Why All Schools Must Be Schools of Social-Emotional Competence and Character

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What is Needed to be College, Career, Community, & Life Ready... in 2028?

www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqZiIO0YI7Y
We are preparing our students for an uncertain future! But one constant will be the importance of caring interpersonal relationships.
A person is a person through other persons. –Bantu
What do we know with certainty?
To thrive in the 21st century, students need more than traditional academic learning. They must be adept at collaboration, communication and problem-solving, which are some of the skills developed through social and emotional learning (SEL). Coupled with mastery of traditional skills, social and emotional proficiency will equip students to succeed in the swiftly evolving digital economy.

Report of the World Economic Forum, 2016, p. 4

https://www.weforum.org/reports/new-vision-for-education-fostering-social-and-emotional-learning-through-technology
We Must Shift Our Focus

Preparation for College Completion “+” and Career Continuity

Ready, Willing, and Able—Savitz-Romer & Bouffard
Closing the Revolving Door—Rutgers Collaborative Center
“Simply passing the accountability assessment is not enough for them to navigate this complex world”

(Metz Elementary Principal)
Social-emotional and character competencies are as basic, foundational, and essential to academic achievement as reading competence.
We must Turn our Jumbled Schoolhouses into Places that Synergistically Promote Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD)
The Task is One of Ethical and Moral Responsibility and Educational Equity

It must be guaranteed for children to be in a positive school climate and to systematically learn social-emotional competencies and character virtues essential for life, college, and career success. It cannot be optional.

For the future, educational equity and excellence require full preparation for the tests of life-- academic, civic, social-emotional, and character-- not mainly a life of tests.
If You Had a Magic Wand, What Values Would You Wish Your Children Would Internalize Forever?

- Friendship
- Peace
- Wisdom
- Beauty

- Long Life
- Riches
- Popularity
- Family
We Know How to Succeed

- State and National Schools of Character, including many in New Jersey
- NJ State Board of Ed Resolution for SEL
- Examples of best-practices models for SEL skill development
- Articulation of Principles for Culture of Health, Safety, Support, and Achievement in Schools
- Successful, Feasible, In-Practice Models for Ongoing Implementation Support and Continuous Improvement (e.g., NJ SSN’s)
What Kind of Schools Do you Want for YOUR Grandchildren?
NJSHACC Guidelines for Truly Achieving Schools
The Culture of a Learning Organization: Echoes of Dewey

- **INSPIRING** ................. of one another
- **CHALLENGING** ............. take risks to improve
- **SUPPORTIVE** ................. collective efficacy
- **SAFE AND HEALTHY** ...... others’ keepers
- **ENGAGED** .................... collaborative norms
- **RESPECTFUL** ............... no-fear communication
- **COMMUNITIES OF LEARNERS** ... set and pursue goals for learning together

Successful Organizational Guidelines- Schools and Units

*Have a conversation at your tables regarding the dimensions of the NJ SHACC Guidelines:*

- How would you assess whether a classroom was following each of the guidelines?
- How would you assess whether or not your school was following each of the guidelines?
- *For both students and adults, how would you make your schools-* **all aspects of them**-- more inspiring? Supportive? More of a Community of Learners?
True achievement in school and in life integrates the intellectual, emotional, and social facets of learning. These are inextricably interconnected.

How Students Can Truly Achieve: Climate, Character, and SEL Competencies

Positive, Character-Building School Climate + Explicit Instruction in SEL Skills + Habits of mind and patterns of thinking that include curiosity, explaining their reasoning, feedback process, asking questions, and defining and solving problems, and striving to communicate clearly and proudly.

We Need an Integration of Social-Emotional Competence and Character

MOSAIC

Mastering Our Skills And Inspiring Character

If Skills are the propellers,
Virtues are the rudder.
The Journey of Life requires both.
Positive (Noble) Purpose: William Damon

The intention to accomplish something that is both:

- Personally meaningful
- In service of a greater, non-destructive good
In your classes and in your life you may have learned about and encountered people with a strong sense of purpose. Similarly, you might feel your own sense of purpose. In a five-paragraph essay, that includes an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion, please respond to the following:

- What is your definition of purpose?
- What might be your purpose? Why?
- How would someone know that is your purpose in life?
Help Students Identify Their Broad Priority/Values in Multiple Intelligence Projects and Products

- What is one rule that you believe is important to live your life by, that gives your life meaning and purpose?

- If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

- Is there some situation or place that you think is unfair/makes you upset/you can’t stand?

- If we lived in a perfect world, how would people behave differently than they do now?
Resilient Schools and Students Come from a Confluence of SECD and Supportive School and Community Environments

Evidence-Based SECD Programming and Promising Practices to Support The Whole Child and All Children

Safe, Caring, Cooperative, Well-Managed Learning Environments

Teach SECD/Performance Character Competencies In ALL Tiers

Provide Opportunities for Positive Contributions, Recognition, and A Sense of Purpose And Pride in Being Part of the School For ALL Children

Less Risky Behavior, More Assets, & Positive Development

Greater Attachment, Engagement, & Commitment to Schools of Character

Better Resilience and Success in School and Life

Resilient Schools and Students Come from a Confluence of SECD and Supportive School and Community Environments
Good Science Links SECD to the Following Student Gains:

- Social-emotional skills
- Improved attitudes about self, others, and school
- Positive classroom behavior
- 10-11 percentile-point gains on standardized achievement tests

And Reduced Risks for Failure:

- Conduct problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Emotional distress

Small Steps Toward a Great Journey: How Shall We Proceed to Get to Where We Know We Must Go?
Successful 21st Century Schools Understand and Emphasize:

Systematic, comprehensive, and effective approaches to school-wide SECD are an essential component of all students’ academic and life success.

We must turn what seems Incredible into Inevitable and what seems Inconceivable into Achievable.
Essential Features of SECD Programs

- They are not just programs– they must be part of a multiyear school improvement strategy
- Provide a common language
- Flexibility with consistency
- Specific lessons focused on SECD
- Opportunities for integration across all subjects via skills, themes, core virtues
Academy for Social-Emotional Learning in Schools: SELinSchools.org

Overarching goals are to address the gap in professional development of school leaders and diverse education professionals that exists today and to create a community for on-going mentoring, resource support, and sharing of experiences from walking the talk!

The Academy offers a two certificate programs connected to a virtual Professional Learning Community:

**Certificate for School Leadership in Social-Emotional Learning and Character Development.** (SELinSchools.org)

**Certificate for Direct Instruction of Social-Emotional Learning and Character Development.** (sel.rutgers.edu)

Academy Overview Video: [http://novo.cse.edu/](http://novo.cse.edu/)
Courageous Leadership Needed

- To look into the future with realism and commitment in a short-term political environment requires courage.
- To change course requires courage.
- To provide the structural, budget, and personnel supports needed requires courage.
Courageous Leadership Needed

For adults to model the changes at the Board level, in the district office, and in all school-related services areas requires courage.

To move to an orientation of communities of learners in a spirit of continuous improvement, with no fear of data, and to see one-another as resources with untapped positive potential acting as rainbows in students’ and colleagues’ clouds requires courage.
One thing I know: The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.

Albert Schweitzer

It did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected of us.

Viktor Frankl

Everyone can be great because everyone can serve.

Martin Luther King, Jr.
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