Core Function → **Personalized Learning: Social/ Emotional Competency**

Effective Practice → Providing instruction, modeling, classroom norms, and caring attention that promotes students' self-respect, management of emotions, concern for others, and responsibility

Indicator: The School Community Council ensures that all parents understand social/emotional competency and their role in enhancing their children's growth in (1) understanding and managing emotions, (2) setting and achieving positive goals, (3) feeling and showing empathy for others, (4) establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and (5) making responsible decisions. (6330)

Explanation: The evidence suggests that the Social Emotional Competency promotes self- and social awareness and management, as well as how to make responsible decisions. These skills have been shown to improve academic, social, and behavioral outcomes, especially when both home and school provide positive environments in which these skills can grow. Schools can help families better understand social-emotional skills for their own betterment and to help them work with their children on positive relationships, behaviors, and self-concept.

Questions: What resources will the school provide for families to better understand social-emotional concepts? What activities will the School Community Council hold to teach families about the Social Emotional Competency? What kinds of communication methods are used between teachers and families? How will the school incorporate social and emotional concepts into daily routines and interactions?

What is the Social-Emotional Competency?

The Social-Emotional Competency fosters a level of concern and respect for oneself and others strengthening skills of self-management and productive decision-making (Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015; Educator Competencies, 2015; Redding, 2016). Specifically, social-emotional learning (SEL) helps students use their "sense of self-worth, regard for others, and emotional understanding and management to set positive goals and make responsible decisions" (Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015, p. 2). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (2012) identifies five primary skills in the social-emotional domain:

- Self-awareness: Being able to identify and understand one's own emotions, thoughts, behaviors, and abilities;

- Self-management: Being able to regulate these emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in the pursuit of positive and healthy goals;

- Social awareness: Being able to understand and relate to others, identify social supports and resources, and understand social norms for how to act;

- Relationship skills: Being able to communicate and work well with others and develop positive and meaningful relationships; and

- Responsible decision-making: Being able to make productive decisions about how to behave and interact with others, based on an understanding of norms, consequences, and others' needs.

Weissberg and Cascarino (2013) write that, "SEL programming is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful" (p.

10). Yet many of these skills need to be explicitly taught to children and adolescents, especially as they pertain to the learning process. Teachers should not only instruct about these concepts but should also model and provide opportunities for their application throughout the school day, in the context of a safe environment for socializing and learning (Wiessberg & Cascarino, 2013; Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015).

Why is it so critical for schools to inform families about social-emotional learning?

This competency is both intrapersonal and interpersonal, as a function of one's own personal understanding and a positive social environment (Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015; Educator Competencies, 2015). The five skills that CASEL promotes are not only developed within this positive learning environment, but they are both put to use at school and in the community at large. Research has shown that students who have had training in the social-emotional competency are better students, better citizens, and better employees later in life, with reduced rates of negative or risky behaviors and disciplinary issues (CASEL, 2012; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013; CASEL, 2015). The Social-Emotional Competency is therefore critical for students of all ages to learn and master; students need a solid foundation in self-concept and empathy for others at an early age, but the ability to navigate "increased independence, peer pressure, and exposure to social media" in adolescent and teenage years is critical for their academic and personal success (CASEL, 2015, p. 6).

Yet much of a student's self-concept and social skills have their roots outside of the school building. Involving families in Social-Emotional Competency work allows for better coordination between what happens at school and at home and builds positive relationships between families and educators (CASEL, 2012; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013; CASEL, 2015). Having teachers and parents sharing these messages of positive social and emotional habits and skills can increase these positive outcomes, as students will see that their teachers and family share an interest in their well-being and have a consistent set of expectations for their behavior and academics at home and at school (CASEL, 2012; Redding, 2013).

Albright, Weissberg, and Dusenbury (2011) wisely point out that an SEL agenda and school-family partnerships naturally:

… share a common mission: to create an engaging and supportive climate for learning both in school and at home… [Sharing these practices] eases the transition between home and school and creates consistency and continuity in expectations for behavior, which enhances not only children's developing skill sets, but also the relationships between children and their parents, teachers, siblings, and peers. (p. 1-3)

Consequently, the engagement of families in this work, whether through the teachers or the School Community Council, is a natural fit and an effective strategy to maximize the social and emotional benefits for children.

Strategies schools can use to increase parental understanding of Social-Emotional Competency

For families who are unfamiliar with SEL, they may need to be explicitly taught, just like their students. It is as important to model these practices with adult learners as it is with children because SEL is something that can benefit everyone in both a personal and social way (CASEL, 2012; Redding, 2013). Just as parents may want to create a healthier environment at home and be more attuned to their children's emotional signals, they can also personally benefit from introspection and greater social awareness (Redding, 2013; Redding, 2016).

Schools can take a number of simple actions to help parents better understand and be able to foster SEL at home. Keeping communication clear, ongoing, constructive, and child-centered helps families understand what they can do to help their child in their learning and behavior (Albright, Weissberg, Dusenbury, 2011). Providing resources in the form of workshops, a resource room, family-school compacts, invitations into the classroom, or hallway displays can give parents tools to use with their children at home that they know will be effective and consistent with school expectations (Albright, Weissberg, Dusenbury, 2011; Redding, 2014). It is important for schools to consider differentiated and culturally relevant approaches when working with families and students alike on this often-sensitive and critical work (CASEL, 2012; Redding, 2013).

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