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PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL- EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN THE SCHOOLS

Heather Mae Calkins

75 Pages

This thesis presents a research project that examined the differences between parent and teacher perceptions of social-emotional learning (SEL) in the schools. This project also examined how parents and teachers rank social-emotional goals with respect to academic goals for their children. Results indicate that teachers rate the importance of SEL more highly compared to parents; however, there was no difference in how parents and teachers ranked the items overall. Qualitative analyses revealed differences in the reasoning for parent and teacher support for SEL in the schools as well as concerns for the inclusion of SEL. Future research should further investigate these differences between parent and teacher perceptions of SEL, as this could influence how SEL is presented to stakeholders and how it is implemented.

KEYWORDS: SEL; social-emotional learning; teacher perception; parent perception; IEP; disabilities

PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL-
EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN THE SCHOOLS

Heather Mae Calkins

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Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

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EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN THE SCHOOLS

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CHAPTER I: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Social and emotional competence in childhood are crucial components for building peer relationships, achieving academic success, and developing a healthy psyche. These constructs include tasks such as learning to recognize and manage one's emotions, developing empathy for others, and engaging in appropriate social behaviors (CASEL, 2017). There are many social-emotional tasks that children must master throughout their childhood and adolescence; however, a variety of factors influence children's competence in these areas. One such factor is the presence of a disability, as research indicates that children with disabilities face challenges regarding social and emotional competence. These disabilities include learning disabilities (Nowicki, 2003), attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (Semrud-Clikeman & Schafer, 2000), orthopedic disabilities (Yagmurlu & Yavuz, 2015), autism spectrum disorder (American Psychological Association, 2013), specific language impairment (McCabe & Meller, 2004), and emotional disturbance (Algozzine, 2017). Interventions to ameliorate social and emotional deficits include, but are not limited to, direct instruction, modeling, and prompting strategies (Guralnick, 2010). Many of these interventions are carried out within a school setting to support a child's social and emotional development. However, some researchers have found that the school may not be doing enough to meet children's needs in these areas (Kwon et al., 2011). Furthermore, parents of children with disabilities believe that the schools are not doing enough to meet the needs that they deem most important for their children, which indicates disparate priorities between parents and schools (Spann, Kohler, & Soenksen, 2003). With recent legislation that mandates the inclusion of social and emotional learning standards within Illinois schools (ISBE, n.d.), it is important to address the divide between parent and teacher attitudes toward social-emotional learning (SEL) in the schools.

Past studies have shown differing results in terms of teacher and parent beliefs regarding school-based SEL; thus, this study adds to the literature regarding teacher and parent perceptions of the importance of SEL. In addition, this study explored how parents of children with disabilities may prioritize goals for their students differently compared to parents of typically-developing students. This study also investigated how teachers prioritize goals based on their classroom composition (general education, special education, or general education with children with IEPs or 504 Plans). Finally, this study adds to the literature regarding differences in goals for children depending upon the child's age. This study may help researchers and school personnel gain an understanding of the attitudes of teachers and parents toward SEL in the schools and may assist in home-school collaboration efforts.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Social Competence

Social competence is a construct that outlines various aspects of individual characteristics and behavioral patterns that are useful and necessary in social interactions (Blair et al., 2015; Rose-Krasnor, 1997). Researchers do not agree on a single definition of social competence and continue to assess social competence in a variety of ways (Rose-Krasnor, 1997). Different researchers have conceptualized social competence as a multilevel construct consisting of the following: social adjustment, social performance, and social skills (Cavell, 1990); social skills, peer group acceptance, and friendship quality (Hinde, 1987); and problem-solving behavior, perspective taking, and person perception (Sarason, 1981). However, most experts agree that social competence can be defined as one's effectiveness in social situations (Cavell, 1990). For the purpose of this study, social competence consists of effortful control over socially-oriented behavior and social skills (CASEL, 2017).

Early social competence has been associated with a variety of positive outcomes. Guhn et al. (2016) concluded that social competence in kindergarten was linked to peer connectedness and academic achievement in fourth grade. Other studies support the idea that social competence has a positive effect on academic achievement (Stepp et al., 2011; Welsh et al., 2001). Furthermore, social competence as rated by teachers in kindergarten may have long-term effects in domains including education, employment, crime, mental health, and substance abuse in adulthood (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015).

Children with disabilities face difficulties in the domain of social competence. Guralnick (2010) discusses how children with developmental delays often face difficulties in peer-oriented social competence on several levels, including improperly encoding social situations, having

difficulty regulating one's emotions during peer interactions, not sharing an understanding of social rules, and the lack of prosocial behaviors in the child's behavioral repertoire. These difficulties can translate into difficulties initiating and maintaining peer interactions (Pierce-Jordan & Lifter, 2005).

Children with learning disabilities, on average, are rated as less socially competent than their typically-developing peers (Bender & Wall, 1994). A meta-analysis conducted by Nowicki (2008) found that children with learning disabilities were rated as less socially competent than their peers on a variety of measures including teacher-perceived competence and peer preference ratings. Other studies have revealed that 30% of children with identified learning disabilities belonged to the rejected group when peer social status was assessed (Sater & French, 1989). When children with disabilities reflect on their own social competence, some rate themselves similarly to their same-age peers (Nowicki, 2003) while other children report that they have difficulties making friends (Zeedyk, Cohen, Eisenhower, & Blacher, 2016).

Other research has shown that many other children who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 Plans also may have difficulties in social competence, including children with ADHD (Thorell & Rydell, 2008), autism spectrum disorder (American Psychological Association, 2013), specific language impairment (McCabe & Meller, 2004), psychiatric disorders (Matthews et al., 2016; Perren & Alsaker, 2009), and physical disorders (Yagmurlu & Yavuz, 2015). Deficits in social competence have been linked to peer rejection. Students with disabilities are at a heightened risk of negative social outcomes, as they often face peer rejection and are rated as less socially competent than their peers (Sater & French, 1989). Consequently, children with disabilities report that they have few, poor-quality friendships (Normand et al., 2011; Taheri, Perry, & Minnes, 2016) and that they feel lonely at school (Zeedyk et al., 2016).

Social competence envelops the related construct of social skills, which refers to the specific behaviors that lead to desirable social outcomes for an individual. Social skills are necessary for developing positive peer relations. The five dimensions of social skills outlined by Caldarella and Merrell (1997) include peer relations, self-management, academic, compliance, and assertion. The presence of adequate social skills has been linked to a variety of positive outcomes including academic success (Schonfeld et al., 2015), the formation of friendships (Crawford & Manassis, 2011), and a decreased likelihood of participating in bullying (Polan, Sieving, & McMorris, 2013).

A lack of social skills is correlated with mental health problems (Ratcliffe et al., 2015), juvenile delinquency (Stepp et al., 2011), and poor school performance (Davis et al., 2014). Research further suggests that a lack of social skills is correlated to poor peer relationships as well as peer rejection and victimization (Sater & French, 1989). Peer rejection is, in turn, linked to maladaptive cognitions, including thoughts of social incompetence and depression (Parker & Asher, 1993). Other research has shown that emotional competence is related to the development of peer relations, suggesting that having an ability to understand, regulate, and cope with different emotions is related to positive social behaviors (Denham et al., 2003).

Emotional Competence

Emotional competence can be defined as self-efficacy in situations that evoke emotions (Saarni, 1999). Emotional competence entails recognizing and understanding the emotions of the self and others, the capacity for empathy, the ability to express and regulate one's own emotions, and emotional self-efficacy (Mathews et al., 2016). For the purpose of this study, emotional competence is conceptualized similarly to Matthews et al. (2016) and will consist of emotion recognition, empathic responses to others, and emotional self-control.

Some researchers have made an explicit divide between emotional and social competence, as results reveal that difficulties in emotional competence do not account for all social deficits (Berkovits & Baker, 2014). However, many studies have revealed that social competence in childhood is linked to early emotional competence, which suggests that emotional competence is crucial in the formation of peer relationships (Blair et al., 2015; Denham et al., 2003). Saarni (1999) emphasizes the inextricable nature of social and emotional competence by stating that “emotion-eliciting transactions... are invariably social in nature” (2). Blair et al. (2015) likewise concluded that emotional and social development are highly interdependent, positing that emotional competence – particularly emotion regulation – allows children the opportunity to interact more positively in social situations, which promotes the development of social competence. Better understanding of emotions has also been linked to higher social status, further highlighting the link between these two constructs (Hubbard & Coie, 1994).

Emotional competence is related to numerous positive outcomes. For example, early emotional maturity is linked to later emotional well-being (Guhn et al., 2016) as well as academic competence (Carroll et al., 2001). Emotional competence is associated with increased social competence, as would be expected due to their reciprocal nature. Specifically, studies have shown that emotional competence is associated with positive peer experiences, the ability to initiate social interactions, and empathic behavior (Dunn, 1995; Garner & Estep, 2001). Emotional competence difficulties also have been linked to increased anxiety (Mathews et al., 2016), long-term behavioral problems (Rydell et al., 2007), peer rejection (Henricsson & Rydell, 2006; Hubbard, 2001), deficits in empathy for others (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001), as well as risky sexual behaviors, drug use, and behavioral adjustment problems (Hessler & Katz, 2010).

Children with disabilities have deficits in emotional competence. Children with emotional disturbances have difficulties understanding that they can control their behavioral responses to emotions (Semrud-Clikeman & Schafer, 2000). Children with ADHD have difficulties in controlling their emotions as well as understanding the emotions of others (Saarni, 1999). Difficulties in emotional competence have also been found for children with developmental delays (Berkovits & Baker, 2014), intellectual disabilities (Pochon & Declercq, 2014), learning disabilities (Elias, 2004), and autism spectrum disorder (Begeer et al., 2008).

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (SEL) refers to the process by which individuals acquire knowledge and skills related to a) identifying and understanding their own emotions as well as the emotions of others; b) managing their emotions and behaviors; c) developing empathy and social awareness; d) developing social problem-solving strategies; and e) establishing and maintaining positive relationships with others (CASEL, 2017; Schonfeld et al., 2015). The goals of SEL include fostering self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2017).

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) passed Public Act 93-0495, which mandates that public schools incorporate social and emotional learning standards. ISBE suggests several ways in which SEL instruction can be included in the school, such as embedding SEL instruction into the existing curricula, providing opportunities for students to practice social and emotional skills, and taking advantage of teachable moments that occur during the school day. The three overarching goals for social-emotional learning include: 1) developing self-awareness and self-management skills; 2) using social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships; and 3) demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible

behaviors in various contexts including the home, school, and community. The goals have different sub-goals for different age groups. Incorporating SEL at all grade levels is important, as some research reveals that SEL provided in earlier grade levels does not produce long-term outcomes unless SEL activities continue (Zhai, Raver, & Jones, 2015). The beliefs and attitudes of parents and teachers are important because these mandates are in place.

The SEL mandate does not outline a specific way in which SEL should be incorporated; however, researchers have outlined various ways for schools to include SEL. These strategies include pairing children with developmental delays with typically-developing children, prompting social skills in the classroom, fostering inclusive classrooms, and utilizing formal curricula (Buckley, Storino, & Saarni, 2003; Guralnick, 2010; Kwon, Elicker, & Kontos, 2011). Although the mandate does not specify who is responsible for the provision of SEL supports, research has shown that classroom teachers in all grades can effectively implement SEL by incorporating it into their routines (Durlak et al., 2011).

SEL in the schools is related to various positive outcomes for youth. SEL instruction has led to the enhancement of various components of social and emotional competence. For example, SEL curricula increase students' abilities to manage emotions, interact positively with others, and attain positive overall social-emotional well-being (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012). SEL also increases social skills and reduces impulsivity (Zhai et al., 2015).

Improvements in social-emotional functioning through SEL instruction may lead to increased academic performance. One meta-analysis found that academic performance increased by 11% for students who received SEL (Durlak et al., 2011). Other studies have demonstrated an increase in reading achievement for lower achieving students, indicating that SEL may have particularly positive implications for children who are struggling in school (Ashdown & Bernard,

2012). This study is supported by findings that low achieving youth have deficits in social-emotional competence similar to children with learning disabilities (Sater & French, 1989). Interventions specifically targeting children with disabilities have also been found to improve school grades (Espelage, Rose, & Polanin, 2016). Academic improvements following SEL have been demonstrated for children between kindergarten and twelfth grade (Durlak et al., 2011).

Children with IEPs may have individualized goals pertaining to SEL. Such goals allow for progress monitoring efforts in relation to perceived social-emotional deficits. However, IEP goals for SEL are often omitted or are too vague to enact change. Kwon, Elicker, and Kontos (2011) found that although socially-relevant IEP goals matched the children's social functioning, teachers did not differentiate their interactions with students based on the varying social needs of children in response to their IEP goals. A closer look at teacher perceptions of the importance of SEL in the schools may elucidate this issue. Furthermore, this study explored the perceptions of parents with children who have IEPs or 504 Plans to address whether social goals are of importance to these parents.

Ecological Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model of development outlines the interactions between an individual and the various contexts which the individual occupies. The relations between the individual and the immediate contexts within which the individual is situated, including home and school, are microsystems. Furthermore, a mesosystem comprises the interactions between major microsystems at play in an individual's life, and a macrosystem consists of the greater social system surrounding the individual, including legislation. Sheridan, Warnes, and Dowd (2004) state that congruence across contexts within which an individual is situated is most conducive to positive and long-term outcomes for youth. Specifically, they posit

that the relationships among the microsystems operating in a youth's life are crucial to healthy social and emotional development.

The authors of the present study examined the mesosystem-level relationship between home and school and how the relationship influences SEL in the schools. A lack of congruence between parent and teacher ratings of the perceived importance of SEL in the schools may reveal a disparity that requires attention to ensure positive outcomes for students. Furthermore, this study took into consideration the macrosystemic influence of the Illinois SEL mandate on teacher attitudes toward SEL in the schools.

Home-School Collaboration

Home-school collaboration is a process which involves at least one parent and one individual from the school system who share in decision-making for a child. Individuals engage in collaborative efforts to determine mutual academic and behavioral goals for which all participants are committed to working toward (Cowan, Swearer, & Sherida, 2004). The definition of home-school collaboration implies that both the parents and the educators agree on goals; however, these two important microsystems within which a child is situated can be vastly different. The mesosystem may be characterized by home-school mismatch, a term that encompasses differences in culture, language, values, and practices between home and school (Barbarin et al., 2010). Whether or not this mismatch is disadvantageous is unclear at this time (see Barbarin et al., 2010); this study adds to the literature regarding home-school match with respect to the way parents and teachers view SEL.

Home-school collaboration is beneficial in myriad ways. Sheridan et al. (2004) indicate that a collaborative relationship between a child's parents and teacher is associated with increases in grades, academic achievement, school attendance, and positive behaviors. In

addition, parental involvement in school is linked to increases in academic achievement, positive attitude toward school, and positive behavior (Ferrara, 2009). Many researchers suggest that interventions specifically for children with social-emotional deficits should include both parents and teachers (Guralnick, 2010). Other researchers have posited that the success of students with disabilities is maximized when a collaborative relationship exists between parents and special education experts (Bailey et al., 1998; Wellner, 2012). Comprehensive interventions that include several agents of change can be more beneficial for children, particularly younger children (Mahoney & Wiggers, 2007).

Research has indicated that parents become less involved with their children's schooling as their children age. Green et al. (2007) found that involvement decreased at each grade level between first and sixth grade. They also found that parents of children in middle school were less involved on average than parents of children in elementary school. The results also indicated that parents reported more home-based involvement compared to school-based involvement with their child's education. A child's poor behavior and attitude toward school is also associated with decreased involvement of both mothers and fathers (Skaliotis, 2010). This decrease in school involvement as children progress through school may have implications for children with social and emotional difficulties as well as students who have academic difficulties, as research indicates that children with disabilities benefit from parents who are involved in their school lives. However, parental involvement in the form of parents talking to their children about school may increase even though involvement in school-based activities decreases (Muller, 1998).

Some studies have revealed that parents of children with special needs may be more likely to be involved in their child's schooling (Peters et al., 2008) while other studies have found no significant impact of child's ability status on parental involvement (Skaliotis, 2010).

Parents of children who have an IEP are required to be a member of the IEP team for their child and attend IEP meetings. Thus, they are an integral part of their child's education. However, it is unclear how much parents are actively participating during IEP meetings. As Finan (2016) indicates, many parents "feel disconnected and passive attendees" to the meetings (13). Little to no research has explored how parental involvement may differ depending on the child's specific disability.

The results of this study add to the literature by investigating how parental ratings of the importance of SEL in the schools differ based on their child's age. These data can serve as an indicator of parental involvement in the sense that parents are considering how important various aspects of school are for their children. Specifically, parents who indicate that SEL is highly important in the schools may be considered as more involved because they are critically evaluating what they believe is important for their child within the school context.

IDEA Classifications

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), passed in 1975, ensured that children with disabilities received an appropriate education, which involved services to address their unique needs (Finan, 2016). IDEA has thirteen categories under which a child's disabilities may be classified in order for the child to receive school-based services. For the purpose of this study, nine of these categories are outlined below (see Maanum, 2009).

1) Specific Learning Disability: Specific Learning Disability (SLD) refers to any deficit in academic performance that cannot be accounted for by deficits in global intellectual functioning.

2) *Other Health Impairment*: This category is reserved for individuals who have a chronic or acute health problem that affects their school performance. Examples include asthma, epilepsy, and ADHD.

3) *Autism Spectrum Disorder*: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is categorized by deficits in communication and social skills.

4) *Emotional Disturbance*: Emotional disturbance is an umbrella term for psychological difficulties that affect a child's ability to learn, maintain interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers, or result in negative behaviors. Examples include schizophrenia, depression, and bipolar disorder.

5) *Speech or Language Impairment*: This category covers any impairments in communication, including impaired fluency, articulation, comprehension, or expression.

6) *Orthopedic Impairment*: Orthopedic impairment include any physical disability that could affect a child's academic performance.

7) *Intellectual Disability*: Intellectual Disability (ID) is characterized by below-average general intellectual functioning and deficits in adaptive functioning that impact a child's educational performance.

8) *Vision/ Hearing Impairment*: This category represents a conglomeration of four categories listed in IDEA that pertain to vision and hearing impairments. Difficulties with hearing or vision must impact communication and daily functioning for children to receive any educational supports.

9) *Multiple Disabilities*: This category is reserved for children who exhibit concerns that align with two or more categories outlined by IDEA. Individuals who are found eligible for

special education under this category tend to require high levels of support throughout a school day.

Children who classify for special education under these categories exhibit different strengths and weaknesses. These differences in abilities may result in differing goals and priorities for teachers and parents. However, little to no previous research has addressed this possibility. In this study, parents and teachers who have contact with children who have IEPs and 504 Plans were asked to report the nature of the specific disabilities of youth. Researchers assessed whether parents and teachers prioritize SEL differently based on the disability category reported.

Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions of SEL

Teachers' perceptions of SEL are of particular importance, as they are the primary implementers of SEL in the schools. Indeed, as Schonert-Reichl (2017) indicates, positive attitudes toward SEL, motivation to develop their students' SEL skills, and how well SEL fits into the school and classroom are all factors that can influence teacher implementation of SEL. Teachers perceive SEL to be important in school and life (98.9% of respondents) and perceive that SEL skills enhance academic outcomes (96.2% of respondents) (Buchanan, Gueldner, Tran, & Merrell, 2009). Other studies have revealed that 77% of teachers believe SEL will have a positive impact on academic performance (Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013). Furthermore, 79% of teachers who reported poor student behavior as at least somewhat of a problem in their schools believe that SEL will improve student performance (Bridgeland et al., 2013). However, other studies have found that only 68.9% of teachers believe that SEL should be taught in the classrooms, and many reported that it was not feasible to devote class time or prep time to SEL (Buchanan et al., 2009). Other studies reveal that only 19% of teachers believe SEL does not

have a place in the schools (Bridgeland et al., 2013). These studies create an unclear picture of teachers' attitudes toward SEL; this study investigated teachers' attitudes toward SEL as well as how important they believe SEL components are in relation to academics.

Teachers' beliefs regarding the importance of SEL are dependent upon the age of the children in question. Bridgeland and associates (2013) concluded that teachers see SEL as most relevant for elementary-aged children. Specifically, 77% of all teachers surveyed opined that SEL is an important part of school for children in preschool and elementary school. However, the percentage of teachers declined to 69% for children in middle school and 56% for youth in high school (Bridgeland et al., 2013). Most importantly, only 42% of high school teachers believe SEL should have a place in the schools, and only 28% of high school teachers reported that SEL was a part of their schools (Bridgeland et al., 2013). These results demonstrate that many teachers believe SEL becomes less important as youth grow older; this study adds to the literature by surveying teachers in Illinois, a state in which SEL is mandated, to assess attitudes toward SEL in kindergarten through high school. In addition, open-ended questions assessed teacher explanations for their perceptions of SEL, as it is unclear why SEL is viewed as less important in the later school years.

Another study found that teachers, despite acknowledging the importance of SEL, believe parents should be primarily responsible for SEL (Zinsser, Shewark, Denha, & Curby, 2014). In addition, 81% of teachers indicate that a big challenge of SEL implementation is the lack of reinforcement in the home (Bridgeland et al., 2013). These attitudes likely undermine SEL if teachers do not acknowledge how SEL fits into school. Teachers may devote less time and energy to SEL if they do not acknowledge its utility. This study examined teachers' beliefs about

the appropriateness of SEL in the schools and adds to the literature on who teachers deem responsible for SEL.

Teachers of inclusive classrooms may be more attuned to individual students' social or emotional goals. A study by Kwon, Elicker, and Kontos (2011) found that teachers in general education classrooms emphasized the importance of social goals more heavily compared to teachers in self-contained special education classrooms. The authors suggested this may have been due to the sample of the study and state that further study is required to shed further light on this finding.

Parental perceptions of the importance of SEL has been found to be less positive than that of teachers. One study asked parents and teachers to rate the appropriateness of SEL in a public elementary school, the time priority of SEL versus academic instruction, and the value of specific affective activities. Overall, the mean attitudes for teachers was 3.90 and was 3.71 for parents (Burlison, Nelson, & Tollefson, 1980). This study illuminates the difference between parent and teacher priorities; however, this study was conducted before the implementation of mandatory SEL curricula, so the data may be outdated. More research is needed to address the differences between parent and teacher perceptions of SEL.

A study by Spann, Kohler, and Soenksen (2003) also revealed that parents of children with IEPs may have a priority of social skill development for their children within the school system. The study included 45 parents of children with autism spectrum disorder or other pervasive developmental disorders who had an IEP. The parents were asked about their child's placement in the school (general education or special education), the extent of home-school communication, and priorities and satisfaction with the school services provided to their child. Fifty-one percent of parents interviewed indicated that making friends and interacting with peers

were among their topmost priorities for their child. Furthermore, the study's results indicated that nearly half of parents thought the schools were doing little or nothing to address their main priorities for their children. These results indicate that parents prioritize social skill development in the school for their children with IEPs but feel the school's efforts are inadequately addressing these needs. However, all parents in this study had children with autism spectrum disorder or other pervasive developmental disorders, which are disabilities with marked impairment in reciprocal social interactions. Parents may prioritize social skill development more highly for their child with autism spectrum disorder due to the deficits in social interactions that are inherent to autism spectrum disorder. Parents of children with disabilities that do not entail social deficits may prioritize these skills differently. Indeed, parents of children with autism spectrum disorder may be more concerned with their child's social and emotional development compared with parents of children with language impairments (Lindsay et al., 2016). This finding indicates that parents of children with autism spectrum disorder prioritize social development more highly than parents of children with language impairments despite evidence that suggests that children with language impairment have deficits in social and emotional functioning (Joffe & Black, 2012). It remains unclear how parents of children with a variety of disabilities would prioritize social and emotional skill development within the context of the school.

Additionally, Spann, Kohler, & Soenksen (2003) found that parents of older children with IEPs were less satisfied with the school's abilities to meet their children's needs. Specifically, 83% of parents of children aged 15 to 18 believed that schools were doing little or nothing to address their child's needs, which translated to 67% of the same parent group reporting low satisfaction with the school's ability to address their children's needs. The gap between parental priorities and school priorities represents a significant source of discord in the

child's mesosystem of home and school. As previous literature has indicated, collaboration between parents and teachers of children with special needs leads to the best outcomes for these children (Wellner, 2012). This study adds to the literature on this issue by assessing parents' and teachers' perceptions of the match between school goals and parental goals for children with IEPs or 504 Plans. The study also investigated the nature of the divergent priorities between parents and teachers.

The Current Study

The present study was designed to address various gaps in the literature. The researchers asked the following questions:

- 1) Do parents and teachers rate the importance of SEL differently?

We expected a difference in parent and teacher priorities related to SEL due to past studies' findings of divergent parent and school goals for children (Spann, Kohler, & Soeknsen, 2003; Burlison et al., 1980). It was hypothesized that, in general, teachers would rate SEL as more important in the school compared to parents.

- 2) Do teacher ratings of the importance of SEL differ based on classroom composition (i.e. general education without children with disabilities, general education with children with disabilities, and special education classrooms)?

Previous studies have indicated a need to explore this dimension further, as research has found that general education teachers were more aware of the socially-oriented goals of children with disabilities within their classroom (Kwon et al., 2011). It was hypothesized that, due to a general education classroom teacher's exposure to a wide array of social and emotional skills that children possess, general education teachers would be more likely to identify children in their classrooms who would benefit from

SEL. Therefore, it was expected that general education teachers with children with IEPs in their classrooms would prioritize SEL more than special education teachers or general education teachers without children with disabilities in their classrooms.

- 3) Do parents of children with IEPs or 504 Plans rate the importance of SEL differently than parents of children without IEPs or 504 Plans?

It was hypothesized that parents of children with IEPs or 504 Plans would prioritize social skills more than parents of typically-developing children. Past research has shown that children with disabilities tend to have more difficulties in peer-based social interactions (Guralnick, 2010), and parents prioritize social goals for their children with disabilities (Spann et al., 2003).

- 4) Do parents of children with IEPs rate the importance of SEL differently based on their child's disability?

As research has indicated, children with different disabilities have different social-emotional difficulties (Kwon et al., 2011). However, little is known regarding how parents may view these disabilities differently in terms of their child's social-emotional needs. It was hypothesized that all parents of children with disabilities will rate social-emotional skills as important, but that parents of children with emotional disturbance or disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder that typically involve impaired social functioning will prioritize social-emotional learning in the schools more highly than parents of children with other disabilities, such as physical disabilities or learning disabilities.

- 5) Do parental ratings of SEL differ by the child's grade in school?

The difference in parental ratings of SEL is important due to the differentiation outlined by the Illinois state mandate for SEL. SEL is mandated at all grade levels for children in public schools; however, it is unclear how parents regard the importance of SEL for their children throughout schooling. ISBE specifies specific SEL goals for the following age groups: 1) kindergarten through third grade; 2) fourth and fifth grade; 3) sixth through eighth grade; 4) ninth and tenth grade; and 5) eleventh and twelfth. This study aimed to elucidate parents' perceptions of the importance of social and emotional learning at different time points in children's lives.

6) Do the goals of parents and school personnel differ for students who have IEPs?

Past research has shown that schools and parents have different priorities for children (Spann, Kohler, & Soeknsen, 2003). The researchers hypothesized that parents would report that schools are not addressing the needs they feel are most important for their children, whereas teachers would report that the schools are adequately addressing students' needs. This analysis was exploratory.

7) What SEL practices do parents and teachers see utilized within their schools?

This analysis was qualitative and exploratory. It was hypothesized that teachers and parents would report a wide range of practices including non-descript support to research-based curricula. In addition, it was hypothesized that teachers may report more specific curricula, as they have more direct contact with the curricula used in the schools.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

Participants

Fifty-four public-school teachers participated in this study. Ninety-six percent of respondents were female. Eighty-five percent of the sample was white, 3.7% was Hispanic/Latino(a), 1.9% was Asian American, 1.9% was black, and another 7.4% reported multiple ethnicities or did not respond. Teachers from all grades completed the survey: 45.2% reported teaching in an elementary school, 16.9% in a middle school, and 5.7% in a high school. Additionally, 90.6% of respondents reported having children with IEPs and 504 Plans in their classroom.

In addition, 114 parents of children in grades kindergarten through 12th grade enrolled in a public school participated in this study. Eighty-six percent of the respondents were female. Ninety-one percent of the sample was white, while 2.6% were Asian American, 0.8% were Hispanic/Latino(a), and 4.2% reported having another race/ethnicity or did not respond. Parents of children across grade levels completed the survey: 56.4% had a child in elementary school, 15.7% in middle school, and 29.7% in high school. In addition, 20.4% of parent respondents indicated that they had one child with an IEP or 504 Plan and 3.5% of respondents indicated that they had more than one child with an IEP or 504 Plan.

Parent participants were recruited using online advertisements in two local school districts. In addition, parents who had expressed interest in being part of various research studies were mailed a letter explaining the study and providing a link to the survey. Finally, an e-mail link was distributed to staff at a local university. The investigators also posted hard copies of flyers in teacher break rooms in various Illinois schools.

Measures

This study utilized two questionnaires administered via Qualtrics. One questionnaire was intended for the teachers in the sample while the other was intended for the parents in the sample (see Appendices B and C).

The Likert-scale and rank-order items presented in these questionnaires were derived from the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale, 2nd edition (BERS-2) which assesses behavioral and emotional strengths of children (see Epstein, Ryser, & Pearson, 2002). The BERS-2 has 52 items that fit into five subscales: Interpersonal Strength (measures a child's ability to control emotions and behaviors in social contexts), Family Involvement (measures a child's relationship with family), School Functioning (measures a child's competence regarding classroom tasks), Intrapersonal Strength (measures a child's view of his or her own competence), and Affective Strength (measures a child's ability to give and receive affection) (Epstein et al., 2002). The questionnaire items were selected from four of the five subscales in the BERS-2. The researchers excluded the subscale of Family Involvement due to the study's focus on SEL in the school context.

The questionnaires included eight Likert-scale items regarding the importance of SEL in the schools, including four reverse-scored items. Responses to these eight items were averaged for each participant to create a single measure of participants' perceptions of the importance of SEL in the schools. This scale's internal reliability for the current sample was adequate for parents ($\alpha = .76$) as well as teachers ($\alpha = .83$). Participants also responded to an open-ended question regarding their responses to these items. In addition, both questionnaires included a rank-order question for which participants were asked to rank the importance of ten social, emotional, behavioral, and academic skills. SEL items were combined to form an average for

each participant. Participants were presented with an open-ended question regarding their rankings of the items. Additionally, participants responded to an open-ended question regarding the SEL supports they see employed within the schools.

In addition to items regarding the perceptions of SEL, the questionnaires included Likert-scale items and an open-ended question regarding the fit between parent and school goals for children with IEPs (if applicable to the participant). These questions were included on an exploratory basis. Participants also reported demographic information including grade taught, gender, and race or ethnicity (teachers) and child's gender, grade in school, IEP / 504 status, and type of disability if applicable (parents).

A coding manual was created based on the qualitative responses received for each of the three open-ended questions on the survey using a constant comparative method within a grounded theory framework (Nastasi, 2009). The researcher adopted an inductive approach by reading through parent and teacher responses separately and creating a coding manual for each qualitative question. After all responses were read and themes were pulled from each response, similar themes were combined. For example, the themes of social-emotional learning as a life skill and supporting students as future citizens were combined into one theme describing *Future-Oriented* reasons to support SEL. Qualitative responses were reviewed on three separate occasions to ensure all applicable codes were identified. After parent and teacher responses were thoroughly reviewed, coding manuals for parents and teachers were combined for each qualitative question and the resulting codes were applied to the responses. Some responses did not fit any theme and were, thus, not coded.

Due to the inductive nature of the investigation, the primary researcher recruited an independent coder in order to obtain information regarding interrater reliability. Interrater

reliability was calculated based on 20% of the responses from both parents and teachers for each question set. The three coding manuals had interrater reliabilities of 63%, 63%, and 80% interrater reliability upon initial coding. The majority of coding disagreements were regarding the definition of “home-school collaboration efforts.” One coder interpreted this code as any contact between the home and school rather than collaborative problem-solving efforts to meet student needs. The definition was consequently limited to collaborative efforts involving parents or guardians and the school staff. All coding disagreements were discussed until interrater reliability was 100%. In addition, the primary researcher reviewed several responses outside the set used for interrater reliability to finalize coding after certain ambiguities were indicated by the second coder. The final coding manual as well as representative responses for each code are provided in Appendix A.

Procedure

Participants were asked to consent to complete an online questionnaire. After consenting to participate, teachers completed a 15-item questionnaire. Parents completed a similar 20-item questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: Two independent-samples t tests were conducted to compare teacher and parent responses regarding their perceptions of SEL in the schools. The four negatively worded Likert-scale items were reverse scored in order to obtain an average appropriateness rating for parents and teachers for which higher scores meant more support of SEL in the schools. There was a significant difference between how parents and teachers view the importance of SEL, $t(153) = -2.17, p = .03$. Specifically, parents rated SEL as less important ($M = 5.47, SD = .75$) compared to teachers ($M = 5.76, SD = .84$). Additionally, rank-order items related to SEL were reverse scored for both parents and teachers so that higher rankings were reflected by higher scores, and the scores for SEL-items only were averaged and compared. There was no difference between how parents ($M = 6.04, SD = 1.29$) and teachers ($M = 6.24, SD = 1.80$) ranked SEL-related items, $t(134) = -.72, p = .47$.

Qualitative analyses provided to explain the ratings of the importance of SEL revealed that *SEL Affects Academics* was the code identified the most often as the reason to support SEL in the schools by both parents and teachers (Parents = 25.8% of responses, Teachers = 43.2% of responses). In addition, 25.8% of parent responses fit the code *Schools as Exposure Site to SEL Skills* compared to only 5.4% of teachers. Other major codes that emerged were the were *Caring for the Whole Student* (Parents = 15.1%, Teachers = 18.9%), *Future-Oriented* (Parents = 21.5%, Teachers = 18.9%), and *Extended Amount of Time at School* (Parents = 20.4%, Teachers = 5.4%). Parents and teachers also mentioned concerns with incorporating SEL into the school, including “*Parents should*” statements indicating that parents are responsible for supporting SEL (Parents = 16.1%, Teachers = 24.3%), *SEL Needs Not Met at Home* (Parents = 10.8%, Teachers = 16.2%), *Schools with Limited Resources* to support SEL (Parents = 5.4%, Teachers = 8.1%),

and *Academics First* indicating that academic skills were more important than SEL skills (Parents = 6.5%, Teachers = 10.8%).

Additional qualitative responses provided to explain rank orderings of academic and social-emotional tasks indicate that 45.2% of teacher responses were coded with *SEL as Most Important* whereas only 19.5% of parent responses fit this code. Conversely, 26.8% of parent responses fit the code *Academics First*, whereas only 6.5% of teacher responses fit this code. Other responses revealed codes such as *Balance between SEL and Academics* (Parents = 18.3%, Teachers = 6.5%), and *Future-Oriented Skills* (Parents = 23.2%, Teachers = 12.9%).

Hypothesis 2: This hypothesis was set forth to determine whether there were differences between teacher views of the importance of SEL in the schools based on classroom composition: general education without children with IEPs or 504 Plans, general education with children with IEPs or 504 Plans, and special education classrooms. Due to a survey error in which data related to classroom composition was not collected, analyses were conducted based on data indicating whether each teacher had children with IEPs or 504 Plans in their current classroom to create the following groups: general education with children with IEPs or 504 Plans and general education without children with IEPs or 504 Plans. Responses to Likert-scale questionnaire items regarding the appropriateness of SEL in the schools were averaged and used to compare the teachers' beliefs using an independent-samples *t* test. There was no difference in the rated importance of SEL in the schools between teachers with children with IEPs or 504 Plans in their classrooms ($M = 5.80, SD = .82$) and teachers without children with IEPs or 504 Plans in their classrooms ($M = 5.28, SD = .99$), $t(47) = 1.33, p = .19$. Rank order items were also assessed to compare how teachers with different classroom compositions ranked the items. SEL items were averaged for both teacher groups, and averages were compared using an independent-samples *t* test. There

was no difference in rankings of SEL items in relation to academic items between teachers with children with IEPs or 504 Plans in their classroom ($M = 6.23, SD = 1.88$) and teachers without children with IEPs or 504 Plans in their classroom ($M = 6.30, SD = .70$), $t(41) = -.07, p = .94$. However, these analyses should be interpreted with caution, as only five teachers reported that they did not have children with IEPs or 504 Plans in their classroom.

An exploratory one-sample t test was conducted to determine whether teacher ratings of the importance of SEL was greater than an average rating of four. Results indicate that teachers ($M = 5.76, SD = .84$) view SEL as more appropriate in the schools compared to a neutral rating of four, $t(49) = 14.89, p < .001$. In addition, a one-sample t test was conducted to determine whether teachers ranked SEL items more highly than a neutral view represented by a value of five and a half. Results indicate that teachers ($M = 6.24, SD = 1.80$) ranked SEL items significantly more highly compared to a neutral ranking of five and a half, $t(42) = 2.69, p = .01$.

Hypothesis 3: To assess differences in the perception of the importance of SEL in the schools between parents of children with IEPs/ 504 Plans and parents of typically developing children, responses to Likert-scale items regarding the appropriateness of SEL in the schools were averaged and compared using an independent-samples t test. There was not a significant difference between parents of children with disabilities ($M = 5.56, SD = .71$) and parents of children without disabilities ($M = 5.44, SD = .76$) regarding the perception of the importance of SEL in the schools, $t(103) = .69, p = .49$. Rank order items were assessed to compare the priorities of parents based on the ability status of their child. The SEL items were averaged for both parent groups, and the averages were compared using an independent-samples t test. There was not a significant difference between parents of children with disabilities ($M = 6.32, SD =$

1.25) and parents of children without disabilities ($M = 5.95$, $SD = 1.29$) with regard to rankings of SEL items, $t(92) = 1.24$, $p = .22$.

An exploratory one-sample t test was conducted to determine whether parental Likert-scale ratings of the importance of SEL were significantly different from an average rating of four. The results indicate that parental attitudes toward SEL ($M = 5.47$, $SD = .75$) are significantly higher than four, $t(104) = 20.18$, $p < .001$. In addition, a one-sample t test was conducted to determine whether parental rank orders of SEL items ($M = 6.05$, $SD = 1.28$) were ranked more highly compared to the average of five and a half; results indicate that items related to SEL were ranked significantly higher than neutral, $t(93) = 4.15$, $p < .001$.

Hypothesis 4: Due to an error with the survey, data to address this hypothesis were not collected.

Hypothesis 5: To assess the potential differences in parental beliefs of the importance of SEL in the schools based on child grade level, Likert-scale items were averaged and compared based on the following grade levels: elementary (kindergarten through fifth grade), middle (sixth through eighth grade), and high school (ninth through twelfth grade). Comparisons of rank order items were also assessed according to the same grade groupings. Rank order items pertinent to SEL were averaged and compared across the three groups using a one-way ANOVA.

Results indicate that parents of children in elementary school ($M = 5.48$, $SD = .74$), middle school ($M = 5.53$, $SD = .82$), and high school ($M = 5.41$, $SD = .77$) did not differ in their perception of SEL, $F(2, 100) = .16$, $p = .85$. Likewise, rank orderings of SEL items did not significantly differ across elementary ($M = 5.88$, $SD = 1.36$), middle ($M = 6.16$, $SD = 1.28$), and high school ($M = 6.38$, $SD = 1.10$), $F(2, 90) = 1.29$, $p = .28$.

Hypothesis 6: Due to an error with the survey, data related to parents' views of IEP goals were not collected. As the hypothesis initially regarded the comparison of parent and teacher responses, this hypothesis could not be addressed. However, teacher views of IEP goals were still analyzed on an exploratory basis. Four items were reverse scored so that higher scores reflect more support for each item. The items fell into the following conceptual categories: the degree of perceived fit between school and parent goals, the extent to which SEL goals are included in IEPs, the perceived effectiveness of how schools are helping children with IEPs, and the extent to which the services children receive in the schools are related to their IEP goals. Average scores were compared to an average rating of four to determine if teacher views were more positive than neutral.

All results were significant at the $p < .01$ level, indicating that teachers view each category more positively than neutral: perceived fit between school and parent goals ($M = 4.50$, $SD = .98$), perceived inclusion of SEL-related goals in IEPs ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.46$), perceived effectiveness of schools in helping children with IEPs ($M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.32$), and perceived match between goals and services for children with IEPs ($M = 5.70$, $SD = .98$).

Hypothesis 7: Qualitative responses regarding specific SEL supports noted within the schools were coded. The most frequent code was *School Staff* (Parents = 22.5%, Teachers = 56.8%). The school staff listed as SEL supports included social workers, school psychologists, counselors, and intervention specialists. Teacher responses more often fit the codes *General Classroom Strategies* and *Non-Specific Teaching of SEL Skills* (32.4%) as well as *Formal Curricula* (24.3%), such as Second Step, compared to parents (27.0% and 6.7%, respectively). After combining codes into a new code, *Evidence-Based Practices*, the differences between the

percentages of parents and teachers mentioning specific SEL-supportive strategies becomes clearer (Parents = 13.5%, Teachers = 37.8%).

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The results of this study add to the literature regarding parent and teacher beliefs about social-emotional learning. Similar to past research, parents in this study viewed SEL as less important compared to teachers (Burlison, Nelson, & Tollefson, 1980). These results indicate that parents may not fully understand and appreciate the importance of SEL. In addition, qualitative data indicate that 26.8% of parents prioritized academic skills over SEL skills despite having acknowledged the impact of SEL on academic success. Schools should seek to inform parents of the benefits of including SEL in the school curriculum, and efforts should be made to enhance home-school collaboration as it pertains to SEL. Similarly, schools should explain the SEL supports in place at the school, as qualitative responses indicate that teachers are more knowledgeable about the specific curricula taught and strategies employed whereas parents were much more likely to mention informal compared to formal SEL supports. In particular, parents were more likely than teachers to mention staff-student relationships, exposure to various social-emotional events at school, and the extended time spent within the school. Knowledge of the specific strategies and research-based initiatives in place at the school may help parents conceptualize how SEL fits into their child's learning.

Results also indicate that the majority of both parents and teachers perceive SEL positively, despite qualitative responses in which both parents and teachers indicated that SEL was not the school's job. Parents and teachers should be educated further about the impact of SEL on academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011). In addition, various sources of evidence-based SEL support should be presented to concerned parties, as qualitative responses indicate that both parents and teachers reported specialized school personnel and general strategies as

ways in which the school is supporting SEL. Future research should work to further capture knowledge parents and teachers have regarding evidence-based SEL support strategies.

This study examined the differences in teacher beliefs regarding SEL based on classroom composition to add to previous literature indicating that teachers of integrated classrooms may be maximally sensitive to SEL needs (Kwon et al., 2011). The results of this study indicated that there was no difference between teachers based on whether they had children in their current classroom who had IEPs or 504 Plans. However, it should be noted that there were only 5 teachers who reported that they did not have children with IEPs or 504 Plans in their classroom. These results may reflect the high percentage of classrooms with push-in services. It may no longer be an area of interest to study whether teachers' perceptions of SEL differ based on classroom composition, particularly when including strictly general education classrooms. Although this may vary based upon the state, this study demonstrates the amount of contact that teachers in Illinois have with children with disabilities due to inclusion efforts. Future research could extend these comparisons to LBS1s, general education teachers, special education teachers, and support staff such as school psychologists, social workers, and principals. This research would shed light on the relationship between experience with children with disabilities and/or training experiences and individuals' perceptions of SEL.

Despite previous literature that suggests that parents of children with disabilities prioritize social goals for their children, the results of this study did not reveal a significant difference in how parents with and without children with disabilities view the importance of SEL (Spann et al., 2003). However, despite being nonsignificant, the results are in the expected direction such that parents of children with disabilities viewed SEL as more important and ranked it more highly compared to parents of children without disabilities. Future research

should explore these potential differences and how the prioritization of SEL for parents of children with disabilities may affect parental satisfaction with school-based services.

Little to no research has investigated whether parental perceptions of SEL differ depending upon the grade of their child. The results of this study indicate that SEL prioritization does not differ by grade level. However, the rank order data revealed a trend towards parents prioritizing SEL over academics in higher grades. This result is in conflict with past research regarding teachers' perceptions of SEL based on grade-level taught (Bridgeland et al., 2013). Qualitative responses in this study revealed that many participants indicated that SEL was important in becoming a member of society; one possible explanation could be that parents of older children are more aware of how SEL impacts their child's prospects related to college or job success and, therefore, prioritize SEL differently compared to parents of younger children. Future research should explore parental perceptions of SEL further with particular attention to their perceptions over time.

Although data related to parents' views of IEP goals were not collected, disallowing researchers from comparing parent and teacher views, teacher views were still analyzed. Overall, teachers viewed all aspects of IEPs as significantly more positive than a neutral rating. These results indicate that teachers think IEPs are helping students, that IEPs include social goals, and that services children receive are related to their goals. Future research should explore how these perceptions compare to parental perceptions of IEPs, as this line of research is crucial in supporting parent advocacy efforts.

This study also investigated potential barriers as it relates to SEL in the schools from both parent and teacher perspectives. Many studies have documented teacher resistance to SEL in the schools due to time constraints (Buchanan et al., 2009) or a belief that SEL does not belong in

the schools (Zinsser et al., 2014). This study confirmed these concerns, as both parents and teachers stated that the schools have limited resources and parents should be in charge of SEL. Surprisingly, parents were more likely to indicate that parents are in charge of students' SEL development despite also recognizing that schools support the development of the whole child. Further research should aim to disentangle these conflicting viewpoints to gain a clearer picture of parent perceptions of SEL.

Furthermore, this study employed a rank-order task to assess parent and teacher priorities related to what they would like students to learn at school, including both academic and social-emotional skills. Although quantitative data revealed no significant differences between rankings of SEL-relevant items overall, qualitative data indicated that parents were more likely to consider academics as the most important part of schooling for their children. These data indicate that parents hold conflicting values related to wanting the school to support their child's development in a variety of areas while also prioritizing academics. Future research should utilize this rank-order paradigm with fewer and more succinct items, as 19.5% of parents and 9.7% of teachers indicated difficulty in completing the rankings.

This study has several limitations. First of all, the sample size was limited particularly for teacher participants. The small number of teacher respondents influenced the researchers' abilities to meaningfully examine hypotheses related to differences between teachers with and without students with disabilities in their classroom. However, few teachers reported working in a general education without students with disabilities in the classroom. These data may indicate that most teachers have exposure to children with disabilities in their classroom, thereby capturing the inclusiveness of public schools.

Secondly, a majority of the parent sample was recruited via an e-mail sent out to staff members of a midwestern university. This sample of parent respondents may have skewed the data in such a way that reflects the participants' involvement in higher education. Future research should gather more representative samples of parents to obtain a more representative average parental attitude toward SEL. More representative data lead to more helpful insights into potential policy change.

Thirdly, and most critically, these results likely cannot be generalized outside of Illinois. Illinois has specific mandates to include SEL which differentially impacts teacher and parent knowledge of SEL within the schools as well as their perceptions of SEL. Researchers should expand the scope of research in this area to capture perceptions of SEL across the country in order to inform policy and educational efforts surrounding the importance of SEL.

Research indicates that SEL in the schools has positive impacts on student well-being as well as academic performance. This study adds to the literature by illustrating the converging and diverging views of parents and teachers as it pertains to SEL. School officials or other staff with a vested interest in SEL can use this data to inform their practices regarding home-school collaboration. School staff should begin conversations about the importance of SEL as well as the ways in which schools can meet SEL needs. Including parents in these conversations is a crucial way to strengthen home-school collaboration and invite parents to comment on their priorities for their own children.

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APPENDIX A: CODING MANUALS

SET 1: Likert Scale; answering the question, “Why is/isn’t SEL important?”

1: *Caring for the Whole Student* (address all needs / broader “learning”)

“[...] because it is part of teaching and caring for the whole student.”

2: *Future-Oriented* (life skill / future citizen or member of society)

“Just like educational skills, [social-emotional] skills will assist the student in being a successful adult and citizen.”

3: “*Parents Should*” statements

“While schools should spend some effort supporting social and emotional needs of their students, parents should be the primary sources of this.”

4: *SEL Needs Not Met at Home*

“For many students, basic needs are not being fulfilled in their homes.”

5: *Home-School Collaboration*

“This should be a partnership where both parents and schools are working to help students in academics as well as social and emotional learning. It isn’t all or nothing, and it isn’t just the school or just the parents.”

6: *SEL Affects Academics*

“...if a child’s social/emotional needs are met, they are in a better place to learn.”

7: *Extended Amount of Time at School*

“School is a large portion of a child’s day.”

8: *Schools with Limited Resources* (time, staff, resources, training)

“Schools are limited in their time, staff, legal boundaries, funding, and access to student lives and so can only play a supportive role.”

9: *Schools as Exposure Site to SEL Skills*

“School is the primary point of socializing for kids for 10 years and more.”

10: *SEL Supports on As-Needed Basis*

“I feel it is something that could be addressed if found necessary by school authorities or parents.”

11: *Academics First*

“I think the priority for school needs to be on academic fundamentals.”

12: *Balance between SEL and Academics*

“Mental health, social, and emotional needs should be given as much priority as any other subject.”

13: *School Struggling to Meet SEL Needs*

“...schools do not do enough to address social and emotional needs because they are obliged to be overly focused on academic benchmarks.”

14: *School Staff as Experts*

“Teachers and administrators have much more knowledge about child development and psychology than most parents...”

SET 2: Schools Addressing SEL; answering the question, “What do you see your current school doing to support SEL?”

1: *School Staff* (social worker, school psychologist, school counselor, behavior interventionist)

“We have two school social workers that aid our students.”

2: *Formal Curricula* (Second Step, Cool Tools, Be Cool)

“Our school does Second Step Lessons every Monday for 30 minutes.”

3: *Non-Specific Teaching of SEL Skills* (general reference to “curriculum” or direct teaching of SEL skills, social stories)

“Weekly social-emotional lessons...”

4: *Clip Charts* (Stop Light / red, yellow, green)

“‘Clip chart’ system that reminds children when they make good and bad social decisions.”

5: *Positive Staff-Student Relationships* (teachers in-tune to children’s needs, knowing the children as individuals)

“[School staff] establish mentor-like relationships with students with social-emotional needs.”

6: *Home-School Collaboration*

“[The interventions used at school], while not the same, [are] mimicked at home for consistency and as open conversation [between home and school].”

7: *General Classroom Strategies* (non-specific support, conversations)

“We give them one-on-one time to talk about their emotions.”

8: *Classroom Meetings* (Mindset Monday, family meetings, sunshine circles, morning meetings)

“We also address situations as they arise in the classroom, aka ‘family meetings’.”

9: *PBIS*

“Through PBIS programs that reinforce socially appropriate behaviors...”

10: *General School Approaches*

“Looking through a trauma-informed lens and offering supports to work through multiple issues.”

11: *Staff Development Meetings*

12: *Assemblies or School Programs*

“Anti-bullying campaigns and speakers...”

13: *Afterschool Activities* (sports, clubs)

“The middle school has a [...] club that perpetuates taking care of our community and building leadership.”

14: *Peer Support Systems*

“Our school has a house system to create an environment where kids in grades 4, 5, and 6 are split up randomly in order to expose kids to more than just their friend base.”

15: *Schools with Limited Resources* (time, training)

“Our social workers are so busy that they don’t have time to address all the needs in our school. The teachers have such rigorous curriculums to get through that there isn’t time there, either.”

16: *Focus is on Behaviors*

“If the child is not a typical child, then they see that child as a distraction and having behavioral issues.”

17: *Child-Specific Needs* (IEP and 504s, MTSS, problem-solving teams, SEL teams, SAIG groups)

“Some students have social work minutes...”

18: *Want More Support*

“As [a mother], I really wish that there was more individualized help available to the kids.”

19: *Grade-Level Differences*

“...aside from an anti-bullying curriculum in junior high, there isn't a formal program for older children.”

SET 3: Rank Order Explanation; answering the question. “Why did you order the items the way that you did?”

1: *SEL as Most Important* (meet basic needs before learning: includes confidence, respect for others, self-advocacy, asking for help, identifying feelings, empathy)

“[...] I believe that if one enjoys good mental health (and social and emotional well-being stems from that), then one has a propensity to do well in academic tasks.”

2: *Balance between SEL and Academics*

“Although academics are very important to me, sometimes students need the emotional support that reading and math cannot provide for them.”

3: *Whole-Person Support*

“I think that educational systems should develop a whole person.”

4: *Future-Oriented Skills* (member of society, future adult, good human being, life skills)

“Being smart, [well-read], or good at math does not equate to being a ‘good human being.’ Those things will not get a person hired at a job, help them keep a job, help them find a partner, [or] help them feel fulfilled with their lives.”

5: *Academics First*

“The primary function of school is learning.”

6: *SEL not School’s Priority*

“[SEL is] important, but not necessarily the roles of a school.”

7: *“Parents should”*

“...sharing and feelings should be more on the parents’ responsibilities.”

8: *SEL Needs Not Met at Home*

“Unfortunately, sometimes students aren’t taught [SEL skills] at home.”

9: *SEL Supports on As-Needed Basis*

“Emotional and social needs should be addressed when those needs are limiting the ability to be successful in class.”

10: *Schools with Limited Resources* (time, staff, resources, training)

“I ordered these statements based on what I think I would be able to accomplish within the given time period in school.”

12: *Standardized Testing*

“Reading and math is what students are getting tested on for grades/standardized tests.”

13: *Child-Specific Needs*

“I ranked the options about feelings a little lower because she seems to do very well in that area...”

14: *Difficulty Ordering Items*

“All are important, so ranking is a bit difficult.”

APPENDIX B: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Start of Block: Demographics

Q1 What is your gender?

Male (1)

Female (2)

Q2 What is your age?

Q3 What grade do you currently teach? Choose one.

Note: Self-contained classrooms and push-in staff, select "Other".

▼ Kindergarten (1) ... Other (14)

Display This Question:

If Q6 = Other

Q3a Please provide the grade levels with which you work.

Q4 How many years have you been teaching?

▼ 0-1 (1) ... 30+ (7)

Q5 What is your race / ethnicity?

- Black or African American (1)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native (2)
- Asian American (3)
- Hispanic / Latino(a) (4)
- White (5)
- Multiple Ethnicities (6)
- Prefer not to respond (7)
- Other (8)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Block 1

Q6 Do you **currently** have one or more students in your classroom with IEPs or 504 Plans?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Q6 = Yes

Q6a What are your students' IEPs / 504 Plans for? Select all that apply in your classroom.

- Intellectual Disability (1)
- Specific Learning Disability (2)
- Speech / Language Impairment (3)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (4)
- Emotional Disturbance (5)
- Physical Disability (6)
- Visual Impairment (7)
- Hearing Impairment / Deafness (8)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (9)
- Multiple Disabilities (10)
- Other Health Impaired (11)

Display This Question:

If Q6 = Yes

Q6b Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about IEPs / 504 Plans for the students in your **current class**.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
School goals are similar to the goals parents have for their children (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school is really helping children with IEPs and 504 Plans (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School goals include social goals for children (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The services children receive are related to their goals (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The goals I have for my students are different than the parents' goals (5)



The school's goals are only focused on education (6)



End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: SEL Appropriateness and Examples of SEL

Q7 Please rate the following items about the appropriateness of schools addressing children's social and emotional needs.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
The school should address children's social and emotional needs (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school should help students identify their feelings (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school should help children learn to be kind towards others (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school should help students identify their personal strengths (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school should focus more on math than social and emotional needs (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The school should focus more on reading than social and emotional needs (6)

The school should not be concerned with children's social and emotional needs (7)

Parents should be the ones caring for their children's social and emotional needs, not the school (8)

Q8 Please explain why you do or do not think schools should address social and emotional needs.

Q9 How do you see your school support students' social and emotional needs?

End of Block: SEL Appropriateness and Examples of SEL

Start of Block: Rank Order, Explanation, and Parent Support

Q10 Please put the following statements in order from **most important** (1) to **least important** (10) for your **current class**. If there are statements you do not find important, you do not have to rank to the item.

At school, I want my students to _____.

- _____ Learn how to follow rules (1)
- _____ Complete math problems at or above grade level (2)
- _____ Share with others (3)
- _____ Read at or above grade level (4)
- _____ Learn how to identify their feelings (5)
- _____ Accept responsibility for their own actions (6)
- _____ Pay attention in class (7)
- _____ Ask for help when they need it (8)
- _____ Show concern for the feelings of others (9)
- _____ Complete tasks on first request (10)

Q11 Please explain how you ordered the 10 statements.

End of Block: Rank Order, Explanation, and Parent Support

APPENDIX C: PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Start of Block: Demographics

Q1 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
-

Q2 What is your age?

Q3 What is your race / ethnicity?

- African American (1)
 - American Indian (2)
 - Asian American (3)
 - Hispanic / Latino(a) (4)
 - White (5)
 - Prefer not to respond (6)
 - Other (7)
-

Q4 What is your highest level of education?

- Less than high school (1)
 - High school graduate (2)
 - Some college (3)
 - 2 year degree (4)
 - 4 year degree (5)
 - Professional degree (6)
 - Doctorate (7)
-

Q5 What is your occupation?

Q6 What is your family's yearly income?

- Less than \$10,000 (1)
- \$10,000 - \$19,999 (2)
- \$20,000 - \$29,999 (3)
- \$30,000 - \$39,999 (4)
- \$40,000 - \$49,999 (5)
- \$50,000 - \$59,999 (6)
- \$60,000 - \$69,999 (7)
- \$70,000 - \$79,999 (8)
- \$80,000 - \$89,999 (9)
- \$90,000 - \$99,999 (10)
- \$100,000 - \$149,999 (11)
- More than \$150,000 (12)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Child Demographics and SEL Goals

Q7 Do any of your children have an IEP or 504 Plan?

- Yes- one child (1)
- I have more than one child with an IEP / 504 Plan (4)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Q7 = I have more than one child with an IEP / 504 Plan

Please answer the remainder of this survey with respect to only **one child** with an IEP / 504 Plan in your household.

Display This Question:

If Q7 = Yes- one child

Please answer the remainder of this survey with respect to the child in your household who has an IEP / 504 Plan.

Display This Question:

If Q7 = No

Please answer the remainder of this survey with respect to only **one child** in your household.

Display This Question:

If Q7 = Yes- one child

And Q7 = I have more than one child with an IEP / 504 Plan

Q7a What is your child's IEP / 504 Plan for? Select all that apply.

- Intellectual Disability (1)
 - Specific Learning Disability (2)
 - Speech / Language Impairment (3)
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder (4)
 - Emotional Disturbance (5)
 - Physical Disability (6)
 - Visual Impairment (7)
 - Hearing Impairment / Deafness (8)
 - Traumatic Brain Injury (9)
 - Multiple Disabilities (10)
 - Other Health Impaired (11)
-

Display This Question:

If Q7 = Yes- one child

And Q7 = I have more than one child with an IEP / 504 Plan

Q7b Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about the IEP or 504 Plan for your child.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
School goals are similar to the goals parents have for their children (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school is really helping children with IEPs and 504 Plans (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School goals include social goals for children (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The services children receive are related to their goals (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The goals I have for my students are different than the parents' goals (5)

The school's goals are only focused on education (6)

Q8 How old is your child?

Q9 In what grade is your child?

▼ Kindergarten (1) ... 12th (13)

Q10 What is your child's gender?

Male (1)

Female (2)

Q11 What is your child's race / ethnicity?

- Black or African American (1)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native (2)
- Asian American (3)
- Hispanic / Latino(a) (4)
- White (5)
- Multiple Ethnicities (6)
- Prefer not to respond (7)
- Other (8)

End of Block: Child Demographics and SEL Goals

Start of Block: SEL Appropriateness in School

Q12 Please rate the following items about the appropriateness of schools addressing children's social and emotional needs.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
The school should address children's social and emotional needs (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school should help students identify their feelings (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school should help children learn to be kind towards others (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school should help students identify their personal strengths (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The school should focus more on math than social and emotional needs (5)

The school should focus more on reading than social and emotional needs (6)

The school should not be concerned with children's social and emotional needs (7)

Parents should be the ones caring for their children's social and emotional needs, not the school (8)

Q13 Please explain why you do or do not think schools should address social and emotional needs.

Q14 How do you see your child's school support students' social and emotional needs?

End of Block: SEL Appropriateness in School

Start of Block: Rank Order, Explanation, and Parent Support of SEL



Q15 Please put the following statements in order from **most important** (1) to **least important** (10) for your child.

At school, I want my child to _____.

- _____ Learn how to follow rules (1)
- _____ Complete math problems at or above grade level (2)
- _____ Share with others (3)
- _____ Read at or above grade level (4)
- _____ Learn how to identify their feelings (5)
- _____ Accept responsibility for their own actions (6)
- _____ Pay attention in class (7)
- _____ Ask for help when they need it (8)
- _____ Show concern for the feelings of others (9)
- _____ Complete tasks on first request (10)

Q16 Please explain how you ordered the 10 statements.

End of Block: Rank Order, Explanation, and Parent Support of SEL