 19)	3.95	1.39
HS (N = 20)	3.58	1.61

Item 17: Overall Satisfaction of Training

Whether or not participants were exposed to SEL during pre-service or in-service training, all participants (N = 129) were asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction regarding their current level of training to provide SEL instruction. Satisfaction was rated on a 7-point

scale. As before, a score of zero indicated a response of *completely dissatisfied.* A score of 6 indicated a response of *completely satisfied.* A score of 3 indicated a *neutral* response.

Across the entire sample, the average response was slightly more than *neutral* (M = 3.15, SD = 1.48). When broken down by school level the average response of elementary school teachers was highest (M = 3.50, SD = 1.43), followed by middle school teachers (M = 3.09, SD – 1.35) and high school teachers (M = 2.91, SD = 2.91, SD = 1.63).

An ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the impact of school level on teachers' satisfaction with training. Results of this analysis can be found in Table 25. Based on the Shapiro-Wilks test, responses from each group failed to meet the assumption of normality. Levene's test indicated that responses to item 17 did meet the assumption for homogeneity of means. Differences between school level groups were not found to be significant.

Table 24. Overall Perception of Training Adequacy—Descriptive Data

Item 17: *Please rate your overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding your current level of training related to SEL?*	M	SD
General (N = 129)	3.15	1.48
ES (N = 20)	3.50	1.43
MS (N = 19)	3.09	1.35
HS (N = 20)	2.91	1.63

Table 25. Overall Perception of Training Adequacy—ANOVA

Item 17: *Please rate your overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding your current level of training related to SEL?*	Df	F	P	η^2
Between Within	2 126	1.710	>.05	.026

Sub-Question 1F: To What Degree Do K-12, Illinois Teachers Experience a Culture of Support Regarding SEL within Their School?

Participants responded to one item (Item 18) regarding perceptions of school culture related to SEL. This item consisted of multiple sub-items.

Item 18: Perceptions Regarding Culture of Support

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement towards five statements regarding the degree to which they perceive a culture of support related to SEL in their school. For each of these five sub-items, agreement was measured on a 7-point scale in which zero indicated that the participant *strongly disagreed* and six indicated that the participant *strongly agreed*. Intermediate ratings indicated increasing degrees of agreement (1-*disagree; 2-somewhat disagree; 3-neither agreed or disagreed; 4-somewhat agree; 5-agree*). Descriptive and inferential statistics for each sub-item are depicted in Table 26-27. These tables depict results across all participants (general) and between each grade level group (ES, MS, HS).

Across the entire sample, the average response to four of the five sub-items (18a, 18b, 18c, 18d) fell at or slightly above *somewhat agree*. The average response of these sub-items ranged from sub-item 18b (M = 4.00, SD = 1.34) at the lowest, to 18a (M = 4.29, SD = 1.35) at the highest. These sub-items each addressed specific statements about how SEL is supported in schools. Item 18e, on the other hand, was a more general statement regarding how SEL is supported in schools: *my school places the right amount of attention on SEL.* This average response on this item (M = 3.40, SD = 1.61) was the lowest amongst the five sub-items in this section.

As has been seen across other items, differences emerged based on school level. The average response of elementary school teachers was highest on each of the five sub-items. Likewise, the average response of high school teachers was lowest on each of the five sub-items, with the average response of middle school teachers falling in the middle.

An ANOVA was conducted for each sub-item under item 18 to evaluate the impact of school level on the degree to which teachers perceive a culture of support related to SEL instruction in their schools. Results of these analyses can be found in Table 27. The Shapiro-Wilks test was used to evaluate the distribution of responses within each group. As with all previous items, responses from each group failed to meet the assumption of normality. Additionally, based on Levene's test, each sub-item failed to meet the assumption of homogeneity of variances. Thus, Welch's test was used to evaluate p-values, the results of which found statistically significant main effect for each of the five sub-items.

Sub-item 18a (Welch's (2, 82.421) = 18.520, $p < .001$) provided the following statement: *My school expects teachers to address children's' social-emotional development.* The effect-size ($\eta^2 = .221$), fell into the high range. Post-hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test indicated multiple interactions. The mean response for elementary school teachers was statistically significantly higher than that of middle school teachers ($M_{differnce} = .648$, CI [.12, 1.27], $p = .012$) as well as that of high school teachers ($M_{differnce} = 1.553$, CI [.94, 21.57], $p < .000$). Additionally, the mean response for middle school teachers was significantly higher than that of high school teachers ($M_{differnce} = .904$, CI [.24, 1.57], $p = .005$).

Sub-item 18b (Welch's (2, 82.421) = 18.520, $p < .001$), provided the following statement: *Teachers in my school actively address children's social-emotional development.* The effect-size

(η^2 =.167), fell into the high range. Post-hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test indicated multiple interactions. The mean response for elementary school teachers was statistically significantly higher than that of middle school teachers ($M_{differnce}$ = .668, CI [.13, 1.20], p = .011) as well as that of high school teachers ($M_{differnce}$ = 1.370, CI [.67, 2.07], p < .000). Additionally, the mean response for middle school teachers was significantly higher than that of high school teachers ($M_{differnce}$ = .702, CI [.04, 1.36], p = .035).

Sub-item 18c (Welch's (2, 82.309) = 15.127, p < .001) provided the following statement: *My principal encourages the teaching of social-emotional skills to students.* The effect-size (η^2 =.202) fell into the high range. Post-hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test indicated multiple interactions. The mean response for elementary school teachers was statistically significantly different than that of high school teachers ($M_{differnce}$ = 1.739, CI [.98, 2.50], p < .001). Similarly, the mean response of middle school teachers was statistically significantly different from that of high school teachers ($M_{differnce}$ = 1.159, CI [.37, 1.95], p = .002). The difference between Elementary school teachers and middle school teachers ($M_{differnce}$ = 0.580) was not statistically significant.

Sub-item 18d (Welch's (2, 5.18) = 82.721, p < .001, η^2 =.202) provided the following statement: *The culture of my school supports the development of children's social-emotional development.* Post-hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test indicated that the mean response of elementary school teachers was statistically significantly different that of high school teachers ($M_{differnce}$ = .859, CI [.15, 1.57], p = .013). Differences in means between remaining groups were not found to be statistically significant.

Finally, sub-item 18e (Welch's (2, 82.561) = 5.001, p = .009, η^2 =.066) provided the following statement: *My school places the right amount of attention on SEL.* Post-hoc comparisons using the Games-Howell test indicated that the mean response of elementary school teachers was statistically significantly different than that of high school teachers ($M_{differnce}$ = 1.023, CI [.18, 1.86], p = .013). Mean difference amongst other groups were not found to be statistically significant.

Overall these data indicate that teachers in this sample perceive a culture of support related to providing SEL instruction, but this perception varies significantly depending on school level. High school teachers report a perception of support that is significantly lower than that of other levels. Whereas, elementary school teachers report the highest perception of support.

Table 26. Perception of a Culture of Support around SEL Instruction—Descriptive Data

Item 18. Please rate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements	M	SD
Item 18a: *My school expects teachers to address children's' social-emotional development*		
General	4.29	1.35
ES	5.05	0.84
MS	4.40	1.19
HS	3.50	1.45
Item 18b: *Teachers in my school actively address children's social-emotional development*		
General	4.00	1.34
ES	4.71	1.06
MS	4.04	0.98
HS	3.34	1.57
Item 18c: *My principal encourages the teaching of social-emotional skills to students*		
General	4.12	1.59
ES	4.92	1.02
MS	4.34	1.34
HS	3.18	1.78
Item 18d: *The culture of my school supports the development of children's social-emotional development*		
General	4.12	1.38
ES	4.63	1.02
MS	4.04	1.27

HS	3.77	1.63
Item 18e: *My school places the right amount of attention on SEL*		
General	3.40	1.61
ES	4.00	1.25
MS	3.32	1.45
HS	2.98	1.90

Table 27. Perception of a Culture of Support Around SEL Instruction—ANOVA

Item 18. Please rate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements	Df	F	P	η^2
Item 18a: *My school expects teachers to address children's' social-emotional development*		18.520	<.001	.216
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 18b: *Teachers in my school actively address children's social-emotional development*		11.316	<.001	.167
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 18c: *My principal encourages the teaching of social-emotional skills to students*		15.127	<.001	.202
Between	2			
Within	126			
Item 18d: *The culture of my school supports the development of children's social-emotional development*		82.721	<.001	.064
Between				
Within	2			
	126			
Item 18e: *My school places the right amount of attention on SEL*		5.001	<.05 (.009)	.066
Between	2			
Within	126			

Sub-question 1G: What Experiences Have K-12, Illinois Teachers Had Providing SEL Instruction?

Several items evaluated the actual experience that participants have had providing SEL instruction. Some items included skip logic, meaning not all participants responded to each of these items.

Item 19: Past Experiences Providing SEL Instruction

Participants were first asked to indicate if they had ever provided SEL instruction of any kind to their students. Of the sample of 129 participants, 96 (74% of entire sample) indicated that they had provided SEL instruction to their students. Of these, 35 were elementary school teachers (92% of all elementary school teachers in sample), 38 were middle school teachers (81% of all middle school teachers in sample), and 23 were high school teachers (52% of all high school teachers sampled).

Table 28. Past experiences providing SEL Instruction

Item 19: *Have you ever provided SEL instruction of any kind to your students?*	Yes	No
General (129)	96	33
ES (N = 38)	35	3
MS (N = 47)	38	9
HS (N = 44)	23	21

Item 20: Satisfaction with Past Experiences of Providing SEL Instruction

The 96 participants who indicated that they have provided SEL instruction in some form to their students were asked to rate their overall satisfaction regarding the impact of that instruction on their students. Satisfaction was measured on a 5-point scale. A score of zero indicated that the participant responded that he/she was *not at all satisfied.* Scores of a one

through four indicated responses of increasing levels of satisfaction: 1 = *slightly satisfied*; 2 = *moderately satisfied*; 3 = *very satisfied*; 4 = *extremely satisfied.*

The average response of the 96 participants with experience providing SEL in some form fell slightly above *moderate* satisfaction (M = 2.11, SD = 0.88). The average response from high school teachers was the highest amongst the three school levels (M = 2.29, SD = 0.69), slightly higher than the average response of elementary school teachers (M = 2.23, SD = 0.94). Middle school teachers, on average, reported the lowest level of satisfaction amongst the three school levels (M = 1.89, SD = 0.89). Overall, these data indicate that teachers in this sample have found their experience providing SEL instruction to only be moderately satisfying.

Table 29. Satisfaction with SEL instruction—Descriptive Data

Item 20: *In general, how satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with the impact of SEL instruction on your students?*	M	SD
General (N = 96)	2.11	0.88
ES (N = 35)	2.23	0.94
MS (N = 38)	1.89	0.89
HS (N = 23)	2.29	0.69

Item 21-23: Current Experience Providing SEL Instruction

Whereas items 19-20 asked about teachers' past experiences providing SEL instruction, items 21-23 asked about teachers' current experience providing SEL instruction. All participants in the sample (N = 129) were given a brief definition of the term *formal SEL program* with several well-known examples identified. Participants were then asked to indicate if their students currently receive SEL instruction through *any* formal SEL program. Only 46 participants (36% of entire sample) indicated that their students currently receive instruction through a formal SEL program. Of these 46 participants, 23 were elementary school teachers (61% of all elementary teachers in the sample), 17 were middles school teachers (36% of all middle school teachers in

the sample), and only 6 were high school teachers (14% of all high school teachers in the sample).

These 46 participants were asked to name any formal SEL program currently being used with their students, if they knew the name of that program. All but three of these participants (N = 43) identified at least one formal SEL program currently provided to their students. A total of five participants identified more than one formal SEL program in use. Table 30 depicts the frequency of the 12 formal SEL programs that were identified across each school level.

Table 30. Formal SEL Programs Identified

Item 22. *What is the name of that program(s)?*	ES	MS	HS
Second Step	14	10	1
Positive Behavioral Interventions and supports (PBIS)	1		1
Lion's Quest	3		
Zones of Regulation	4	4	1
Connections (teacher created)	1		
CSI		1	
BIST		1	
CHAMPS		1	
Capturing Kids Hearts		1	
Social Thinking			1
School Tools TV		2	
Formation Program			2

In addition to naming the formal SEL program in use, these participants were asked to indicate who provides this curriculum by selecting one of four statements that best describes by whom SEL instruction is provided to their students. Of the 46 respondents, 24 of them responded *I am the primary instructor of this formal SEL program*. Another 6 participants responded *I provide instruction with the assistance of a co-teacher*. Another 7 participants responded *Another staff member is the primary instructor but I help.* Finally, 9 participants responded *I take minimal or no part in providing SEL instruction through this program*.

Table 31. Who Provides Formal SEL Instruction to My Students

Item 23. *Which of the following best describes who provides SEL instruction to **YOUR** students through this formal program*	Frequency
I am the primary instructor of this formal SEL program	24
I provide instruction with the assistance of a co-teacher	6
Another staff member is the primary instructor but I help	7
I take minimal or no part in providing SEL instruction through this program	9

Item 24: Informal SEL Practices

Recognizing that formal SEL programs are not the only means by which teachers provide SEL instruction, participants were asked if they provide SEL instruction through informal means. Of the total sample, 79 participants (61% of total sample) responded *yes*. Of these 79 participants, 34 were elementary school teachers (89% of all elementary teachers in the sample), 26 were middle school teachers (55% of all middle school teachers in the sample), and 19 were high school teachers (43% of all high school teachers in the sample).

Item 25: Informal Practices—Qualitative Response

Many teachers engage in SEL practices throughout the day, whether or not they use a formal program to provide SEL instruction. To gain insight into these practices, participants were asked to briefly describe any informal means through which they might provide SEL instruction to their students. Responding to this statement was optional and a total of 77 participants responded. Of these, 33 were elementary school teachers (87% of all elementary teachers in the sample), 25 were middle school teachers (53% of all middle school teachers in the sample), and 19 were high school teachers (43% of all high school teachers in the sample). Qualitative analysis was conducted as described previously in which themes were identified and responses categorized. Table 32 summarizes the results of this categorization. Three primary themes emerged through this process: responses related to teacher demeanor and relationship

building, responses related to interventions provided, and responses related to broader school systems.

Table 32. Coded Themes of Participants' Use of Informal SEL Practices

Theme/Sub-Theme		Definition
Teacher Demeanor/Relationship-Building		Statements referencing practices focused on the teachers' role in promoting social-emotional skills by engaging students and developing positive relationships.
Interventions		Statements referencing any specific technique/strategy used to support social-emotional development.
	Planned: Individual-Focused	Reference to any intervention specifically planned into the day to target an individual student's social-emotional needs. May be directed towards family or support network of the student.
	Planned: Group-Focused	Reference to any intervention specifically planned into the day to target the needs of a group of students (small group or whole-class).
	Planned: General	Reference to any planned intervention described generally without specifying if targeted towards individual students or groups.
	Unplanned	Reference to any intervention provided in response to an unplanned issue/event that comes up during the course of the day.
Broader Systems Practice		Statements describing SEL practices that are incorporated into broader school initiatives (e.g. PBIS) or a statement describing support services available at the school-wide level.

Teacher demeanor/relationship building. The first primary theme that emerged involved statements regarding teachers' role in promoting social-emotional growth by engaging students and developing positive relationships. A total of 11 respondents included statements that fit this theme. Several respondents described how they engage students by showing an active

interest in them. For example, one elementary school teacher stated “I take an active role in the lives of my students. I ask about their homes lives, activities in other classes, etc.” Another elementary school teacher stated that he/she will “informally ask students ‘How are you doing today? What is wrong? Tell me something good about today.’" Other respondents described ways that they engage students more generally through statements such as “building relationships” and “emotional support.” Several respondents described characteristics of their everyday demeanor with students, such as being “positive and inviting,” and engaging in “open communication with students.” Multiple respondents described ways that they greet students during the day and acknowledge their feelings.

Interventions. The second primary theme that emerged involved statements regarding specific interventions used to support social-emotional skills. Almost all respondents (N = 72) provided statements that fit this theme. The types of interventions that respondents described were sub categorized as those intentionally built into the day (planned) and those provided in response to issue/event that comes up during the day (unplanned).

Responses describing planned interventions fell in one of three categories: individually-focused interventions, group-focused interventions, and general interventions. Individually-focused interventions included statements that specifically referenced planned strategies/techniques used to support individual student needs. A common individually-focused intervention cited was Check-In/Check-out—a well-defined intervention used by schools to purposively engage students and monitor behavioral goals through short interactions with a trusted adult. Other strategies described were individual skill boosters, 1-1 coaching, private discussions/meetings/conferences, and individual feedback and reflection. One respondent

described meeting with the family of certain students. One respondent described the use of anxiety/depression scales.

Group-focused interventions included statements that specifically referenced planned strategies/techniques used to support a group or class of students. Common responses described group/class discussions, social skills groups, and group check-ins. These interventions were often described as being built into existing structures of the day such as class read aloud or literature groups, morning meetings, and advisory. Several respondents referenced formal SEL programs that they try to incorporate/generalize throughout the day. *Second Step* was mentioned more than once. Two other programs were mentioned that were not previously identified in the survey: *Rough Spots* and *Tools for Triumph*.

Many of the responses describing planned interventions did not indicate if it was individually or group targeted. Many of these interventions were described in general terms as strategies/techniques that are incorporated throughout the day as needed. Many of these responses described broad practices such as discussions focused on empathy, problem solving, and discipline. These responses also included reference to teaching strategies such as modeling, using positive reinforcement, journaling, and watching videos. Statements that were more specific described peace circles/restorative justice practices, spiritual relaxation meditation, and emotions thermometer. One respondent described the use of the physical space to support social-emotional needs through what he/she called the "kindness corner."

Finally, a number of respondents described informal interventions that are unplanned and take advantage of events/issues that arise in the moment to support social-emotional development. Most commonly, these respondents described opportunities found during "natural

teaching moments." One respondent described this as "intervening during conflict," while another described it as "discussing applicable situations." Other respondents described checking in with students "as needed," for example if a student seemed to be struggling to manage emotions.

Broader systems practices. The third primary theme involved statements referencing broader systems used to support social-emotional development at the school-level. A total of 21 respondents provided statements that fit this theme. Several responses referenced practices that are part of specific school-wide initiatives. For example, one elementary school teacher responded to the prompt by simply stated "Through the PBIS program." Other respondents referenced teaming structures used to promote SEL instruction, such as one respondent who worked with the grade-level team to incorporate SEL into the ELA and Social Studies curriculum. A handful of respondents at the middle and high school levels indicated that SEL instruction is expected to be addressed as part of an advisory program provided to all students. A couple respondents identified their settings as restorative justice schools, indicating that informal SEL instruction is built into their school identity.

A few respondents referenced support services available at their school to support social-emotional needs. For example, one high school respondent mentioned that students can be referred to a "student assistance program." Another high school respondent stated, "We collaborate as a Support Services Dept. to design formal and informal access for students and to support our teachers with SEL integration in the classroom." A middle school respondent explained that he/she may make a referral to a school counselor.

Question 2: What is Illinois Teachers' Familiarity with and Use of the Illinois SEL Standards?

Whereas as question 1 focused on the provider capacity of Illinois teachers to provide SEL instruction, this second question focused on their familiarity with and use of the Illinois SEL Standards to inform instruction. This question was addressed through three sub-questions, which looked at teachers' familiarity with the standards, their use of the standards to inform lesson planning, and their use of the standards to inform assessment.

Sub-Question 2A: To What Degree Are Teachers' Familiar with the Illinois SEL Standards?

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze participants' familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards. Participants were first asked to rate their level of familiarity with the standards (Item 26). Familiarity was further evaluated through open-ended question in which those with at least a slight familiarity with the standards were provided the option of briefly describing their experience with the standards (Item 36). Those with at least some familiarity were asked to report any training experiences (items 28-29). Finally, all participants were asked to indicate their desire to learn more about the Illinois SEL Standards (Item 27/37).

Item 26: Familiarity with SEL Standards

Similar to item 2 in which participants were asked to rate their level of familiarity with the term SEL, participants were asked to rate their level of familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards on a 5-point scale. A score of zero indicated that the participant was *not at all familiar.* A score of four indicated that the participant was *extremely familiar*. Intermediate ratings indicated varying degrees of familiarity (1: *slightly familiar;* 2: *somewhat familiar;* 3:

moderately familiar). Participants who indicated that they were *not at all familiar* jumped to item 37 through skip logic because the intermediate items would not have been relevant to their experience.

Across the entire sample, the average response fell just above *slightly familiar* (M = 1.19, SD = 1.20). The majority of respondents, (N= 74, 57%) indicated that they had at least some familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards; i.e. they were at least *slightly familiar.* This means that 55 participants (43%) indicated that they were *not at all familiar* with the Illinois SEL Standards.

Differences emerged based on school level, particularly between the average response of high school teachers and the average responses of elementary and middle school teachers. Consistent with other items in this survey, the average response of elementary school teachers was highest of the three groups (M = 1.47, SD = 1.22), followed by middle school teachers (M = 1.30, SD = 1.12), and high school teachers (M = 0.82, SD = 1.21).

An ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the impact of school level on the level of familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards. The Shapiro-Wilks test indicated that group responses were not normal. Levene's test indicated that variances were homogeneous. Results of the ANOVA indicated a main effect amongst groups $F(2, 126) = 3.470$, $p = .034$, $\eta^2 = .052$. Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey's test found that the mean response of elementary teachers was statistically significantly higher than that of high school teachers ($M_{differnce} = .656$, CI [.04, 1.28], $p = .036$). No other difference between group means were found to be significantly different.

These data indicate that, overall, more than half of teachers in this sample have at least a slight familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards, though with variability based on school level. On average, High school teachers reported significantly lower level of familiarity than elementary school teachers. Nearly half of the total sample reported no familiarity with the standards, with a majority of these respondents being high school teachers.

Table 33. Familiarity with the IL SEL Standards—Descriptive

26. *How familiar are you with the Illinois SEL Standards?*	M	SD	0: *Not at all familiar*	1: *Slightly familiar*	2: *Somewhat familiar*	3: *Moderately familiar*	4: *Extremely familiar*
General	1.19	1.20	55 (43%)	21 (16%)	29 (22%)	22 (17%)	2 (2%)
ES	1.47	1.22	12 (32%)	6 (16%)	11 (29%)	8 (21%)	1 (3%)
MS	1.30	1.12	16 (34%)	9 (19%)	14 (30%)	8 (17%)	0 (0%)
HS	0.82	1.21	27 (61%)	6 (14%)	4 (9%)	6 (14%)	1 (2%)

Table 34. Familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards—ANOVA

Item 6. *How familiar are you with the Illinois SEL Standards?*	Df	F	P	η^2
Between Within	2 126	3.470	<.05 (.034)	.052

Item 36: Familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards (Qualitative Response)

To provide greater context regarding participants' level of familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards, participants were asked to briefly describe their experience with the standards. Responding to this statement was optional and a total of 62 participants responded (48% of entire sample). Of these responses, 23 came from elementary school teachers (61% of all elementary school teachers in the sample), 25 came from middle school teachers (53% of all middle school teachers in the sample), and 14 came from high school teachers (32% of all high school teachers in the sample). Qualitative analysis was conducted as described previously in which themes were identified and statements categorized. Table 35 describes the results of this categorization. Five primary themes emerged through this process: statements regarding familiarity and/or experience

with the standards; statements regarding use of the standards in the planning or provision of instruction; statements regarding the use of the standards to inform accommodations/modifications to address individual student needs; statements regarding the usefulness or benefit of the standards; and statements referencing another tool or framework.

Table 35. Coded Themes of Participants' Familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards

Theme	Definition
Statement of Familiarity	A direct statement describing the level of familiarity with the IL SEL Standards
Planning/Instruction	A statement describing use of the IL SEL Standards in the planning or provision of instruction
Accommodations/Modifications	A statement describing use of the IL SEL Standards to address specific needs of individual students
Usefulness/Impact	A statement regarding the degree to which the respondent finds the IL SEL Standards useful or beneficial
Connection to Another Tool/Framework	A specific reference to another relevant tool or framework

Statement of familiarity or experience. The first primary theme involved statements referencing the respondent's familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards. A total of 34 respondents provided statements that fit this theme. This familiarity ranged across three general categories: minimal or no familiarity, some familiarity, and substantive familiarity. Despite this range in familiarity, the majority of these respondents (N = 23) indicated they had minimal to no familiarity with the standards. Many spoke quite directly of their lack of familiarity. Some examples include the following: "I don't have any experiences"; "Minimal"; "none"; "I do not use the standards." Other respondents spoke of a minimal awareness of the standards. The following responses express this sentiment:

> I know we have them as they align to our 2nd Step curriculum, but that is it.
> Just aware that we are supposed to address them in advisory.
> I have looked through them at institute days when our counselor and administrators went over them with us. Other than that I have not spent much time referring to them.

Not all respondents described such minimal familiarity with the standards. A few (N= 8) described more than a minimal amount of exposure, indicating that they have at least occasionally used the standards (e.g. "I use them somewhat"), or have read through the standards at least a few times (e.g. "I know they exist. I have read the high school standards somewhat carefully.") A small few (N = 3) indicated that they have substantive familiarity with the standards. Examples can be seen in the following quotes:

> I'm familiar with the middle school SEL standards, however, my student needs utilize the lower grade level standards—we teach where my students are at.
> I have been exposed to the standards and am aware of them. I use them as a touch stone to see where students should be at.

Planning/instruction. The second primary theme that emerged involved statements describing the use of the Illinois SEL Standards in the planning and/or provision of instruction. A total of 19 respondents provided statements that fit this theme. Many of these responses involved statements describing use of the standards while planning SEL lessons. For example, one respondent explained that his/her weekly SEL lesson "aligns" directly with the standards, while another explained that he/she uses the standards as a "primary resource" when developing SEL objectives. One respondent who does not get the opportunity to devote time to an SEL lesson regularly, explained that he/she still attempts to "reference" the standards. Another respondent explained, "I don't put them in my lesson plans, but I integrate them throughout the lessons as I teach them." A small number of respondents stated that the standards inform their use of specific instructional strategies/approaches (e.g. restorative circles, social groups).

Rather than describing the use of the standards in the development of individual lessons, some respondents described the standards as benchmarks used to gauge student's social-emotional progress. For example, one respondent stated, "I have used them as a touch stone to

see where students should be in their social and emotional development," while another respondent stated, "We use the standards as a means of getting an idea of what type of skills need to be taught." Another sub-set of responses focused on the use of the standards to drive curriculum planning and program development. For example, one respondent stated that his/her school used the standards to select a SEL curriculum. Another respondent explained that his/her school used the SEL standards when embedding SEL instruction into the ELA curriculum. Some respondents indicated that the SEL standards help inform school-wide initiatives, such as the following respondent who described the use of the standards to develop a PBIS program:

> We use the SEL Standards in the development and implementation of our behavior matrix and during our SEL implementation day.

Accommodation/modification. A third primary theme involved statements describing the use of the Illinois SEL standards to address specific needs of individual students. A total of 9 respondents provided statements that fit this theme. Most of these statements described using the standards to develop, work towards, and monitor IEP goals. These actions were described as a collaborative effort with other staff members (e.g. school social workers). Several respondents indicated that they have used the standards when considering the needs of non-IEP students as well. One respondent described specific needs that he/she targets, "Use of impulse control and stress and self-management during test taking or doing assignments."

Usefulness/impact. A fourth primary theme involved statements referencing the perceived usefulness or impact of the standards. A total of 6 respondents provided statements that fit this theme. A small number of respondents described a positive impact, as seen in the following response:

> It has changed the dynamic in my classroom to one of more social awareness. In addition, it has reduced problem behaviors because I am teaching the appropriate social skills and emotion regulation.

Other respondents described the standards in a more negative light. For example, one respondent explained that they "are a bit difficult to understand sometimes," while another explained that are "too formal." One respondent described the standards as "well written but difficult to access."

Connection to another framework or tool. The fifth primary theme involved statements in which the respondent made a connection to another tool or framework when describing his/her familiarity/experience with the Illinois SEL Standards. A total of 8 respondents provided statements that fit this theme. Examples included a framework to guide instructional planning (*Universal Design for Learning*), a framework of problem solving skills (*Habits of Mind*), and multiple references to a specific SEL curriculum (*Second Step*).

Item 28-29: Training Experience Regarding the Illinois SEL Standards

The 74 participants who indicated that they were at least *slightly familiar* with the Illinois SEL Standards were asked if they have ever received training regarding the standards. Those that responded *yes* were then asked to indicate how they received that training: through pre-service/graduate school experience, through in-service training, through some other form of training.

Of the 74 participants who viewed this item, only 21 (16% of total sample) indicated that they had received training regarding the Illinois SEL standards. Of these 21 participants, only 8 (6% of total sample) indicated that they received training through pre-service/graduate school experience. A majority of these 21 participants (N = 17, 13% of total sample) indicated that they received training through in-service experiences. Two participants indicated other means by

which they gained training experience regarding the Illinois SEL Standards. One participant explained that he/she received training regarding the Illinois SEL Standards through support developed by his/her principal. Another participant explained that he/she received training regarding the standards while developing an SEL based program for the private school at which he/she worked.

Table 36. Training Experiences Regarding the Illinois SEL Standards

Item 28: *Have you received training regarding the Illinois SEL Standards?*	Yes	No
Total (N=74)	21	53
ES (N = 26)	4	22
MS (N = 31)	10	21
HS (N = 17)	7	10
Item 29: *How have you received training regarding the Illinois SEL Standards (Select all that apply)*		
Pre-service/graduate school experiences	8	---
In-service experiences	17	---
Other	2	---

Item 27/37: Desire for More Information Regarding the Illinois SEL Standards

All participants (N = 129) were asked if they would like to learn more about the Illinois SEL Standards. Participants could respond in one of four ways: *No, not interested*; *Neutral*; *Yes, somewhat interested*; *Yes, very interested*. The majority of participants indicated that they were somewhat interested (N = 70, 54% of total sample) in learning more. Similar numbers of participants responded as being *very interested* (M = 21, 16% of total sample) or *neutral* (M = 28, 22% of total sample). A small number of participants responded that they were not interested in learning more about the standards (M =10, 8%).

Table 37. Interest in learning more about the IL SEL Standards

Item 27/37: *Would you be interested in learning more about the Illinois SEL Standards?*	No, not interested	Neutral	Yes, somewhat interested	Yes, very interested
General (N =129)	10	28	70	21
ES (N = 38)	3	6	24	5
MS (N = 47	4	11	25	7
HS (N = 44)	3	11	21	9

Sub-Question 2B: To What Degree and How Often Do the Illinois SEL Standards Play a Role in the Lesson Planning of Teachers?

The 74 participants who indicated at least some familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards were asked a series of questions evaluating the degree to which they apply the standards when *planning lessons*. First, participants were asked to indicate if they have ever used the standards to inform lesson planning (Item 30). Participants who responded *yes* to this item were asked to respond to two follow-up items regarding their perception of usefulness of these standards when planning lessons (item 31), and the frequency that they use the standards when planning lessons (Item 32). Participants who responded *no* to the initial item in this series progressed to the next section through skip logic as the follow-up items would not be relevant to them.

Item 30: Screener

Of the 74 participants who indicated at least some familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards, only 24 responded that they have used the standards to inform lesson planning. This sub-group represents 32% of the portion of the sample that has at least a slight familiarity with the standards and 29% of the total sample. Of these 24, nine were elementary teachers (24% of all ES teachers in sample), eight were middles school teachers (17% of all MS teachers in sample), and seven were high school teachers (16% of all HS teachers in sample).

Item 31: Usefulness

These 24 respondents were asked to rate the level of usefulness of the standards when lesson planning. Usefulness was measured on a 5-point scale. A score of zero indicated that the participant responded that he/she found the standards *not at all useful*. A score of 4 indicated that the participant found the standards to be *extremely useful.* Other scores represented intermediate perceptions of usefulness (1: *slightly useful*; 2: *moderately useful*; 3: *very useful*). The average response of this group fell slightly below *moderately useful* (M = 1.92, SD = 0.78).

Item 32: Frequency

In addition to measuring usefulness, these 24 participants were asked to rate how frequently they use the Illinois SEL Standards for lesson planning. Frequency was measured on a 5-point scale. A score of zero indicated that the respondent *never* uses the standards for lesson planning. A score of four indicated that the respondent *always* uses the standards when lesson planning. Intermediate scores included the following: 1: *rarely*; 2: *sometimes*; 3: *often*. The average response of these 24 participants fell between *sometimes* and *often* (M = 2.42, SD = 0.72).

Table 38. Use of IL SEL Standards to Inform Planning—Descriptive Data

Item 30: *Do you use the Illinois SEL Standards to inform your* lesson planning*?*	Yes	No
Total (N = 74)	24	50
ES (N = 26)	9	17
MS (N = 31)	8	23
HS (N = 17)	7	10
Item 31: *How useful or not useful do you find the Illinois SEL Standards when* planning lessons?	M	SD
Total (N =24)	1.92	0.78
Item 32: *How often, if at all, do you consider the Illinois SEL Standards when* planning lessons?	M	SD
Total (N =24)	2.42	0.72

Sub-Question 2C: To What Degree and How Often Do the Illinois SEL Standards Play a Role in the Assessment Practices of Teachers?

The 74 participants who indicated at least some familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards were next asked a series of questions evaluating the degree to which they apply the standards to their *assessment* practices. Similar to the series of items regarding use of the standards to inform lesson planning (items 30-32), participants were asked to respond if they have ever used the standards to inform their assessment practices (item 33). If they responded *yes*, they were then asked to respond to two follow-up items regarding perceived usefulness of the standards in relation to assessment (item 34), as well as the frequency that they used the standards (item 35).

Item 33: Screener

Of the 74 participants who indicated at least some familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards, only 18 responded that they have used the standards to inform assessment practices. This sub-group represents 24% of the portion of the sample that has at least a slight familiarity with the standards and only 14% of the total sample. Of these 18 participants, five were elementary teachers (13% of all ES teachers in sample), five were middles school teachers (11% of all MS teachers in sample), and 8 were high school teachers (18% of all HS teachers in sample).

Item 34: Usefulness

These 18 respondents were asked to rate how useful they found the standards to be when informing assessment practices. Usefulness was measured on the same 5-point scale as described

for item 31. The average response of this group fell slightly above *moderately useful* (M = 2.06, SD = 0.73).

Item 35: Frequency

The frequency at which these participants use the standards to inform assessment practices was measured on a 5-point scale in the same manner as the previously described regarding item 32. The average response of these 18 participants fell between *sometimes* and *often* (M = 2.56, SD = 0.51).

Table 39. Use of IL SEL Standards to Inform Assessment—Descriptive Data

Item 33: *Do you use the Illinois SEL Standards to inform your* assessment *practices?*	Yes	No
Total (N = 74)	18	56
ES (N = 26)	5	21
MS (N = 31)	5	26
HS (N = 17)	8	9
Item 34: *How useful or not useful do you find the Illinois SEL Standards to be in your* assessment *practices?*	M	SD
Total (N =18)	2.06	0.73
Item 35: *How often, if at all, do you consider the Illinois SEL Standards when developing* assessments?	M	SD
Total (N =18)	2.56	0.51

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The present study aimed to gain greater insight into Illinois teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding SEL instruction as well as their familiarity with and use of the Illinois SEL Standards. To better understand how this insight may impact the ability to implement SEL initiatives and provide SEL instruction in school, the T-CapSEL was framed using the conceptual framework of professional capacity as defined by Durlak and Dupree (2008). This chapter will focus on a discussion of the findings, followed by a discussion of implications, limitations, and future directions. In the discussion of findings, this section will focus first on how findings relate to the broad aims of the study, followed by more narrow discussion on how the findings relate to each factor of professional capacity.

General Findings

There were three primary aims of this study: 1) evaluate the degree to which Illinois teachers possess the professional capacity around SEL to facilitate social-emotional outcomes for students, 2) evaluate the degree to which this professional capacity may differ based on school level, and 3) evaluate the degree to which teachers are familiar with and make use of the Illinois SEL Standards.

Professional Capacity to Provide SEL Instruction

Few, if any, studies have attempted to evaluate the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of teachers regarding SEL through the conceptual framework of professional capacity. By framing the research questions as an investigation of professional capacity, this study aimed to gain insight into multiple components that impact teachers' ability to successfully provide SEL instruction and implement SEL initiatives.

In general, the teachers in this sample demonstrated strengths and weaknesses regarding their professional capacity related to SEL. Strengths can be seen in the relatively high perception regarding the benefit and need for SEL in schools. Teachers across each school level recognized SEL as beneficial and important for students. Relative weaknesses were reflected through perception of skill proficiency and self-efficacy. Teachers reported having had few opportunities to receive formal training around SEL. They also reported limited experiences providing SEL instruction. Although reporting motivation to provide SEL instruction, these teachers indicated limited confidence/comfort in providing it to students. Some areas of overall weakness differed based on school level. For example, elementary school teachers reported higher levels of familiarity and culture of support compared to teachers working at older levels.

Insight into the relative strengths and weaknesses regarding teacher capacity to provide SEL instruction builds upon previous surveys that have investigated teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs around SEL. The largest of these studies (Civic Enterprises et al., 2013) reported that teachers across the country and at all school levels "endorse and value" SEL. It also reported that teachers believe that SEL promotes positive life trajectories. These conclusions relate to the present findings that teachers demonstrate high perception of benefit and need for

SEL in schools. However, the present findings suggest that CASEL's report may present an overly positive picture of teachers' readiness to provide SEL instruction, as it failed to capture concerns regarding teachers' limited preparation and experience of actually providing SEL instruction. In other words, recognizing that SEL is beneficial and important does not necessarily mean that teachers possess the capacity to confidently and effectively provide SEL instruction.

The overall weaknesses demonstrated by teachers in this sample reflect a limited degree of familiarity with the underlying theory of SEL as well as limited experience providing evidence-based instruction to support the social-emotional needs of students. On the other hand, the strengths demonstrated by teachers in this sample reflect an intuitive understanding that SEL plays an important role in the overall educational development of their students. Certainly, many teachers actively support social-emotional outcomes through a variety of practices, whether they realize they are promoting SEL or not. However, these actions are limited by the degree to which one's intuitive awareness of SEL supports the full range of learning encompassed by SEL.

The preliminary findings of this study are important for schools/districts to consider when building the necessary supports to effectively implement SEL initiatives. The intuitive awareness that many teachers possess regarding SEL can be built upon through training that supports a greater familiarity with SEL as a formal construct that is informed by best practices. Just as Buchanan et al. (2009) found that teachers are open to receiving further support regarding effective provision of SEL instruction, the present study suggests that teachers are motivated to directly support the social-emotional development of students if given opportunities to develop confidence and comfort around SEL instruction.

Professional Capacity Regarding SEL Across School Levels

In their report titled *The Missing Piece* (Civic Enterprises et al., 2013), CASEL reported that teachers across all school levels display consistent endorsement of the benefits and importance of SEL. The present study found similar findings regarding teachers' perception of benefit and need. However, across many items on the T-CapSEL, high school teachers consistently endorsed items at a lower level than teachers at other levels. These results suggest that the professional capacity of high school teachers to provide SEL instruction is limited relative to the capacity of teachers at lower grade levels.

Unlike previous surveys, the T-CapSEL framed its evaluation through the conceptual framework of professional capacity, which placed greater emphasis on a variety of factors contributing to teachers' perceptions regarding their ability to provide SEL instruction. The findings of the present study suggest that although teachers in general need to develop greater familiarity with and comfort providing SEL instruction, this is particularly true for teachers working with high school students. A number of factors may contribute to this difference, several of which will be discussed later. When navigating the barriers to systems change, advocates hoping to promote SEL initiatives should take into consideration the differing levels of capacity that teachers may possess at various school levels.

Familiarity with the IL SEL Standards

The findings of this study found that teachers at all levels possess limited familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards and report minimal use of these standards to guide instruction. Some exceptions to this emerged. Based on qualitative response, teachers working with students in

special education reported a greater likelihood of having used the standards to develop social-emotional goals as part of students' IEP.

Despite the development of the Illinois SEL Standards in 2004 as the first stand-alone SEL standards in the country, little evidence has emerged regarding their use to guide SEL instruction or evaluate social-emotional outcomes. This study suggests that the standards may have not been promoted effectively enough to result in wide-scale use by teachers throughout the state or across school levels.

Skill Proficiency

The first factor in Durlak and Dupre's (2008) framework is skill-proficiency—the skills and experience necessary to implement and maintain an innovation. In the context of this study, skill proficiency refers to teachers' familiarity with SEL, general knowledge regarding SEL, training related to SEL, experience providing SEL instruction, and culture of support around SEL within school communities.

Familiarity

Teachers' broad familiarity with SEL and SEL instruction was evaluated through early items in the T-CapSEL. Generally speaking, teachers in this sample reported that they perceive themselves to fall between *somewhat familiar* and *moderately familiar* regarding the construct of SEL. However, there were statistically significant differences in familiarity based on school level. On average, high school teachers reported lower familiarity than other groups. This difference was further reflected by the percentage of teachers who opted to respond to the open-ended prompt asking them to describe their experience with SEL instruction. Whereas 95% of

elementary school teachers and 87% percent of middle school teachers chose to respond, only 70% of high school teachers chose to respond.

Although over three-fourths of all participants (N = 100; 77.5%) indicated that they feel at least *somewhat familiar* with the term SEL, a significant number of teachers (N =29; 22.5%) indicated that they have only *slight familiarity* or *no familiarity*. This response was particularly prominent amongst high school teachers. A total of 38% of all high school teachers in the sample reported this limited level of familiarity, a notable percentage when compared to only 18% of middle school teachers and 10% of elementary school teachers who reported the same level of limited familiarity. When responding to the open-ended prompt, over 10 respondents, all of whom were middle or high school teachers, directly stated that they essentially had no familiarity with SEL instruction (e.g. "I know nothing about instruction, only heard the phrase at Special Ed. meetings about student IEPs"). These findings suggest that teachers at younger school levels feel a greater sense of familiarity with SEL than teachers at older levels. The current study is limited in inferring as to why the difference in familiarity exists across school levels. Further research is needed to explore why this difference exists. One possible factor may have to do with the greater availability of SEL curricula at younger levels. In recent years, CASEL published consumer guides meant to identify effective SEL programs. Using a rigorous set of criteria, the Preschool and Elementary Edition (CASEL, 2012) identified 7 programs at the pre-school level and 19 at the elementary (K-5) level. On the other hand, the Middle and High School Edition (CASEL, 2015a) only identified 10 programs for both levels combined.

Another possible factor explaining the difference in familiarity across school levels may have to do with differences in instructional expectations/responsibilities that exist at each level.

Whereas it is relatively common to find kindergarten teachers who expect to address SEL as an integrated component of the kindergarten experience, it becomes less and less of an expectation with each passing grade (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010), even though students maintain a maturing need to develop social-emotional competence (Association for Middle Level Education, 2010). With differences in expectations comes differences in time and other resources that are committed to SEL instruction. At younger grades, students, by and large, spend the majority of their day with a single teacher who is expected to demonstrate relatively broad content knowledge across several subject areas. This leaves ample opportunity for classroom teachers to provide SEL instruction. Middle and high school teachers, on the other hand, generally work within departmentalized models in which they are seen as specialists in their respective content areas (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010). This sense of specialization is, in part, promoted through district/state policies requiring teachers, particularly at middle and high school levels, to possess content-specific endorsements. Of the 6 elementary level endorsements, 27 middle school level endorsements, and 37 high school level endorsements offered in the state of Illinois, none address SEL instruction (Illinois State Board of Education, 2016). This suggests that SEL is not yet valued as its own content area. In a system that promotes specialization, the lack of an endorsement regarding the provision of SEL instruction leaves a void as to who feels responsible for providing that instruction.

Despite the tendency to promote specialization at older school levels, it may be important that SEL is not necessarily perceived as a specialty in the same way that other content-specific areas are seen. Although research suggests that social-emotional competency is best provided through direct, formal instruction (Durlak, et al., 2011; Kress & Elias, 2006; Zins, et al., 2004),

SEL instruction should be viewed as an integrated component of learning that is infused throughout the school experience (Domitrovich, et al., 2010; Jones & Bouffard, 2012). In this way, SEL instruction should be viewed in a similar fashion as literacy instruction. Just as all teachers, no matter their content specialty, emphasize literacy skills to some degree, all teachers should view the promotion of social-emotional competency as falling within their responsibility as well. The findings of this study suggest that teachers' may have varying perceptions regarding their responsibility to provide SEL instruction. This responsibility tends to be de-emphasized as students get older. As long as educators' role in supporting social emotional competency is minimized, efforts to successfully implement formal SEL programming will be limited.

General Knowledge

In addition to providing insight into teachers' general familiarity with SEL, early items of the T-CapSEL provided insight into aspects of their general knowledge of SEL instruction as well. The primary themes emerging from open-ended responses indicated a level of understanding regarding SEL instruction that varied across participants.

As described in Chapter 2, SEL instruction can be viewed as consisting of two primary components: the provision of explicit instruction promoting five inter-related competencies, and the establishment of learning structures that foster a safe and caring school environment. Although nearly a quarter of all participants (N = 31; 24%) articulated specific competencies/skills when describing what they know about SEL, only a small fraction of participants (N = 3; 2.3%) articulated the role of the environment. This result suggests that teachers in this sample are more likely to associate SEL with specific skills than to the overall learning environment.

Response patterns to the open-ended prompts revealed an understanding of SEL instruction by many teachers that could be described as more intuitive-based than theory-based. For instance, although responses describing competencies/skills were easily placed within one of the five established competencies, only a very limited number of responses describing competencies/skills actually used the terminology promoted by CASEL. Further, of the 31 respondents who included competency-based statements, all but 11 included two or fewer of the five competencies. Through their own terminology, these respondents recognized a relationship between certain skills and SEL/social-emotional growth. However, as the competencies are inter-connected, the value of explicitly addressing each competency is an important way to ensure that students develop a balanced skill set and achieve the positive outcomes associated with effective SEL instruction (Durlak et al., 2011; Zins et al., 2004).

Effective teachers likely develop an intuitive understanding of important aspects of social-emotional growth through their experience of working in schools, and, perhaps, through their own social-emotional competency. However, without a strong foundation of the underlying theory of SEL, teachers run the risk of limiting the effectiveness of their efforts to support social-emotional growth in their students. For example, one might insufficiently address the full range of skills needed for students to develop social-emotional competency. Respondents in this sample were nearly twice as likely to describe self-management as an important component of SEL, reflecting the importance that these teachers place on students' ability to cope with their emotions and engage in appropriate behaviors. Certain competencies, such as self-management, are often expressed in a more external fashion than other competencies (e.g. self-awareness). This may make the externally expressed competency as more salient to teachers who are than

more likely to address it, perhaps at the expense of other, less salient components of social-emotional competency.

Another way that teachers' may limit themselves by merely possessing an intuitive understanding of SEL is by insufficiently addressing the skills within a given competency. For example, when describing self-management, participants overwhelmingly focused on coping with negatively valanced emotions (e.g. anger, frustration, sadness), overlooking the importance of being able to manage the wide range of emotions that are a natural part of the human experience.

Pre-Service Training

Just under a quarter of teachers in this sample reported that they received SEL-specific training during their pre-service, teacher preparation programs. When asked about the degree to which they found this training adequate, average response fell only slightly above *neutral.* Because teachers in this sample reported having worked, on average, 14 years, participants' pre-service training represents a range of experiences that may not necessarily reflect current training trends. Nonetheless, these findings indicate that the training that many Illinois teachers received regarding SEL at the pre-service level was minimal.

Despite the growing efforts within the field of education to take a more preventative approach to supporting SEL, teacher preparation programs have an inconsistent record in preparing teachers to provide SEL instruction. Specifically looking at training programs in Illinois, Fleming and Bay (2004) found that teacher preparation programs struggled to incorporate courses and field-based experiences focused on SEL. They found this gap to exist despite ample opportunities within the then current NCATE-aligned *Illinois Professional*

Teaching Standards to promote SEL training. Since their study was published, accreditation standards have changed as well as the emphasis provided within teacher preparation programs to prepare candidates for changing expectations of those entering the field. For example, the Council for Accreditation for Educator Preparation (CAEP) was developed in 2010 to establish a national set of standards governing the preparation of teachers (CAEP, 2015). However, further study is necessary to better understand the degree to which teacher preparation programs currently prepare teacher candidates to address students' social-emotional needs. CASEL recently commissioned a report sub-titled: *A National Scan of Teacher Preparation and Social and Emotional Learning* (Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, and Hanson-Peterson, 2017) to do just that. In this report, researchers reviewed the content of state certification requirements and coursework found in over 600 teacher preparation programs throughout the country. The report found that although many pre-service programs promote the social-emotional growth of teachers, little attention is given to the promotion of SEL instruction directed at students. Given the findings from current Illinois teachers in the present study, schools/districts planning to promote SEL initiatives must recognize that many teachers are not likely to have developed strong foundational knowledge regarding best practices related to SEL.

In-Service Training

When asked about in-service training, nearly half of the teachers in this sample reported having received some form of training during their professional careers. Respondents reported multiple means through which they received this training, most commonly citing school-sponsored professional development, workshops, collaboration with colleagues, and personal

research. On average, these respondents rated their sense of adequacy regarding this training as slightly higher than in-service training: *somewhat adequate*.

As schools/districts continue to develop preventative programming related to SEL, teachers are likely to receive some form of SEL training. This training is particularly important if teachers lack pre-service exposure to SEL. Nonetheless, the 46% of participants in this sample reporting that they have received some form of in-service training represents a relatively small percentage of teachers in a state that has mandated the provision of SEL instruction within the framework of the Illinois SEL Standards for over a decade and a half. Although further study is needed to gain greater insight into how schools/districts support the professional growth of teachers around SEL instruction, the current findings suggests that many practicing teachers have received limited training around SEL and the provision of SEL instruction.

Culture of Support

Durlak and Dupre (2008) describe their framework as an ecological model of implementation capacity, meaning that the capacity to implement an innovation is impacted by factors across multiple levels within an organization. In their model, capacity is not only impacted by the systems through which the innovation is *delivered* but the systems that *support* that delivery as well. Culture of support is impacted by a variety of factors and provides an indication of the overall commitment of a community to an innovation (Bracket, et al., 2011). In addition to reflecting the capacity of teachers to provide SEL instruction, culture of support reflects the organizational capacity of schools to support that instruction, which can greatly impact teachers' capacity to implement SEL instruction. In general, teachers in this sample reported that they perceive some degree of support towards SEL at their school. However,

significant differences emerged based on school level. Across each of the five sub-items addressing perceived culture of support, the average response from high school teachers was significantly lower than that of elementary and middle school teachers, falling only slightly above *neutral*. This was the strongest difference to emerge on the T-CapSEL from this sample of teachers, demonstrating a clear difference in how the culture of schools at different levels provide a sense of support related to SEL. Putting this in context with findings discussed previously, not only do high school teachers report lower levels of familiarity and training opportunities related to SEL, they also report a lower degree of cultural support. Although unclear from this study, these factors likely interact. In some high schools, the result of this interaction may produce a diminished level of commitment to addressing students' social-emotional needs through SEL instruction, impacting the degree to which SEL initiatives are implemented and maintained at this level.

Experience Providing Formal SEL Instruction.

Another area of the T-CapSEL that addressed skill proficiency focused on teachers' experience providing SEL instruction. Participants were provided a definition of formal SEL instruction with several examples of well-known programs. When asked if they had ever provided SEL instruction in the past using a formal SEL program, nearly three-fourths of participants (N = 96; 74%) reported that they had. This included nearly every elementary school teacher (N = 35; 92%) and a significant majority of middle school teachers (N = 38; 81%). A notably lower percentage of high school teachers (N = 23; 52%) reported having provided formal SEL instruction in the past. As has been discussed previously, factors related to instructional expectations and availability of evidence-based programs may contribute to this difference.

The participants who had provided SEL instruction generally reported a *moderate* level of satisfaction regarding their experience. Interestingly, high school teachers amongst this group reported a slightly higher level of satisfaction than elementary and middle school teachers. Although the small sample size makes it difficult to draw strong conclusions, this is a surprising result given the consistent pattern of high school teachers reporting lower responses than the other sub-groups on items throughout the T-CapSEL. A possible explanation may be that given the limited culture of support, those high school teachers who do find the opportunity to provide formal SEL programs feel greater appreciation for the effect on students. Further study is needed to gain greater insight into the experience of teachers at all school levels when providing formal SEL programs to give greater context to these findings.

Whereas a majority of participants reported having provided formal SEL instruction in the past, only 36% (N 46) of participants reported that they currently provide such instruction. The majority of these respondents were elementary school teachers. It is unclear why there was such a drop in current instructional experience when compared to past instructional experience, especially given the moderate level of satisfaction that respondents reported regarding their past experiences. Further study is needed to gain a better understanding of current SEL practices in Illinois schools.

Teachers reporting that they do currently provide formal SEL instruction to students identified a total of 12 programs. The program *Second Step* emerged as the clear favorite amongst this sample of teachers, cited 25 times by teachers at all school levels. The next most cited program was *Zones of Regulation* which was identified by 9 teachers. The remaining 10 programs were cited no more than 3 times each. Though it is fair enough to consider each of

these programs as part of a school's formal approach to providing SEL instruction as they address components that overlap with SEL, some are not technically SEL programs/curricula. For example, PBIS (cited twice) is a school-wide approach to teaching and reinforcing desired behavior throughout the school (Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010). Behavior Intervention Support Teams (BIST; Boulden, 2010) is another school-wide approach to addressing discipline in a positive, measured fashion with the goal of reducing punitive consequences such as suspension and expulsion. Although these programs incorporate components of SEL by promoting social-emotional growth through a positive, safe school environment, they are not technically formal SEL programs as they do not explicitly teach SEL through a developmentally scoped and sequenced curriculum. Nonetheless, this indicates that a number of schools are attempting to address social-emotional needs of students through school-wide initiatives focused on school climate. Future study should evaluate the degree to which various types of school-wide programs fit into a district's SEL plan as mandated through the 2003 Illinois Children's Mental Health Act, and the degree to which schools/districts balance school-wide initiatives with explicit instruction.

It would be further valuable to learn more about how schools/districts select programs into which they invest. *Second Step* and *Lions Quest* are both identified as effective SEL-specific programs in CASEL's *Guide of Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs* (CASEL 2013; CASEL; 2015a). However, no other programs identified by teachers in this sample met the criteria of CASEL's review. Certainly, there are plenty of formal SEL programs not identified in the CASEL guides that provide appropriate fit for certain schools. However, the limited amount

of research into many of these programs limits the consumer power of schools/districts to make informed decisions regarding SEL curricula.

Experience Providing Informal SEL Instruction

When asked about informal SEL practices, 61% of the sample (N = 79) reported that they currently provide SEL instruction through informal means. Almost all elementary school teachers (N = 34; 89%) reported that they provide SEL instruction informally while only slightly more than half of middle school teachers (N = 26; 55%) and slightly less than half of high school teachers (N = 19; 43%) reported that they do so. As will be discussed shortly (see discussion on perception of need), teachers at all levels report that providing SEL instruction through informal needs is important. However, when directly asked to describe such practices, only a slight majority of middle school teachers and a slight minority of high school teachers actually reported that they provide such instruction.

Open-ended responses to a prompt asking participants to describe informal SEL practices provided greater insight into how teachers provide informal SEL instruction. These responses revealed that teachers provide SEL instruction through various interventions that are both planned and unplanned. Many of these respondents indicated that they address students' social-emotional needs through their demeanor and by building relationships. Others recognized the role of broader school systems. These responses indicate that SEL instruction is provided through a variety of means that can be incorporated throughout the school experience.

Informal SEL instruction is difficult to define and capture through a self-report survey. Given that a definition of informal SEL instruction was not provided as part of the T-CapSEL, it should be noted that participants may have under-reported the degree to which they provide

informal SEL instruction. Some teachers, especially if they have limited familiarity regarding SEL, may not realize the extent to which they support students' social-emotional growth through informal instructional means. For example, some teachers may model social-emotional competency or promote competency through certain learning activities (e.g. morning/afternoon check-ins, mood thermometer). Others may engage in certain practices that intentionally strengthen relationships with students (e.g. morning greetings). Even if one were to assume that a greater percentage of teachers engage in informal SEL practices than was reported in this survey, these findings suggest a lack of awareness on the part of some teachers regarding the degree to which they promote SEL instruction in their classrooms. No matter the case, further study is needed to better understand the nature of informal SEL practices and the degree to which teachers across grade levels engage in such practices.

Informal practices provide a valuable complement to formal SEL programs as they offer opportunities to generalize learning and integrate social-emotional skills throughout the learning experience. Given the pressures faced by educators to emphasize academic skills at the expense of social-emotional skills (Durlak et al., 2011; Humphrey, 2013; Zins, et al., 2004) informal practices provide an opportune way to support social-emotional outcomes despite these pressures. Just as it is important for formal instructional approaches to be guided by evidence-based interventions, informal approaches to supporting social-emotional growth should be informed by best practice. Such approaches can and should be taught to teachers as an expected part of effective pedagogy. This belief was evident from several directors of teacher preparation programs who were interviewed as part of the *National Scan of Teacher Preparation and Social & Emotional Learning* (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). For example, one program instructs

teacher candidates to promote students' ability to engage in positive self-talk when faced with a difficult academic or social situations. Another program instructs teacher candidates to use morning greetings to assess students' readiness to learn.

Perceptions of Benefit

The next factor in Durlak and Dupre's (2008) framework of provider capacity is perception of benefit regarding an innovation. In the context of the present study, this refers to teachers' perception that SEL instruction carries benefit for their students. Much attention in recent years has been devoted to the expanding awareness of the link between SEL and a number of positive student outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011; Zins et al., 2004). Further, past surveys have consistently reported that teachers recognize the connection between development of social-emotional skills and positive life trajectories (Civic Enterprises et al., 2013) and that teachers perceive SEL instruction as socially valid to the needs of their students (Buchanan, et al., 2009). This growing awareness of the benefit of SEL may be connected to the increasingly effective dissemination of research by organizations such as CASEL.

Given this background, it is not surprising that the results of the present study found that teachers in this sample perceive SEL instruction as beneficial to their students. This perception was consistent across multiple sub-items measuring various academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes. This perception was also consistent across school level, indicating that teachers in this sample, no matter the level at which they teach, perceive SEL instruction as valuable for their students. This sentiment was reflected by a number of responses to the open-ended prompt asking participants to describe what they know about SEL. These responses identified a link between SEL instruction and various academic, behavioral, and life outcomes,

reflecting a clear recognition that student learning results from the various inter-related factors of human functioning.

Perceptions of Need

Perception of need regarding an innovation is the next factor in Durlak and Dupre's (2008) framework of provider capacity. In the context of this study, this refers to the perception that SEL instruction is a valuable and important aspect of students' educational experience. Findings related to this factor addressed the importance of SEL instruction at various grade levels, importance of instructional method, and importance of instructional provider.

Importance of SEL at Various Grade Levels

Consistent across each sub-group, participants in this study perceived SEL instruction as important for their students. They further reported a perception that SEL instruction is important to students across all grade levels. Although still recognizing it as important, participants across sub-groups reported lower level of importance of SEL instruction at the high school level. CASEL's definition clearly describes SEL as a process through which "children and adults" develop and demonstrate social emotional competency (CASEL, 2015b). When provided such a definition, many teachers are likely to acknowledge that students in high school need support developing skills related to their social-emotional competency just like students of any other age. Nonetheless, teachers in this sample rated SEL instruction as less important for high school students. If they have been exposed to examples of SEL instruction, many teachers are likely to have been exposed to a great many more examples at the pre-secondary level. As discussed previously, there are fewer validated formal SEL programs designed for use at the high school level (CASEL 2013; CASEL; 2015a). This may unconsciously bias some to think that SEL

instruction is less important at the high school level when, in fact, SEL instruction is less commonly provided through formal approaches.

Importance of Instructional Method

Participants in this sample generally reported that various instructional methods were important to promote social-emotional development. However, there was a striking difference based on the degree of formality through which instruction is provided. Whereas some statements in the T-CapSEL prompted participants to rate the importance of providing SEL instruction formally (e.g. as its own subject during a specific time of day; through use of formal curriculum explicitly addressing SEL), other statements prompted participants to rate the importance of less formal means of instruction (e.g. through integration into other subject areas; through informal practices/routines). Consistent across sub-groups, teachers in this sample attributed greater importance to the latter set of items (less formal methods) compared to the former set of items (formal methods).

This indicates that although teachers in this sample seem to recognize the importance of providing SEL instruction, they may be less committed to more formal means of providing such instruction. It is unclear why this may be. As described in earlier chapters, SEL advocates argue that SEL instruction should be complex and developmentally sequenced, provided through direct explicit instruction, and provided through engaging teaching techniques (Kress & Elias, 2006). However, teachers have varied experiences with actually providing SEL instruction, and they may be limited in their exposure to exemplars of developmentally scoped and sequenced instruction focused on social-emotional development. Additionally, teachers are continually being pressured by external forces to account for academic gains—pressure that often leaves

little opportunity for instruction geared towards SEL (Durlak et al., 2011; Humphrey, 2013; Zins, et al., 2004). Given such pressures, teachers' preference towards informal methods of instruction may reflect a conscious or unconscious flexibility to address student needs through means that seem most appropriate to them.

Importance of Instructional Provider

Results from this survey indicate that the person providing SEL instruction is perceived as important. Specifically, teachers in this sample rated clinical staff (e.g. school social workers, school psychologists) and teachers as the most important providers of SEL instruction with much less importance given to administrators and outside providers. The staff members seen as most important was affected by the school level of the participant. Whereas elementary school teachers saw themselves or other teachers as the most important providers of SEL instruction, high school teachers saw clinical staff as the most important. This finding may reflect the nature of teacher responsibilities at each level. Due to environmental structures (e.g.. departmentalized instruction), many teachers at higher grade levels may see themselves as unable to provide isolated SEL instruction, or they may see themselves as unqualified compared to staff who specialize in mental health. As was discussed previously, high school teachers reported a lower level of overall familiarity with SEL than elementary school teachers, meaning they may be less aware of the degree to which they can effectively provide direct SEL instruction to their students through a variety of formal and informal means. Further, they may be unaware of the potential degree that they already engage in SEL practices.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the final factor in Durlak and Dupre's (2008) model of provider capacity. In the context of this study, it refers to the confidence, comfort, and belief that teachers possess the ability to effectively provide SEL instruction.

Participants were asked to rate their perception of self-efficacy through multiple sub-items. One set of sub-items addressed personal components of teacher's self-efficacy. These items included statements regarding their perceived motivation to provide SEL instruction, their confidence in their own social-emotional skills, and the degree to which addressing their students' social emotional needs comes naturally to them. A second set of items asked participants to rate their perceived ability to actually provide SEL instruction. For example, one item asked the following: *I feel confident in my ability to provide SEL instruction.* Another item asked: *I know enough about SEL to teach it to my students.* Teachers in this sample reported a notably higher sense of self-efficacy regarding the first set of items compared to the second, indicating that although they possess confidence regarding various intuitive aspects of SEL, they are less comfortable actually providing instruction. This difference was particularly evident in the response of high school teachers who responded at a significantly lower level than elementary school teachers.

This is a relevant finding, as previous surveys, such as Buchanan, et al. (2009) and Civic Enterprises et al. (2013), did not evaluate self-efficacy in such as direct manner. These findings provide an interesting view in which teachers seemly feel confident regarding the value of SEL but are not necessarily confident in their ability to provide SEL instruction to students. These findings are likely connected to the limited exposure to SEL training that has been reported in the

past (Bracket et al., 2011; Buchanan et al., 2009; Civic Enterprises et al., 2013), as well as earlier in this chapter. Given the reported level of motivation to provide SEL instruction and the previously reported perceptions of benefit and need, many teachers are likely to improve their sense of self-efficacy with training and opportunities to provide SEL instruction.

The Illinois SEL Standards

As part of the 2003 Children's Mental Health Act, the Illinois legislature mandated the state board of education to develop standards to guide and support SEL instruction throughout the state. As mentioned in earlier chapters, this legislation has been hailed by SEL advocates as a very significant step in the promotion of SEL in schools (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010). However, few efforts have been made to measure the degree to which these standards have been incorporated into practice. Thus, it is unclear if these standards have had an impact on student outcomes.

The present study suggests that Illinois teachers have limited familiarity with the Illinois SEL Standards. Over half of the respondents in this sample (N = 76; 59%) reported that they have *no familiarity* or only *slight familiarity* with the Illinois SEL Standards. This was particularly evident with high school teachers who reported, on average, less than *slight familiarity*. This was significantly lower than the average response from elementary school teachers. At the same time, the average familiarity of elementary and middle school teachers was unimpressive as well. SEL advocates may describe the state of Illinois as a leader in promoting SEL standards, but establishing stand-alone standards has not necessarily resulted in significant familiarity from the teachers who are expected to actually provide SEL instruction.

Limited familiarity with the standards corresponded with limited use of the standards. Of the total sample, only 19% (N = 24) reported using the standards to inform lesson planning. A mere 14% (N = 18) reported using the standards to inform assessment practices. Although these results indicate that the teachers in this sample use the standards minimally to inform practice, it is unclear how they engage with the standards when they do actually use them. It would be valuable for future research to explore how teachers successfully engage with SEL standards to inform their practice so that recommendations could guide other educators in their use of the standards to promote social-emotional outcomes.

Through open-ended response, several participants did indicate that they actively engaged with the standards. These respondents described a positive impression of the impact of their use of the standards on students and the classroom environment. However, the majority of these responses provided insufficient detail to develop recommendations for use of the standards by others. Responses that did provide sufficient detail indicated that the standards were used as a resource to guide the development of IEP goals. Thus, it appears that a primary means by which teachers in this sample use the Illinois SEL Standards is to support the educational programming of students in special education.

A potential starting point for promoting greater familiarity and use of the standards is through training. Despite the 2003 mandate for Illinois districts to provide SEL instruction, and the subsequent development of Illinois SEL standards to guide such instruction, a very limited number of teachers (N = 21; 16%) reported having received any kind of training regarding the standards. Of the total sample, 6% (N = 8) reported receiving training at the pre-service level, and 13% (N = 17) reported receiving training at the in-service level. This is not necessarily

surprising given the limited training reported previously in this discussion regarding SEL in general. However, it is telling of the insufficient effort given to the dissemination and implementation of the standards over the past decade and a half.

Despite limited familiarity with the standards and minimal training experiences, a significant number of participants expressed desire to learn more. When asked if they were interested in learning more about the Illinois SEL Standards, 70% of participants indicated that they would be *interested* or *very interested.*

Implications

The findings of this study present several implications regarding promotion of SEL instruction and the implementation of SEL initiatives in schools.

General Need for Training, Coaching, and Technical Support

If SEL is viewed as beneficial and important for all students, it is necessary that all teachers are familiar with the underlying theory of SEL so they can support social-emotional outcomes in as efficacious a manner as possible. Although teachers seem to recognize the value and importance of SEL, their capacity to provide SEL instruction is limited by factors such as familiarity, training, experience, culture of support, and sense of self-efficacy. One of the most striking results of the present study relates to teachers' sense of self-efficacy. In addition to valuing SEL instruction, many teachers are motivated to provide SEL instruction. However, belief in SEL and motivation to provide it are insufficient to support social-emotional outcomes if teachers do not feel comfortable or confident providing the instruction that will result in those outcomes in the first place. Supporting teachers' broad sense of self-efficacy provides a valuable starting point to promote their professional capacity to provide SEL instruction.

An important way to support overall teacher capacity to provide SEL instruction is through appropriate training, coaching, and technical support at the pre-service and in-service levels. Effective training, coaching, and technical support should promote greater familiarity with the underlying theory of SEL, greater exposure to the various approaches through which SEL instruction can be provided, and greater awareness of the Illinois SEL Standards as a tool to guide and support SEL instruction. Because teachers seem to recognize the value and importance of SEL, training, coaching, and technical support need not overemphasis why SEL instruction is needed. Rather, greater emphasis is needed regarding how SEL instruction is provided and what it might look like at different grade levels.

Training, coaching, and technical support focused on SEL instruction and the Illinois SEL Standards must begin in teacher preparation programs and continue as an integral component of professional development of staff within schools. An important outcome of such training is to promote the realization that directly addressing students' social-emotional needs is a core aspect of education. These needs can be addressed through direct actions expressed through explicit instruction or through the learning environment.

Although there are teachers that would benefit from incorporating SEL practices for the first time, many teachers already support social-emotional growth in a variety of ways, whether they realize it or not. However, without sufficient training, coaching, and technical support, such efforts are limited to what each teacher understands intuitively about his/her students' social-emotional needs. A stronger awareness of best practice related to SEL would allow teachers to build upon the practices in which they already engage and better support the range of social-emotional needs presented by their students. Similarly, greater exposure to the variety of ways

that SEL can be promoted in schools may also expand the awareness of the role that teachers can play in supporting social-emotional development. For example, even if a teacher found that he/she is not the person in a particular school to provide formal SEL instruction, he/she may realize how to integrate SEL instruction into other subject areas or address it informally throughout the day.

Greater familiarity with the SEL Standards could allow teachers to evaluate students' social-emotional progress and target certain areas of need in a systematic manner similar to how student needs are addressed in academic areas. Although valuable that some teachers seem to be making use of the Illinois SEL Standards as a means to inform and monitor special education services, training, coaching, and technical support should support teachers' awareness of how the standards can inform the instructional needs of the entire student population.

Teacher Capacity for SEL at the High School Level

There is a particular need to support the capacity to provide SEL instruction at high school levels. Just as high school students have maturing academic needs, they have maturing social-emotional needs related to the rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive changes occurring in their lives (Association for Middle Level Education, 2010). These needs can and should be addressed through developmentally appropriate SEL instruction. Throughout the field of education, attention has been shifting to the development of "21st century skills" (see National Governors Association for Best Practice, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Through this evolving conceptualization of educational outcomes, non-cognitive skills such as SEL are increasingly being viewed as foundational to "college and career readiness" (ACT, 2014;

National Research Council, 2012). This will likely place greater pressure on schools, particularly high schools, to explore ways to improve SEL instruction.

The logistical challenges of finding opportunities to directly support SEL within an already packed curriculum as well as navigating the entrenched views, of some, regarding the responsibilities of high school teachers presents unique challenges for those advocating for greater attention given to SEL at this level. In its guide, *Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs: Middle and High School Edition* (2015a), CASEL recognized that there is a limited number of evidence-based programs designed specifically to promote SEL at the middle and high school levels. For this reason, CASEL emphasizes that social-emotional competency be promoted through the following, non-mutually exclusive approaches:

1) Establishing a supportive learning environment by infusing SEL into daily teaching practices
2) Integrating SEL instruction throughout the academic curriculum
3) Establishing policies and organizational structures that support SEL instruction and social-emotional development
4) Promoting SEL through direct, explicit instruction.

No matter the approach, greater outcomes are likely to be realized when schools take comprehensive steps to support high quality program implementation (Durlak et al., 2013). These steps should include, if not start with, the promotion of educator's professional capacity to provide SEL instruction.

Implementation of SEL Initiatives

An underlying aim of the present study was to gain insight into the process of implementing innovations in school—specifically, innovations related to SEL. Implementation is a complex process affected by a number of inter-related factors (Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Forman et al., 2013; Forman, 2015). Since teachers are typically the ones expected to provide SEL instruction (Humphrey, 2013), the present study focused on exploring the degree to which teachers possess the capacity to provide SEL instruction and effectively support the implementation of SEL initiatives.

Humphrey (2013) described a multi-level model of SEL implementation that could prove valuable for schools/districts hoping to successfully implement SEL initiatives. In this model, he described a number of factors impacting implementation that fall within 5 domains: (1) preplanning/foundations (awareness, buy-in, staff involvement, incentive to change); (2) implementation support systems (provision of training, ongoing external support), (3) implementation environment (leadership support, integration with other aspects of school or curriculum, time constraints, resource allocation, openness to change, competing priorities, climate and relationships); (4) implementer factors (experience/skills/confidence in delivery, and attitudes to SEL); (5) program characteristics (quality of materials, level of materials, flexibility). Teacher capacity plays a crucial role within each of these domains, demonstrating the overlapping impact that teachers have on the successful implementation of SEL initiatives.

The present findings suggest that insufficient effort has been made to develop and support teacher capacity to provide SEL instruction in Illinois. If SEL initiatives are expected to result in the positive outcomes that are attributed to it, there is a need to invest in the capacity of

teachers and the systems that support them to provide effective instruction. Focusing on training opportunities in general with particular attention given to the training needs of teachers at higher school levels provides a starting point. However, schools/districts must also attend to the broader implementation process, within which teacher capacity plays a crucial role.

Limitations

There has been a paucity of research focused on the capacity of Illinois teachers regarding SEL and the Illinois SEL Standards. This study is intended to provide a preliminary step towards better understanding how to support educators in promoting positive student outcomes through SEL. Although steps have been taken to carefully collect data that is valid and meaningful, there are several limitations to this study that impact how the data can be interpreted.

A first limitation involves the sample and the generalizability of findings to the broader population of K-12 teachers in Illinois. The resulting sample included teachers from a range of school levels and community types from throughout the state that mirrored available data regarding the teacher population in Illinois. This suggests that the results of this study are generalizable to teachers in Illinois but not beyond. However, the limited availability of accurate data regarding the current teacher population makes it difficult to determine the degree to which the results from this study can be generalized to the broader teacher population in Illinois. Thus, generalizability should be made with caution.

Another limitation involves the sample size. The relatively small sample of 129 participants limits the power of inferential statistics to determine if a significant difference actually exists between groups of teachers. This limit in statistical power increases the likelihood

of Type II error, making it more difficult to determine with confidence that an insignificant result actually represents a true lack of difference between school level groups.

The primary tool in this study, the T-CapSEL, was designed specifically for the purpose of this study. The development of this instrument was based upon a theoretical framework of provider capacity and certain items were guided by established instruments measuring similar constructs. Additionally, this instrument was piloted with a small number of teachers whose feedback was elicited to evaluate phrasing, ease of administration, and face validity. Nonetheless, the psychometric properties were not examined, therefore the results should be interpreted with caution.

Finally, given the anonymous administration of the survey, it was not possible to member check qualitative response provided through open-response items on the T-CapSEL. This limits the ability to fully validate the qualitative findings in this study (Merriam, 2009). Despite this limitation, efforts were made to validate qualitative analysis by engaging multiple coders in an iterative process of analysis.

Future direction

The current study provides preliminary data regarding the capacity of teachers to provide SEL instruction and use the Illinois SEL Standards. Despite the limitations identified above, there are a number of directions that future research can pursue to better understand the needs of teachers in their role as educators supporting the social, emotional, and academic needs of their students.

A very limited amount of research has explored the capacity of teachers to provide SEL instruction. Even fewer efforts have been made regarding the familiarity with and use of the

Illinois SEL Standards. Replication and validation of this study is needed to better understand and further explore teachers' capacity to effectively provide SEL instruction and use the Illinois SEL Standards. Research that has explored teacher's capacity to provide SEL instruction has primarily focused on surveying the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of teachers through self-report instruments. It would be valuable to evaluate the utility of the T-CapSEL and its approach to measuring self-report data through the conceptual framework of provider capacity. Such validation would help ensure that data collected through this instrument accurately reflects what it is intended to measure.

Validation and replication of the present study and previous studies using survey methodology is important. However, other methodologies should be explored to more deeply understand teachers' experiences with providing SEL instruction. Such exploration would help provide deeper context to the data gathered through this preliminary study. For example, a qualitatively designed study could further explore factors impacting implementation of SEL initiatives by teachers at varying stages of the implementation process. Such research could attempt to better understand the relationship between teacher capacity and other factors important to successful implementation of innovative practices in schools (e.g. school leadership). Although the present study has focused on provider capacity as an essential component of implementation, further research is needed to better understand the various factors that mediate/moderate the complex process of implementation.

In order to inform efforts to properly train educators to provide SEL instruction, future research should focus on the means through which teachers are prepared and supported to provide SEL instruction and use the Illinois SEL Standards. Regarding pre-service training,

further study is needed to understand the degree to which candidates are exposed to learning opportunities that focus on SEL. Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) recently published a scan of state teacher education policies as well as a scan of syllabi from over 600 schools of education in the country. Building off these efforts, further study should investigate how teacher preparation programs incorporate SEL training through their programming, with emphasis on exemplars that could provide models for other programs to follow. Specifically, in the state of Illinois, further study should evaluate the degree to which teachers are trained to use the Illinois SEL Standards as a resource to guide SEL instruction.

Practicing teachers have reported a desire for training regarding SEL and the Illinois SEL Standards. Further study should investigate the quality of training opportunities available to current teachers with the aim of identifying appropriate methods to support such training. It would be beneficial to identify schools/districts that have identified training approaches that have resulted in growth in teacher capacity.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY OF TEACHER CAPACITY FOR SEL (T-CAPSEL)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title: teacher capacity regarding SEL and the IL SEL Standards
Researcher: Daniel L. Philippe, M.Ed., M.S.Ed.
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Gina Coffee, Ph.D. NCSP

Introduction: You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Daniel Philippe for a Dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Gina Coffee in the Department of School Psychology at Loyola University of Chicago.

You are being asked to participate because you are a current K-12 teacher working in Illinois. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to learn more about teachers' capacity for social emotional learning (SEL) and their familiarity with the IL SEL Standards.

Procedures: If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to complete an online survey. The survey will ask you to respond to items regarding your perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to SEL, your familiarity with and possible use of the IL SEL Standards, and basic demographic information (e.g. gender, grade level, school setting). This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Risks/Benefits: There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

There are no direct benefits to you from participation. The results of this study will help understand how to support teachers and schools in the implementation of SEL instruction. At the end of the survey, you will have the opportunity to learn more about SEL and the IL SEL standards through an online resource. A link will be provided.

Compensation: Participants in this study will have the opportunity to enter a drawing for one of four, $25 gift cards to Amazon.com. Those who elect to enter this drawing will be directed to submit basic contact information to an email accessible only to the researcher for the purpose of this drawing.

Confidentiality: Participants will not be asked to provide identifying information of any kind. Although they may choose to provide basic contact information for the purpose of a drawing, there is no way to connect this information to their responses. Data will be stored on a password protected computer accessible only to research team members.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions: If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Daniel Philippe at dphilippe@luc.edu or Dr. Gina Coffee at gcoffee@luc.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent: By clicking the button at the bottom of the screen and continuing to the next page, you will have indicated that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study.

Screener

1. Are you currently working as a K-12 teacher in Illinois?	Yes	No

Familiarity

2. How familiar are you with the IL SEL standards	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Somewhat familiar	Moderately familiar	Extremely familiar

If *slightly familiar, somewhat familiar, moderately familiar*, or *extremely familiar*	3. Please briefly describe what you know about providing SEL instruction.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is a process of promoting social-emotional skills through instruction that teaches students to become aware of and better regulate emotions, recognize feelings in self and others, interact successfully with others, and make responsible decisions

Perception of Benefit

4. Teaching SEL in schools will:

a. Improve students' ability to identify and regulate emotions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
b. Improve students' ability to take the perspective of others and empathize	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
c. Improve relationships between students and teachers	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
d. Improve relationships between students and peers	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
e. Decrease bullying, and other	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

behavioral/conduct problems							
f. Improve students' ability to make constructive and respectful choices about behavior and social interactions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
g. Reduce students' emotional distress	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
h. Have a positive impact on students' academic achievement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

Perception of need

5. Rate your level of agreement with the following statements

a. Social-emotional skills are important for student success in school and in life	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
b. As a teacher, it is important that I support the social-emotional growth of my students	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
c. It is important that SEL is provided in schools	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
d. As a teacher I do not need to teach social-emotional skills because my students naturally learn these skills through other means	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
e. I do not need to teach social-emotional skills because it not part of my job	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
f. As a teacher, my primary focus should be on academic skills rather than devote instructional time to SEL	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

6. How important is it to provide SEL instruction:

a. During a specific time of the day	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important

b. Through the use of a formal curriculum that explicitly addresses SEL	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
c. Through informal routines such as morning/afternoon check-in, mood thermometer, etc.	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
d. Through integration into other subject areas (i.e. English Language Arts, Social Studies)	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
e. Through a developmental scope and sequence just like any other subject (i.e. reading, math, spelling)	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important

7. How important is it that you provide SEL instruction to ***YOUR*** students	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important

8. How important is it for the following educators to provide SEL instruction to ***YOUR*** students

a. Teachers	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
b. School Clinical Staff: school psychologist, social worker, school counselor, nurse	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
c. Administrator	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
d. Outside agency	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important

9. Please rate the importance of providing SEL at the follow grade levels

a. Preschool	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
b. Early Elementary (K-2)	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
c. Late Elementary (3-5)	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
d. Middle School (6-8)	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
e. High School (9-12)	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important

Self-Efficacy:

10. Please rate you level of agreement with the following statements:

a. I feel confident in my ability to provide SEL instruction	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
b. Taking care of my students' social and emotional needs comes naturally to me	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
c. I know enough about SEL to teach it to my students	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
d. I feel I possess sufficient Social Emotional skills to teach SEL to my students	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
e. I consider myself motivated to provide SEL instruction to my students	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

Proficiency

a. Training

11. As best as you can recall, was SEL addressed during your ***PRE-SERVICE*** training?	Yes	No

If Yes	12. How was SEL addressed during your pre-service training (select all that applies)?
	a. Entire Course(s)
	b. Course Lectures
	c. Assigned Reading
	d. Assignments/Projects
	e. Workshop
	f. Student teaching or Other Field Experience
	g. Research Experience
	h. Other (Please specify)

If Yes	13. How adequate or inadequate do you feel your pre-service program prepared you to provide SEL instruction to the students you serve?						
	Completely inadequate	Mostly inadequate	Somewhat inadequate	Neutral	Somewhat adequate	Mostly adequate	Completely adequate

14. Have you received ***IN-SERVICE*** training regarding SEL?	Yes	No

If Yes	15. How was SEL addressed during your in-service training (Select all that apply)?
	a. School sponsored in-service training

b. Workshops/seminars/didactics
c. Collaboration with colleagues (such as through a professional learning community)
d. Consultation/collaboration with external agency or university
e. Personal reading/research
f. Other (please specify)

If Yes	16. How adequate or inadequate do you feel in-service training has prepared you teach SEL to the students you serve?						
	Completely inadequate	Mostly inadequate	Somewhat inadequate	Neutral	Somewhat adequate	Mostly adequate	Completely adequate

17. Rate your overall satisfaction regarding your current level of training regarding SEL	Completely dissatisfied	Mostly dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Mostly satisfied	Completely satisfied

b. Culture of Supports

18. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements

a. My school expects teachers to address children's social-emotional development	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
b. Teachers in my school actively address children's social emotional development	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
c. My principal encourages the teaching of social emotional skills to students	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
d. The culture of my school supports the development of children's social	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

emotional development							
e. My school places the right amount of attention on SEL	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

c. Experience

19. Have you ever provided SEL instruction of any kind to your students?	Yes	No

If Yes	20. In general, how satisfied have you been with the impact of SEL instruction on your students?
	Not at all satisfied
	slightly satisfied
	moderately satisfied
	Very satisfied
	Extremely satisfied

Some schools provide SEL instruction to teach social-emotional skills through the use of a formal SEL program(s). These programs often combine SEL-related strategies and free-standing SEL lessons. There are many programs available. The following are a few examples:

Second Step,
Zones of Regulation,
RULER,
Strong Kids,
I Can Problem Solve

21. Do you currently provide SEL instruction to your students through the use of a formal SEL program?	Yes	No

IF YES	22. What is the name of that program(s)? If you do not know the name write *I don't know.*

IF YES	23. Which of the following best describes who provides SEL instruction to ***YOUR*** students through this formal program
	I am the primary instructor
	I provide instruction with the assistance of a co-teacher
	Another staff member is the primary instructor, but I help
	I take minimal or no part in providing SEL instruction through this program

24. Do you provide SEL instruction through any means other than a formal SEL program (i.e. teaching about emotions during morning meeting, checking feelings during the day, etc.)?	Yes	No

If Yes	25. Please describe briefly

IL SEL Standards

26. How familiar are you with the IL SEL standards	not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Somewhat familiar	Moderately familiar	Extremely familiar

If *not at all familiar* continue to item 26, then skip to item 37
If *slightly familiar, somewhat familiar, moderately familiar*, or *extremely familiar* continue to item 27

As part of the IL Children's Mental Health Act of 2002, the Illinois State Board of Education was required to develop SEL standards to promote social emotional development in schools in grades kindergarten through 12.

27. Would you be interested in learning more about the IL SEL Standards?	No, not interested	Neutral	Yes, some intere

Continue to Item 37

28. Have you received training regarding the IL SEL Standards	Yes	No

If yes	29. How have you received this training (check all that apply)
	Through pre-service and/or Graduate School training
	Through in-service training
	Other (Please Describe)

30. Do you use the IL SEL Standards to inform your ***LESSON PLANNING?***	Yes	No

If Yes	31. How important of a role do the IL SEL Standards play when ***PLANNING*** units/lessons?						
	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly Important	Neutral	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important

If Yes	32. How often do you consider the IL SEL Standards when planning units/lessons?				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

33. Do you use the IL SEL Standards to inform your ***ASSESSMENT*** practices***?***	Yes	No

If Yes	34. How important of a role do the IL SEL Standards play in your ***ASSESSMENT*** practices?						
	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly Important	Neutral	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important

If Yes	35. How often do you consider the IL SEL Standards when developing ***ASSESSMENTS?***				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

36. Please briefly share your experience using the IL SEL Standards

Demographics
Thank you for completing the survey thus far. There are just a few questions left.
First a few questions about you:

37. What is your gender?	Male	Female

38. To which racial or ethnic group do you *most* identify?
Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
Black or African American
Hispanic/Latino
Asian American
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
American Indian or Alaska native
From multiple races
Other: _____
Prefer not to reply

39. How old are you (Fill in blank)?	

40. How many years have you been a teacher (fill in blank)?	

41. What grade level(s) do you currently teach (select all that apply)?	
Kindergarten	7th Grade
1st Grade	8th Grade
2nd Grade	9th Grade
3rd Grade	10th Grade
4th Grade	11th Grade
5th Grade	12th Grade
6th Grade	

Now a few questions about the school at which you work:

42. Which of the following best describes your school?
Public
Private
Charter

43. Which of the following best describes the community around your school?
Urban
Suburban
Rural

44. About how many students attend your school? (Fill in blank)	

45. What is the lowest grade level taught at your school (not including preschool)?	
Kindergarten	7th Grade
1st Grade	8th Grade
2nd Grade	9th Grade
3rd Grade	10th Grade
4th Grade	11th Grade
5th Grade	12th Grade
6th Grade	

46. What is the highest grade level taught at your school?	
Kindergarten	7th Grade
1st Grade	8th Grade
2nd Grade	9th Grade
3rd Grade	10th Grade
4th Grade	11th Grade
5th Grade	12th Grade
6th Grade	

APPENDIX B

1ST RECRUITMENT LETTERS

Administrator Letter

Date; 1st contact

Greetings,

My name is Daniel Philippe. I am a PhD student completing my dissertation in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. I am writing to invite the teachers at your school(s) to participate in a unique survey that aims to better understand their perceptions of and experiences with Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

Schools in Illinois are required to provide SEL instruction. This study seeks to better understand the perspectives of Illinois teachers regarding SEL and how it is provided in the state of Illinois. This survey is being sent to a select number of K-12 schools in Illinois with the purpose of better understanding how to support educators and administrators in the implementation of school-wide initiatives such as SEL.

I am reaching out to you as a key person at your school who can help distribute this survey to teachers. Shortly, you will receive a 2nd email from me containing a message directed towards potential teacher participants. I kindly ask that you forward this 2nd message to the teachers at your school(s) so they can have an opportunity to participate. My hope is that by sending this message in a separate email, it will be easier for you to forward it. This 2nd message will describe the study, provide a hyperlink through which teachers can participate, and invite respondents to enter a drawing for a $25 gift card. This survey only takes about 15 minutes to complete and it is completely voluntary and anonymous. Please note this survey will only remain open for a limited amount of time. I will send you 3 follow-up emails that I will kindly ask you to forward to your teachers.

I greatly appreciate your time. I would be happy to share findings of this study with you at the culmination of the project upon request. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Daniel Philippe, M.Ed., M.S.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate in School Psychology | Loyola University of Chicago
dphilippe@luc.edu

Accompanying Recruitment Letter for Teachers

Date; 1st contact

Greetings,

My name is Daniel Philippe. I am a PhD student completing my dissertation in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. You have been contacted on my behalf to participate in a unique study of K-12 teachers in Illinois that aims to better understand teachers' perceptions of and experiences with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and the Illinois SEL Standards. The purpose of this survey is to better understand how to best support hard working teachers such as yourself in your everyday practice.

Your participation in this study will be voluntary, and there are no consequences for choosing not to participate. Further, you will not be asked to provide your name or identification of any kind. Only research team members will have access to the survey data, which will be used for analysis purposes only.

As a thank you for your participation, you will have an opportunity at the end of the survey to enter a drawing for one of four, $25 gift cards to Amazon.

If you are willing to complete this 15 minute survey please click the following link to the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H8NL2S9

I wish to thank you in advance for your time which I know is limited. I hope that you consider completing this survey as I hope it will ultimately help teachers such as yourself.

Sincerely,

Daniel Philippe, M.Ed., M.S.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate in School Psychology | Loyola University of Chicago
dphilippe@luc.edu

APPENDIX C

$2^{ND}/3^{RD}$ RECRUITMENT LETTERS

Administrator Letter

Date; 2nd/3rd contact

Greetings,

Recently, you received a letter from me asking you to share a message to your teachers inviting them to participate in a unique survey of Illinois teachers that aims to better understand their perceptions of and experiences with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and the Illinois SEL Standards. The purpose of this survey is to better understanding how to support educators and administrators in the implementation of school-wide initiatives such as SEL.

I would like to thank you for any time that you took to read my letter and to share it with the teachers at your school(s). I have sent this follow-up email in hopes that you would again share a message from me inviting teachers at your school(s) to take part in my study. Shortly, you will receive an accompanying message from me containing a message directed towards potential teacher participants. I kindly ask that you forward this accompanying message to the teachers at your school so they can have an opportunity to participate. My hope is that by sending this message as a separate email, it will be easier for you to share it on my behalf.

I sincerely appreciate your consideration of my request and would welcome any comments or questions that you might have.

Sincerely,

Daniel Philippe, M.Ed., M.S.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate in School Psychology | Loyola University of Chicago
dphilippe@luc.edu

Accompanying Recruitment Letter for Teachers

Date; 2nd/3rd contact

Greetings,

My name is Daniel Philippe and I am a PhD student in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. Recently, you were contacted on my behalf to participate in a unique study of K-12 Illinois teachers. The aim of this study is to better understand teachers' perceptions of and experiences with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and the Illinois SEL Standards.

If you have ***already completed*** this survey, please accept my deepest appreciation and disregard the rest of this message. If you ***have not yet had an opportunity to complete*** this survey, please consider taking a moment to do so now or at your earliest convenience.

The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, and there are no consequences for choosing not to participate. Further, you will not be asked to provide your name or identification of any kind. Only research team members will have access to the survey data, which will be used for analysis purposes only.

As a thank you for your participation, you will have an opportunity at the end of the survey to enter a drawing for one of four, $25 gift cards to Amazon.

If you are willing to complete this 15 minute survey please click the following link to the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H8NL2S9

I wish to thank you in advance for your time which I know is limited. With the results of this study, I hope to better understand how to best support hard working teachers such as yourself in your everyday practice.

Sincerely,

Daniel Philippe, M.Ed., M.S.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate in School Psychology | Loyola University of Chicago
dphilippe@luc.edu

APPENDIX D

FINAL RECRUITMENT LETTERS

Administrator Letter

Date; FINAL contact

Greetings,

Recently you received a letter from me asking you to share a message to your teachers inviting them to participate in a unique survey of Illinois teachers that aims to better understand their perceptions of and experiences with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and the Illinois SEL Standards. The purpose of this survey is to better understanding how to support educators and administrators in the implementation of school-wide initiatives such as SEL.

I greatly appreciate any time that you have taken to read my letter and to share it with teachers at you school(s). This will be the **final** time that I ask you to share a message from me inviting teachers at your school to participate in my study. **This survey will close within the next 48 hours.** Similar to my previous letters, I kindly ask you to forward the accompanying message that will arrive shortly in a second email. The purpose of this follow-up message is to encourage those who have not yet responded to consider participating.

I sincerely appreciate your consideration and would welcome any comments or questions that you might have.

Sincerely,

Daniel Philippe, M.Ed., M.S.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate in School Psychology | Loyola University of Chicago
dphilippe@luc.edu

Accompanying Recruitment Letter for Teachers

Date; FINAL contact

This will be the final time you will be contacted on my behalf.

My name is Daniel Philippe and I am a PhD student in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. Recently, you were contacted on my behalf to participate in a unique study of K-12 Illinois teachers that aims to better understand teachers' perceptions of and experiences with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and the Illinois SEL Standards.

If you have *already completed* this survey, please accept my deepest appreciation and disregard the rest of this message. If you *have not yet had an opportunity to complete this survey* or if you *have started the survey but not yet had a chance to finish it*, please consider taking a moment to do so now or at your earliest convenience. **The survey will close within 48 hours.** This is your *final* opportunity to take part in this study.

The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, and there are no consequences for choosing not to participate. Further, you will not be asked to provide your name or identification of any kind. Only research team members will have access to the survey data, which will be used for analysis purposes only.

As a thank you for your participation, you will have an opportunity at the end of the survey to enter a drawing for one of four, $25 gift cards to Amazon.

If you are willing to complete this 15 minute survey please click the following link to the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H8NL2S9

I wish to thank you in advance for your time which I know is limited. With the results of this study, I hope to better understand how to best support hard working teachers such as yourself in your everyday practice.

Sincerely,

Daniel Philippe, M.Ed., M.S.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate in School Psychology | Loyola University of Chicago
dphilippe@luc.edu

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VITA

Dr. Daniel L. Philippe earned his doctorate degree in school psychology from Loyola University Chicago. Before attending Loyola, he earned his Masters of Science in Education through Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy. During that time, he was a 5th grade teacher in the Archdiocese of Chicago school system. His experience as a classroom teacher instilled upon him the importance of addressing the wide range of needs presented by students. It also instilled upon him the challenges that teachers face in effectively supporting these needs. During the 2016-2017 academic year, Dr. Philippe completed an APA-accredited, pre-doctoral internship within the Illinois School Psychology Internship Consortium (ISPIC). In this placement, he provided mental health services to children and adults across multiple systems (K-12 school district and primary care clinic) within a rural community. During his time at Loyola, he served on the School of Education's Student Development Committee as well the Loyola Association of School Psychologists. As a graduate assistant at the Greeley Center of Catholic Education, he helped provide school-based consultation and technical assistance for schools in the early stages of implementing multi-tiered systems of support. He participated on research teams at Loyola focused on the evaluation of discipline practices at public, charter, and private schools in Illinois.